

THE IRISH FLAG and what it means

THE tricolour of Ireland composed of green, white and orange, is based on a similar flag made for Thomas Francis Meagher of Waterford by the women of the Paris Commune in 1848.

It was adopted by Patrick Pearse and thus became the flag of Ireland.

Though more important than any flag is what goes on under it, the Irish tricolour has a clear meaning which those who first thought of it meant it to symbolise and declare.

The three colours are equally essential.

Green had become associated with the Gaelic Catholic element in Ireland, which had given the country such leaders as Father Murphy, Lalor, Stephens, and the Manchester Martyrs.

The Orange stood for protestantism which had given Ireland Tone, Mitchell, Emmet and Henry Joy McCracken.

But between them was the White. This meant not merely peace between the two sections. It was the colour of **REPUBLICANISM** or Jacobinism as it was called. This was summarised in the words "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" . . .

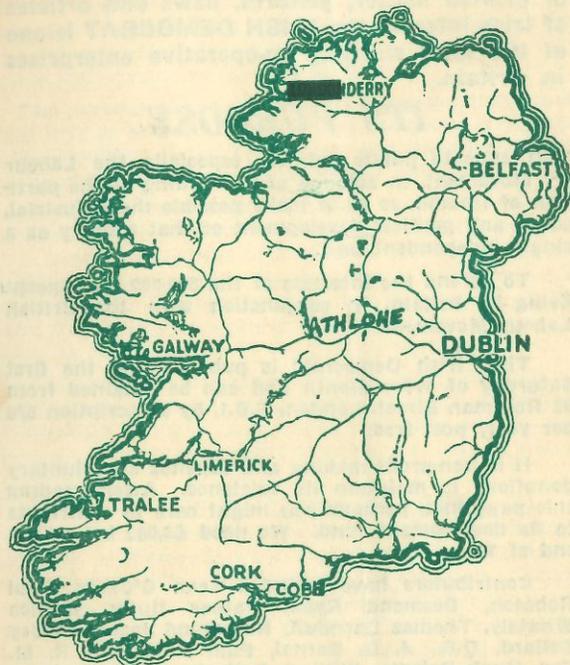
The Irish flag means that **PROVIDED** you have liberty, equality and fraternity, there can be permanent peace between Orange and Green.

That is why republicans of all nations honour the Irish flag.

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THE IRISH CASE AGAINST **PARTITION**

"Ireland her own from the sod to the sky."—Fintan Lalor.



FULL FACTS AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION
BY

DESMOND GREAVES

(EDITOR, IRISH DEMOCRAT)

ONE SHILLING



A CONNOLLY ASSOCIATION PAMPHLET

WHAT

the "Irish Democrat" is

FOUNDED as a small duplicated monthly in 1935, growing from four to eight pages of printed matter, pictures, news and articles of Irish interest, the IRISH DEMOCRAT is one of the most startling co-operative enterprises in Britain.

ITS PURPOSE

TO educate public opinion, especially the Labour Movement, in support of the ending of the partition of Ireland, so as to make possible the industrial, social and political development of that country as a single independent unit.

To defend the interests of the 800,000 Irish people living in Britain, in conjunction with the British Labour Movement.

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Why Partition must be ended

INTRODUCTION

THE Tory pretence that the Irish question was finally settled in 1922, has been rudely contradicted by recent events. The majority of the Irish people do not accept the present position, and some of them have drawn attention sharply to that fact.

What was this settlement which imposed partition on Ireland? What was its background and how did it come about? Who was responsible and what were they trying to do?

The purpose of this pamphlet is to answer these questions, and it may be said at the outset that the blame is laid squarely on the shoulders of the Tory Party, and those in other parties who accepted their Imperialist line of policy.

It sets out the conclusion that the continued partition of Ireland is not in the interests of the people of either country, and urges the Labour Movement of Britain to cut itself free from all Tory policies in this matter. By doing so it will promote lasting friendship between the two peoples, and in addition ensure the support of 800,000 Irish workers in Britain, whose interest in social progress is as great as that of the British workers.

Many Irish readers will know the facts here published already, though they may not have thought of some of the suggestions for doing something about it; it is hoped that they will try to bring both facts and suggestions to the attention of their British fellow-workers.

TO THE ENGLISH READER

A SPECIAL word is perhaps needed to the English reader. While the study of History is a commonplace to every Irishman and requires no explanation or justification, the tradition of England is to let the past take care of itself. There are advantages in both attitudes. But to understand partition both are needed. The situation in Ireland is so complex that it is hopeless to attempt to grasp it without seeing how it came into being step by step.

But for those who just can't stomach history, it may be said that the first section proves historically that the responsibility for the existence of partition is a British Imperialist one at bottom, and nobody else's. Such a reader, if he is prepared to take this on trust, can begin with the section "Why it was done," but he is strongly advised afterwards to read the historical section.

Can the border question be settled by agreement? That issue will present itself to every mind. There are reasons to believe that agreement is more possible now than ever before, and these include:

- (1) The fact that the British Empire as it was known in the past is disintegrating before our eyes, and the fact that its leaders have been compelled to talk as equals with peoples whom they formerly ruled with the sword.
- (2) In the new world situation the MILITARY importance of the Ulster bridgehead is declining, at the same time as Britain's trade rivals are penetrating the Irish market. There is then a possibility that Britain might seek Irish goodwill in the economic field by a political settlement.
- (3) The Unionist-minded workers who form the popular backing of the Northern Ireland Government have been sharply shaken by the impact of Tory policies in rents, employment, etc. Their loyalty to Unionism is admittedly beginning to waver, and if it breaks the older Republican traditions of Northern Ireland protestantism will emerge victorious once again.

But the Imperialists will never climb down unless YOU help to compel them and that means taking the trouble to understand the question.



History of Ireland

I.—Ireland a Nation

HENRY II invaded Ireland in 1169. He made no pretence that the Irish people wanted to be under the English Crown. He claimed (though it has been disputed ever since) that the Pope, Adrian I, had "given" him Ireland provided he could take it.

Although he secured the "submission" of some of the biggest chiefs, he failed to subdue the country. The Irish people, under their clan leaders, speaking their own language, obeying their own laws and customs, resisted his invasion. He succeeded only in biting off part of Ireland around Dublin (called the Pale) and it was not for a further five hundred years that Cromwell finally conquered the whole country in 1649.

The system of society the English introduced into Ireland was very distasteful to the Irish people. Not content with taking away their land, destroying their democratic customs, trying to stamp out their language and culture, even their identity as a people, the invaders systematically despoiled the country of its natural wealth, cut down its forests and burned them to make charcoal, and drove the people out of the richest areas so that they had to crowd into the poorest.

The extent of the depredations carried out may be judged

from the fact that under Mary Tudor the land of two whole counties was confiscated; under James I took place the plantation of Ulster, affecting four whole counties, though, as T. A. Jackson points out in his history, "it is a complete fallacy to attribute to this plantation the peculiar characteristics of political 'Ulster' . . . the two most 'protestant' counties, Antrim and Down, were not included in it." The first policy was to displace Irish Catholics by English Catholics; after the reformation the fact that the Irish people clung to the old religion was made an excuse to confiscate their land. It was the land, not the religion, that Cromwell and his successors worried about, and by 1665 one-sixth of the population had come to own no less than two-thirds of it. The penal laws against Catholics were designed to keep the land in the hands of the robbers.

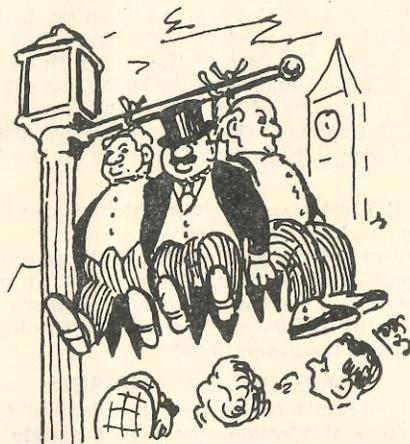
Because the conquest of Ireland was based upon the confiscation of the land, it was natural that the ensuing struggle for independence took on an agrarian character, and was further linked to the struggle for religious emancipation of the Catholics and Ulster dissenters (mostly small protestant farmers also oppressed by the big landowners of the established Church).

The great revolt of 1798 was led by the "United Irishmen," whose aim was to "abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter." Despite the efforts of the British Government to stir up hatred between religious sects, the United Irishmen were extremely successful, and though the rising proved a failure, it so alarmed the ruling class that they carried through the "Union" which disbanded the separate Irish Parliament, and amalgamated the two countries into one state.

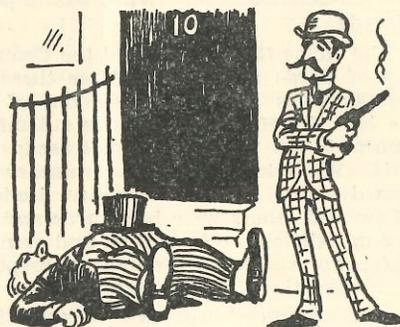
From the time of the Union in 1800 until its dissolution in 1921, a continuous agitation was carried on against it, and not only by Irish people. In 1812 the poet Shelley denounced it in a pamphlet. In 1842 the Chartists made its repeal point seven of the famous "People's Charter." In 1867 the founder of Scientific Socialism, Marx, made a particularly eloquent and logical attack on it, and from its very birth, modern British Socialism took up an attitude of opposition to the enforced inclusion of Ireland in the "United Kingdom."

In the second half of the last century, Parnell welded together the Irish Members of Parliament into a formidable party, gave the demand for the repeal of the Union a positive form in "Home Rule," and linked the national independence struggle with the agrarian struggle of Davitt's Land League, and to the general democratic movement of the common people of Britain. Under such pressure, the British ruling class divided. Gladstone accepted Home Rule and simultaneously initiated moderate land reforms; the Tories were prepared for a measure of land reform, but were

THE COMPLETE GRAMMAR OF (TORY) ANARCHY



"Cabinet ministers would be hanged on a lamp-post in Downing Street."—A. M. Samuel in a speech at Old Trafford,



"The people of this country will be so enraged that they will require some blood of the members of the Cabinet."

—Lord Abington, at Parkstone, 13th Sept., 1913.

take up arms against the Bill."
Sir Edward Carson declared at Coleraine:—

"In the event of this proposed Parliament being thrust upon us, we solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves not to recognise its authority. I do not care twopence whether it is treason or not."

British working men should pause to note how the law-abiding Conservative Party can change its tune when its vital interests are affected.

CURRAGH MUTINY

TO show they were prepared to be as good as their word, the Ulster Unionist Council, which was getting itself ready to declare itself a provisional Government, founded the "Ulster Volunteers" as a force of para-military stormtroopers, and prepared plans to raid arms depots in the Belfast area so as to be better able to defy the Government.

When the plans became known to the Government, if it was to safeguard its authority it was essential to move troops to protect the depots. The House of Lord was openly discussing holding up the Annual Army Act so that after April 30th there would be no army in existence to be used against the opponents of Home Rule. Sir Henry Wilson, Director of Military Operations, gave enthusiastic approval.

On March 20th the Government ordered troops from the Curragh in Co. Kildare, to proceed northwards to defend the arms depots. It was then Britain sunered its most acute constitutional crisis of the 20th century. The commanding officer at the Curragh Camp, Sir Hubert Gough, and 56 of the 60 officers declined to move and declared they preferred to resign their commissions.

Mutiny is a very serious offence in military law but the mutineers were treated as officers and gentlemen. Their demands were acceded to. The Government climbed down and they gracefully withdrew their resignations. A month later, on April 24th, the Ulster Unionist Council arranged the landing of 35,000 German Mauser rifles and 2,500,000 rounds of ammunition at Larne, Bangor and Donaghadee. There was now no need to raid depots. The Government took no action. The Tory officers in the army had successfully defied the constitution.

PARTITION PROPOSED

THE Government proceeded with the Home Rule Bill, but began toying with the idea of allowing the area around Belfast to be unaffected by it for a period of six years. But the Unionists who had so easily defeated the Liberals on the issue of arms, saw no reason to compromise. They were confident they would smash the Home Rule Bill and the Liberal Government as well. They allowed the Liberals to nibble at the provisions of the Bill they had brought in; if this process could be carried far enough, Home Rule would be killed. That the British people had voted

tional representation, something it would never consider in Britain, where it would have helped Labour.

The programme of the victorious Sinn Fein party was an Independent Irish Republic. The demand of the Irish people, as overwhelming as ever, had moved with the times. They had seen that they were going to be cheated out of Home Rule and wanted the additional safeguard of complete separation.

Instead of recognising that the British people had already agreed in principle to giving the Irish what they wanted, and allowing the Sinn Fein to form a government in Ireland, and to set up an Independent Republic, the British Government continued to promise new Home Rule Bills and to negotiate with the Six-County Tories as if the Sinn Fein majority did not exist.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

ON 21st January, 1919, therefore, the Sinn Fein majority met in the Mansion House of Dublin and, following the example of the American colonists of 1776, adopted a declaration of Independence. The Republican Government which they established impressed the British Government very differently from that set up by Ulster Unionists in 1912. Police were ordered to suppress it as a "dangerous organisation" and troops were poured into Ireland. When in spite of police and troops, it became clear that there was a "dual power" in Ireland, and that the Irish people were giving their allegiance to the Republican Courts and Republican laws, and refusing to recognise those of the British Government, the Imperial Government sent the "Black and Tans" (demobilised adventurers, ticket-of-leave men, and officers not clever enough to get promotion) and from mid-1920 onwards these wrought havoc and desolation throughout Ireland.

In the Belfast area special constables of three categories were sworn in, their principal distinction from the R.I.C. being that the A B and C. Specials were recruited from the most fanatical elements of the Orange lodges, while the R.I.C. contained a number of Catholics. At the same time sectarian feeling in Belfast was inflamed once more, and Protestant workers were incited to drive Catholic workers out of the shipyards.

In 1919 Belfast engineers had united in a classic struggle for the 47-hour week. The disunity following the 1920 pogroms lost them 35 per cent. of their wages within four years.

It was while Ireland was in this chaotic state, entirely due to British Imperialist policy, that Lloyd George hastened with the passage of his "Government of Ireland Bill." There was no election in Ireland. The largest party, Sinn Fein, was not consulted.

There was no election in Britain. The Labour Party was not consulted. The Bill established an "Irish Free State" consisting of two parts—Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland—Northern

Ireland consisting of the present six counties. Each state was to have autonomy only in local affairs.

IRELAND PARTITIONED

"THIS Bill has not a single friend in either hemisphere, outside Downing Street," said the pro-British "Irish Times." The Government of Ireland Act came into force on May 3rd, 1921, at the height of the Black and Tan terror.

Instead of inviting the Irish people to vote upon its proposals by a plebiscite or referendum, the British Government decreed two separate General Elections, on different days, one in the Six Counties, the other in the Twenty-Six Counties. The issue was pre-judged. The two states were set up first, and the Irish people were told that they must vote in two parts, one part having already been chosen because it contained a sufficient number of people who would vote the way the British Government wanted. They were offered no choice about it. There was no question of self-determination. Britain decided Ireland was to have two governments and fixed the boundaries of their territories and their powers. Irish people could vote how they pleased, the result of their vote was pre-determined. It was decreed outside Ireland and the people were told: "Take it, you're getting it." with no chance of changing their minds.

The boundaries chosen by the British Government corresponded to no historical or even religious classification. There are nine counties in Ulster. Only six were taken into "Northern Ireland." There are two counties with a strong Protestant majority (Antrim and Down), and two with a slight Protestant majority (Derry and Armagh)—but two additional counties with a strong Catholic majority were included (Fermanagh and Tyrone). Six was the number of counties removed because had the entire nine of Ulster been constituted a separate state, this state would have had a majority of electors in favour of dissolving itself and joining a thirty-two county Ireland. But the four which could have been selected on the dubious basis of the religious argument were insufficient to form a workable state. The great city of Belfast required a hinterland of some extent, two counties and two half counties were not enough for it.

The Northern Ireland state was designed to be small enough to keep the republican majority out of it, and big enough to have as many people in it as could be voted down by the Unionists. It must include as much territory as could be got without its falling into the hands of a Republican majority. As for "Southern Ireland," it consisted of what was left—Donegal, most northerly county of Ireland, was linked to the rest of "Southern Ireland" by a strip of land four miles wide along which runs one road crossing the Erne by one bridge. Yet the main roads between the two parts of "Southern Ireland" pass through areas overwhelmingly opposed to partition!



The elections based on this plan were a foregone conclusion. As if it were not enough to select the areas convenient to them, the Ulster Unionists were encouraged to use every means of coercion against the Nationalists of the Six Counties. Pogroms (also against Socialists) had driven the Nationalists into ghettos in parts of Belfast. Siting of polling booths in the Orange areas prevented their voting unless they were prepared to run a gauntlet. Sectarian hysteria whipped up to the utmost kept people quiet for the sake of safety.

In "Southern Ireland" there was once again an overwhelming Sinn Fein victory.

THE SO-CALLED TREATY

WHEN the six-county state was thus formally in being, as part of an "Irish Free State" which was a sheer fiction, since it never existed, then and only then was the British Government prepared to start talks with the Sinn Fein leaders. For the purpose of a series of long, protracted negotiations the fiction of a "Free State" came in useful. They promised the Irish leaders that partition, actually accomplished before the negotiations began, was a purely temporary measure, and proceeded to wear the Irish plenipotentiaries down on one question after another. When, in December, after having conceded a number of points to trickery and pressure, these dug their heels in against further concessions, Lloyd George told them they must accept partition and the position of a subject Parliament linked to Britain in peace or war, under pain of "immediate and terrible war."

Faced by this threat, the Irish delegation split, and a section of them compromised themselves by signing articles of agreement embodying the British demand. The British then supplied the necessary force to hand over "Southern Ireland" to the element which had signed the articles of agreement, and this settlement was (with British military aid) enforced at the cost of a bloody and protracted civil war. But the Irish people so strongly objected to the title "Southern Ireland" that it was never used. Instead, the title "Irish Free State" was used, and later, popular opinion forced other changes.

The agreement of 1921 was not a treaty, it was a compromise accepted under threat of arms, and imposed by civil war. That the plenipotentiaries weakened in the face of the enemy does not shift the main responsibility from those guilty of enforcing the settlement. Likewise, that the anti-treaty republicans might not have lost if they had made fewer political mistakes does not alter the dictated character of the settlement or shift the blame off British Imperialism.

The British people were told that the enforced settlement was a freely negotiated treaty. They were told the Irish had been consulted and had got what they wanted. But there was a simple

their investments might be taxed, subjected to restrictions or, worst of all, even nationalised. This was quite possible in view of the strong socialist tendencies displayed in the south of Ireland in 1920-22, but should cause no alarm to any class-conscious British worker, who is trying to do that identical thing in Britain.

A third thing was that the Irish landlord class (like the German Junkers in Prussia) had traditionally supplied British Imperialism with colonial administrators, policemen and brass-hats. The Irish people who hate militarism would sweep all this away, and Toryism would lose a source of its power. This likewise should not unduly disturb a class-conscious British worker.

Finally, Ireland was ripe for decisive social changes involving inroads on the "rights" of private property. Toryism feared the effect on the British workers of their nearest neighbour altering the established order of things to the benefit of the ordinary man, because this was likely to arouse comparable desires in the breasts of the British people. Ireland must be denied progress for fear of stimulating British progress.

Determined to defend the interests of the employing classes of Britain at all costs, the Tory Party (in coalition with Lloyd George's Liberal rump) disregarded the wishes of British and Irish people alike.

Partition was imposed from Westminster, under threat of war, to the accompaniment of lies that it was only intended to be temporary, and this was done on behalf of the financiers, industrialists and militarists who are behind the Tory clique that has repeatedly led the British people into slump and war.



III.—Economic Results

THE results of partition have been disastrous to Ireland. That this was bound to be so is easy to understand. No country has all its industries evenly spread over its surface. On the contrary, some industries grow up in some areas, others in others. Thus Britain builds no ships of any size south of the Mersey. She has no sugar beet factories north of it. Such specialisation, or division of labour between different districts of a country binds it together, by making the parts inter-dependent and creating the practical necessity of unity as a nation.

Ireland, like Britain, has for many years had certain districts devoted to certain pursuits. The west breeds the cattle, the east raises them, the south engages in dairying. Light industries of various kinds grew up (when allowed to by Imperialist laws)

in the different towns of Ireland; but the vital engineering and textile industries came to be centred in the Belfast area. This is no more surprising than the centring of cotton in Lancashire or hosiery in Nottingham. But it means that by cutting off that area from the rest of Ireland, the country is deprived of the ability to make the things with which to make things.

It was particularly wicked to cut off this area because, since Britain had been in complete control of Ireland since the days of Cromwell, British Government policy had much to do with the particular pattern of industry on the map of Ireland. Britain had created Ireland's dependence on the north, but now she was taking the north away.

UNEMPLOYMENT

FROM the day partition was carried out to the present there has been chronic unemployment throughout all Ireland, and a continuous stream of emigration from both parts to Britain and America.

It is no use arguing that this might have been no different if Ireland had been united. It has not been united. Certainly there would have been emigration unless certain things were done to develop the country industrially. Those things have been extremely difficult, and have not been done, largely because of partition. This applies to the two parts equally since neither can fully develop without the other.

According to Lord Beveridge, 1927 was the most prosperous inter-war year in Northern Ireland. Unemployment was then 46,000 in a population of a million and a third. In 1938 unemployment averaged 91,000—one in four of insured persons being idle. During the peak employment of the war period there were never less than 14,000 persons idle. In May 1952 the figure had risen to 51,000. According to the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish T.U.C. the most disturbing feature is the high proportion of men unemployed, their unemployment being twice that for women.

The prosperity of Northern Ireland industries, according to the Irish T.U.C., depends on the possibility of securing a world market. The British market is limited for reasons given by the Unionist Professor Isles, who declares that the "relative lowness of employment and income" in the Six Counties is "basically due to physical conditions, the smallness of the area and its distance from the main domestic (i.e., British.—C.D.G.) markets."

The same expert states that the effect of the border was "to cripple certain industries and damage entrepot trade." He adds that:—

"The financial and economic arrangements in the Government of Ireland Act were too restrictive to allow it

(the Northern Ireland Government—C.D.G.) to interfere with the scale of economic development and Northern Ireland was unable to use the techniques by which separate countries could follow independent policy.”

In other words, Northern Ireland cannot compete in Britain because of transport costs and low technical efficiency. She is thrown back on one or two basic industries. She cannot develop in economic harmony with the rest of Ireland because of the border. The specialist industries on which she relies, work for export and are exposed to every economic wind that blows, and she has insufficient power to protect them.

COMPLEMENTARY

IT is no use arguing that as things are Northern Ireland industry is not complementary to Twenty-Six County industry. Its development in the opposite direction has been deliberately fostered, and the result has been continuous unemployment. But the trades and skills of the workpeople of the two parts are complementary to a great extent. What is wanted is a change in the direction of development, which a united Ireland would make possible. A united Ireland would make it possible to give the unemployed skilled workers of the North work making things needed in the Twenty-Six Counties.

An illustration of the injury done by the border to the internal market of Northern Ireland is the town of Enniskillen, whose population rose slightly from 1911 to 1926, but remained stagnant (actually fell by three persons) from 1926 to 1937—because this town is the natural centre for Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and South Donegal, and is thus surrounded by the border on three sides.

Proposals by the Northern Ireland Government to close down the rail-links between Dublin and Donegal which pass through the area would, if carried out, cause a further decline.

The slight increase in population in Newry, Strabane, etc., must be set against heavy falls in the population of the smaller border towns; the larger markets manage to survive, but the smaller ones succumb.

TWENTY-SIX COUNTIES

THE economic position in the Twenty-Six Counties is no better. The rate of unemployment has not in recent times been so high as that in the Six Counties, but emigration has continued at a rate of about 20,000 persons a year.

As soon as the Six-County area was cut off, the remainder of Ireland had to proceed on the basis that there was no large-scale engineering in its territory. During the time when foreign nations were anxious to sell such industry, that is during the slump, the

Twenty-Six Counties had no money to spend on it. When she had the money (during and after the war) the industry was either unavailable or prohibitively costly. The Twenty-Six Counties had, in any case (despite certain successful efforts at industrialisation) to be resigned to importing engineering products in order to keep going

Naturally these had to be paid for and the only ready means of paying appeared to be the export of cattle and other food products, the attraction of tourists, and invisible exports such as income from foreign investments, emigrants' remittances and so on. The difficulty being to pay for current needs, there has been little to spare for expensive schemes of development. Proposals for industrialisation have also been met with the criticism that industries were going to be duplicated.

In any case it would hardly be fair to cut Lancashire off from London and then say to London, “Why don't you weave your own shirts and tablecloths?” London would reply: “We have plenty of other things to do, give us back Lancashire.”

To illustrate these facts with figures, here are the amounts of the Twenty-Six Counties' principal items of export and import for the year 1947:—

	£	£
	Imports	Exports
Live animals	3,159,001	22,110,751
Cereals & Feeding Stuffs	11,148,011	6,911
Textiles	20,046,588	2,816,905
Raw materials & manufactured goods	95,487,127	5,318,832

Of the last class of imports, no less than £28,358,683 would belong to the broad class of engineering products.

Any Twenty-Six County minister for economic affairs is thus set an extremely difficult problem. Unfortunately, ministers have usually solved that problem at the expense of the working class. They are, of course, to be criticised for it and no excuses are here being made for them. What is being said is that no minister should be set such a problem by another country.

Each part into which Ireland has been divided is set an extremely difficult economic problem. Because the two parts are not allowed to lean on each other, they must each separately lean on Britain. This was, of course, in the minds of the Tories who enacted Partition. They wanted to keep Ireland dependent on Britain for political purposes, and they have used that dependence with considerable success.

WHO PAYS FOR PARTITION?

THAT part of Ireland which broke away from Britain is compelled to carry in full its share of the burden of partition. The Six-County state is given help to carry the burden, though

that help in no way compensates for its restricted development, and is paid for moreover by the British working class.

The former Auditor-General for Northern Ireland, G. C. Duggan, O.B.E., C.B., LL.D., states that:—

“Certain sections of Northern Ireland’s expenditure are subsidised by the British Government, and out of Stormont’s total expenditure of £70,500,000, £35,000,000 is in reality met by the Exchequer.”

He adds that whereas defence (which is far from lavish) costs the Twenty-Six Counties £11,000,000 per annum, Northern Ireland, when she has paid the Exchequer an Imperial contribution of £12,500,000 and received back services provided by Great Britain, pays only £1,000,000 as its share of Britain’s (very lavish) defence. Northern Ireland contains about 44 per cent. of the total taxable capacity of Ireland. Not only, therefore does Northern Ireland have provided for her things which the Twenty-Six Counties have to pay for, she gets a subsidy, and when times are hard and she cannot afford to pay her Imperial contribution, the “services” go on just the same.

These items may not seem great in proportion to the total national income of Britain, but they are religiously passed to the working class to foot the bill. The whole of Ireland is prevented from standing on its own feet, and the British workers are mulcted to keep the smaller part from collapse.

WHAT COULD BE

BUT the saving of a sum which the British workers would never grudge if it were put to proper use, is of small importance in comparison with the positive advances which are being lost.

The volume of trade between Britain and Ireland is very substantial because of the closeness of the two countries. In 1947 Britain sent the Twenty-Six Counties alone over £52 million worth of goods, or roughly, £17 worth per citizen of Eire. Every Irishman who did not have to emigrate would on this showing consume £17 worth of British goods in a year. If there had been less unemployment more than £17 per head would have been consumed. But if Ireland was engaged in expanding and re-equipping her industries through a great national redevelopment scheme, trying to make up the leeway of the past, the amount of British plant and equipment imported, together with fuel and raw materials, would raise the figure of £17 per head to a very much higher figure. Much more would be exported to Britain in payment. The increased interchange of goods would mean more work for British workers.

To take one example. At a certain level of development a united Ireland could use the current provided by an atomic power

station at (say) Athlone. The placing of contracts for such a scheme could mean work for the Sheffield steelworkers, London electrical workers, Manchester engineers, Birmingham toolmakers and Liverpool dockers. There would be jobs in Ireland, too, not only for Irish exiles, but for skilled British workers as well. Prosperity is contagious.



IV.—Political Results

PARTITION has had equally disastrous political results both for Ireland and for Anglo-Irish relationships. The Six Counties of Northern Ireland was given a government consisting of those very Conservatives who had defied the British Parliament in 1912-1914 and set up the Ulster Provisional Government.

It has been said that dominions have to be preserved by the means through which they were acquired.

The Six Counties provide a striking illustration. This state was born in coercion, sectarianism and electoral juggling. It had no choice but to preserve itself by the same methods.

SECTARIANISM

IN order to strengthen the antagonism between Protestant and Catholic, the Unionist Government instituted a policy of religious discrimination.

The Premier, Lord Brookeborough, declared: “Many of the audience employ Catholics but I have not one about the place.” Another Minister went further and suggested that Protestants should patronise only Protestant shopkeepers.

Religious discrimination in public appointments resulted in a position where in 1946 it was estimated that Catholics pay 33 per cent. of the taxes and draw only 4 per cent. of the public salaries.

On the other hand, so as to weaken the authority of organisations which bring Catholics and Protestants together in their common interests, the Government maintained the anti-trade union Trades Disputes Act of 1927, and refuses to recognise or negotiate with the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish T.U.C., which represents the overwhelming majority of trade unionists of the Six Counties.

The Belfast T.U.C. in 1949 heard James Larkin urge the unity of Ireland and asked leaders and political parties to “commit themselves . . . to the guarantees they feel called upon to provide to meet the reasonable views of the minority”—the trade union movement was offering toleration. It was too liberal for the Unionists to recognise.

the figure of one policeman to every 100 citizens, the highest proportion in Europe. It has recently been proposed that this proportion should be increased.

This apparatus of coercion is used to operate the "Special Powers Act" already referred to. This Act provides for arrest without warrant, imprisonment without trial, and widespread powers of interference with the rights of assembly and publication. A prisoner held without trial may be denied visits by friends, access to legal advice, and the right to send or receive correspondence. If he dies in prison his relatives may not be permitted to examine the corpse to satisfy themselves of the absence of marks of violence. The Home Minister may direct that no coroner's inquest shall be held.

From time to time since 1923, various provisions of the Special Powers Act have been temporarily suspended, but the powers are to-day substantially the same as when it was first passed.

But the Special Powers Act has been used with a nice discrimination, in favour of Government supporters. A special constable was convicted of carrying out a series of armed robberies using the arms provided for him for his police duties. When his house was searched a considerable quantity of machine-gun ammunition was found there. Despite considerable pressure recorded in the Northern Ireland "Hansard," there was a complete refusal to prosecute for possession of ammunition, though this was an extremely serious offence for which a man might be flogged and undergo a long term of imprisonment.

OVER THE BORDER

THE political consequences of partition are not confined to the actually occupied territory. Quite apart from the direct political consequences of the economic situation created, the Imperialist Government took special steps to have established in the Twenty-Six Counties a government as acceptable to its interests as was practicable. The first Government, set up as a result of the Civil War, was extremely reactionary, viciously anti-working class, and pro-Imperialist. It had the unwelcome task of enforcing acquiescence in the unpopular "Treaty," with British help. So thoroughly did it disgrace itself that in 1932 it was replaced by De Valera's Fianna Fail party. Though De Valera was pledged to a series of measures of broadly Republican scope, he came up against the fact that the economic power of the sections who were interested in keeping Ireland tied to Britain (banks, biggest farmers, industrialists and businessmen) had not been affected by the 1922 settlement. He was prepared for a limited struggle with them on the political field, but shrank from the assault on their economic power, so that in the end he was led into a position of compromise on politics also.

DE VALERA

MR. DE VALERA is acknowledged as one of the most able statesmen in Europe. He might possibly have solved an easier problem. But he did not have an easier problem to solve. He was faced with the fact that as a capitalist statesman favouring industrial development he depended on the cattle trade and investors in foreign securities to pay for his industrialisation. These in turn were opposed to any more industrialisation than their interests demanded. If it had not been for partition Mr. De Valera would not have been faced with this difficult position, and it must not be forgotten that an integral part of that problem was the presence of British troops not 60 miles from his capital city, and his complete dependence on outside sources for military equipment.

It might be asked, if Mr. D. Valera was not prepared for more drastic measures than he adopted, why did not the working class step in and adopt them for him?

The most tragic of the political effects of partition has been the fragmentation and confusion of the working-class movement. No doubt if the working class had been united on a clear policy it might have urged De Valera along the path of struggle rather than compromise, and to the degree that popular feeling was developed, the Government from time to time proved responsive.

Unfortunately, partition not only dealt Ireland a deadly economic and political blow, it also divided the forces which would have enabled her to recover from that blow, and those who stood for compromise with Imperialism assisted the process. The compromise with Imperialism has also expressed itself in a retrogressive policy in international relations.

"One of the most intriguing questions which a united Ireland would postulate is: What would be the political set-up" asked Mr. G. C. Duggan. He answered his own question by saying: "It is almost certain that the Labour Party would rapidly become the strongest combination in the country. But that the trade union power will be vital in settling all the problems that will arise is undoubted."

At present there are two Labour Parties in the Six Counties: one for, the other against, the border. In the Twenty-Six Counties there long subsisted divergences in the trade union movement on the approach to national questions. These are now happily in process of resolution. It is a most striking thing to an outside observer that the workers of Northern Ireland, despite their numbers, organisation and splendid militancy in the industrial field, have not succeeded in making their influence felt politically at Stormont or Westminster. That this failure on the political field is connected with the issue of partition is obvious when it

is seen how the employing class strike back at trade union demands with the political slogan of Unionism, thus helping to perpetuate worker has had exceptional reason to be jealous of his craft. The unskilled have had to emigrate to acquire skill. In a prosy-very local prejudice and encourage political parochialism.

The pressure of mass unemployment has strengthened the more conservative tendencies within the movement. The skilled perous Ireland instead of being on the defensive in such matters the trade union movement would develop all forms of enterprise and initiative and encourage workers to perfect themselves in every industrial aptitude.

BRITISH LABOUR POLICY

RELATIONS between Britain and Ireland, finally, have been bedevilled by partition. In the last war the Twenty-Six Counties were neutral, and even in the Six Counties there were such mass demonstrations when Mr. Churchill attempted to introduce conscription, that the idea had to be abandoned. An independent Ireland would, of course, be entitled to decide her foreign policy in the light of her needs. But requests from Britain for accommodation of any kind would receive more sympathetic consideration from a country that bore no grudge against her.

When the Labour Party was returned in 1945 there was more jubilation in Dublin than there was in London. But when the Labour Government, relying largely on Tory votes, passed the Ireland Act in 1949 there was a bitter revulsion against British Labour, whose action had created a situation where partition would be permanent unless the Six-County Government decided otherwise. Those Irish people who took care to distinguish between British Imperialism and the British working class had their task made more difficult. Both Irish and British workers lost by it. The Ireland Act was one of the many errors by which the right-wing leaders of Labour lost the confidence of the electorate and made possible the restoration of the Tories to office.

The ending of partition would remove such obstacles to the unity of the British and Irish working people, just as it would remove obstacles to the unity of the Irish working people themselves. The Irish workers would be able to resume their rapid march towards a rising standard of living for all, and their ultimate goal of socialism. In doing so, nobody would need to doubt that they would enter into the closest relations of friendship and co-operation with the British workers who, though in another country and possessing a different tradition, have the same interests to serve. Far from separating Irish from British workers, the end of partition would make it possible for them to come together on terms of equality and fraternity for the first time. No Belfast worker need fear that a Britain which ended

partition would discriminate against his industries and inflict unemployment on him. Working-class "Unionism" and religious sectarianism come from lack of self-confidence in the working class and can be removed, as unity grows.



V.—What others say

ATTEMPTS have, of course, been made to justify the maintenance of partition. The old Unionist arguments, stemming from the days of Carson and Galloper Smith still appear in somewhat threadbare form. But recent tendencies have been to try to provide them with a "Labour coating," even a pseudo-socialist regalia. At bottom, the arguments are only one argument, opposition to Irish Nationalism, and denials of its validity.

Rev. J. G. MacManaway, M.A., M.B.E., M.P., wrote of the "Myth of the Celtic Nation" arguing that "the chief factor in Ireland's partition is due to the successful Plantation of James I in 1609 . . . the result of the Plantation of over 300 years ago was to make a certain hard core of Protestantism—chiefly Presbyterian—in Northern Ireland." As has been explained, the Plantation referred to did not affect the "Orange" counties of to-day. Also no serious opponent of partition rests Irish nationality on a "Celtic" race (whatever that may be). Lord Brookeborough's allegations at his London Press conference in 1948 that the "separatists have . . . pledged themselves to the creation of an all-Ireland Gaelic-speaking Republic" is intended to create the impression that the people of the Six Counties would be discriminated against if they did not learn to speak Irish. Yet it is a simple fact that English is the principal language in the Twenty-Six Counties after all these years; the "Celtic Nation" is a dummy erected by the Unionists for themselves to knock down. A united Ireland would naturally encourage its citizens to appreciate Gaelic culture. And why not? Maybe even British (or Indian) people will wish to appreciate it also.

RELIGION

REV. MacMANAWAY'S argument on religion is a pale reflection of the thundering sectarianism of the anti-Home Rule days. The fact is that between 1609 and the present day, Protestants, and most especially the Presbyterians, were the most vocal spokesmen of separatism. The writer's passion for history does not lead him to investigate the careers of those Protestants who fathered Irish Republicanism in Belfast, Wolfe Tone, Jamie

important question of the prospects of a united Ireland. It is because the Protestant workers of the North do not understand the great potentialities Ireland has, and therefore have no faith in the future, that their democratic feelings do not revolt against the discrimination practised in the Six Counties. They have been led to believe that unemployment and insecurity for somebody is inevitable in Ireland and are afraid that by getting a united Ireland they would be sacrificing a slight preference for themselves, and possibly suffering from a slight preference for somebody else.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

A SIMILAR argument about civil and religious freedom is put this way. "What guarantees have the Protestants that they would not be persecuted?" Their numbers and the strength of the united working-class movement is the answer. It would be extremely surprising if in the struggle to defend and extend democracy, the might of a united working class were found inferior to the tactic of an alliance with Imperialism. No country's liberties have any other guarantee than the strength of the popular movement.

"But surely," it is sometimes argued, "it would be best to put the Twenty-Six Counties to rights first, and then invite the six to come in." This is, of course, to assume that unity is in the interests only of the Twenty-Six Counties, which is not correct. But it needs no saying that any improvement of the people's standards in either state within Ireland deserves whole-hearted support. The efforts of trade unionists in the Twenty-Six Counties have secured in certain cases higher rates than are paid in the North, but for decisive social changes the united strength of the workers and all Ireland are needed. The aim should be to secure in Ireland a progressive state of society, which has proved unattainable while partition remains. The critics are like those who would take the front wheel out of somebody's bicycle and then jeer at him: "I'll give it back to you when you show me you can ride the wheel you've got."

LEFTIST ARGUMENTS

FINALLY, among political justification of partition, are the "ultra-left" or pseudo-socialist. The father of these was William Walker, whom James Connolly castigated in the columns of the "Glasgow Forward." The essence of such arguments is that the working class is not interested in national questions but only in wages and conditions. This primitive outlook was understandable in the days when working-class political parties were yet to be built up. The logical conclusion led William Walker's disciple, Mr. Midgley, out of the ranks of labour, into the Tory

Party. To-day, trade unionists are interested in socialism as well.

But now come the doctrinaire socialists to argue that the issue of national unity is only a capitalist dodge to divert the workers from class struggle. They use the natural and proper feeling of solidarity of workers for other workers to divert them from their political task of leading the whole people against the enemy of the whole people, Imperialism. Nationalism is out of date, they say, and the workers of each part of Ireland should strive for socialism in the part they live in. The British workers should strive for socialism as well, and then when everybody has socialism, then all will be well and we need not bother about the border one way or the other.

This train of thought admits the Irish worker's right to decide the social system of the state he lives in—but he must have nothing to say about its boundaries! Worse, it fails completely to examine the facts and get an understanding of the enemies working people have to defeat before they can get socialism. The Tories live by a policy of robbing their own people and other peoples simultaneously, and using the one against the other. They maintain their power by dividing the people, and the border is one example of it. So to talk about having socialism first, and then unity, which is the means to it, afterwards, is to put the cart before the horse and defer both socialism and national unity till Tibb's eve. Such people cannot understand that Imperialism exploits classes and nations at the same time, that is to say, class exploitation and national exploitation are carried out by the same men, the finance capitalists of British Imperialism. You cannot stop them doing one while leaving them free to do the other. You cannot do away with class exploitation without fighting national oppression as well.

In other words if a man or party desires to pass socialist laws for the benefit of the people of a territory, he automatically denies the right of making laws to a government outside that territory. He wants independence **in order** to make laws beneficial to the working man.

EXPERTS

THERE are only a few "expert" arguments now to be examined, for example, that the two parts of Ireland have "grown apart" and their reunification would cause a bit of an upset. The working class can reasonably be expected to be strong enough to see that the right people are upset; the ordinary folk have every reason to welcome the upset. Of course, there would have to be new laws, a new constitution, recasting of taxation, uprooting of frontier posts and so on. The strange thing is that no Imperialist expert ever troubles to mention the upsets caused when Kenya, Malaya or Cyprus are joined to Britain. But the

upset caused by the rejoining of the two parts of another country appal them.

Would a united Ireland be able to stand on its own feet? It is undeniable that the Twenty-Six Counties is compelled to stand on its own feet, though its capacities for development are truncated by partition. The Six Counties receives (indirectly) a subsidy which is, however, not a majestic figure. A united Ireland would have all that exists in these two, plus the opportunity to combine the two parts of the economy.

Would a shortage of coal resources and other minerals make it impossible for Ireland to carry through a plan of industrialisation? The fact that Britain is self-sufficient in only five important minerals (coal, limestone, china clay, salt and fluorspar) does not prevent her maintaining her position as a world industrial power. Ireland is not so poor in resources as Imperialist propagandists make out. Lack of coal is largely offset by plentiful turf and electricity; she has deposits of copper, iron and other ores, and building materials are plentiful, together with numerous minor minerals, some of them valuable. The invention of atomic energy and the possibility of uranium deposits create the prospect that Ireland may never have to rely on traditional industrial methods which have scarred and destroyed the face of countless acres of England and Scotland. In any event she will export what she has, and with it buy what she needs. All other countries do that. Why should this time-honoured solution fall in the case of Ireland?

But could the Irish manage a programme of national development? Would the government of a united Ireland have the courage and imagination necessary for it? First, the Irish people are entitled to have whatever government they want. Second, we need have no doubt that if the government first elected proves inadequate to the tasks the people set it, it will probably occur to them to change it.

Such then are the answers to those who from one point of view or another doubt the wisdom or impracticability of ending partition.



VI.—How to end Partition

THERE are two main interests opposed to partition—the Irish people and the British working class. Nobody can say which of these will make the first break, but it is certain that the greater unity and understanding between them, the quicker will

Imperialism be defeated. For people who are living in Ireland there can, of course, be only one tactic, namely to secure the greatest measure of unity in the struggle against Imperialism, never forgetting that their best allies are the British working class.

In Britain, the need is to get into power a government with a policy of withdrawing British troops from Ireland and allowing the Irish people to decide their own future. The first step would be to institute talks at which Britain would announce her intended withdrawal and make the necessary arrangements for the Irish people freely to elect their own government. If the British Government made it clear that it meant business, Lord Brookeborough's Tories would collapse like a puppet when somebody lets go the string. The announcement that Britain's policy had undergone a change would puncture the whole system of Unionist propaganda and the Northern Ireland people would rapidly adapt themselves to the new facts. It would be necessary for the Government to make it clear that it would adopt a friendly and helpful attitude to the independent Irish State.

Of existing British parties, the Conservatives have declared for the partition, the Communists against it, while Labour is divided between a right wing which supports the border and a left wing which opposes it.

It is clear, therefore, that the only kind of government within immediate sight that would end the border would be a new Labour Government or coalition in which left wing policies had won the day. Such a government would break with the old policies of meeting the Tories half-way, and would rally the anti-Imperialist elements in Britain.

TWO TASKS

SUCH an objective presents opponents of partition with two tasks. First, it means making the unity of Ireland the majority policy in the Labour movement. This demands every effort being made to publicise the Irish case and win support for it. The second task is that of getting such a government elected.

There are anti-partitionists who hesitate on this question. They know the left is traditionally anti-partition, but they fear a swing to the left on the part of British Labour. There is no other force in Britain able to do the job, so they will have to get over their fear, if they want an anti-partition government in Britain.

There are 800,000 Irish-born people in Britain and several million of immediate Irish descent. They should throw themselves energetically into these two great tasks, and support every

progressive move of the British workers, all the time explaining the Irish case and asking for support for it. They will be surprised at the number that will back them up.

It is particularly necessary to expose the essentially Tory and anti-working class nature of the Northern Ireland Government. The unseating of the two Sinn Fein M.P.s, followed by their replacement by defeated Tories, provides a striking case in point, and the undemocratic régime in Northern Ireland should receive deserved exposure.

IMMEDIATE DEMANDS

IN conducting a campaign to get rid of some great evil it is useful to rally public opinion against it by attacking separate parts or consequences of that evil, and incidentally affording some relief to its victims.

Some demands for which support can be won in the Labour movement are:—

- (1) **The recognition of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish T.U.C. and the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act by the Northern Ireland Government.**
- (2) **Restoration of proportional representation to end gerrymandering.**
- (3) **Disbandment of the "B" Specials and pending that the suspension of all "patrols."**
- (4) **The wiping out of all the "Special Powers."**
- (5) **The repeal of those parts of the 1949 Ireland Act which place restrictions on the power to end partition (the part recognising the Republic should, of course, stand).**

These steps alone would not complete the job. But they would form valuable stepping stones, and nobody who is prepared to fight for them should refuse to work with others to do the same.

IT CAN BE DONE

MANY of the Irish people who most passionately desire the ending of the border, and understand quite well the benefits national unification would bring, have grown dispirited after nearly forty years of disappointment. "It will never happen," they say, or, if it will they fear there will be another civil war, which understandably enough they are not prepared to advise.

But it will happen, and there is a new reason for it. The world has not stood still these forty years. British Imperialism, which once scattered its enemies with a whiff of grapeshot, is now being compelled to sit round a table and talk with people

it wouldn't have been seen dead with a century ago. India, Burma, and Ceylon are being followed by Malaya and Cyprus as sure as the sun rises.

The British Empire is dissolving into a set of independent "succession states." There will soon be no tie between them and Britain apart from mutual interest.

The new world situation is the thing for every Irishman to ponder on. Perhaps some of the methods adopted in the past should be revised in the light of it. The idea that Ireland could get unity by promising to help Britain in a war against Russia, seems a bit out of date in 1956. Such a war seems somewhat unlikely just now. The leaders of the Anti-Partition League who toyed with that theory will have to change it.

Then again, those who fear civil war should reflect that when British Imperialism was so strong that she could refuse to talk except with the gun, insurrection was the only way of dealing with her. But she yielded to mass pressure in India; in other places she used the gun for a while, but had to talk in the end. And every day that goes by lessens her capacity to reply to demands for national independence with bloody terror. She is having to give more and more account of herself to the world. Her influence with her former colonies increasingly depends on her behaving herself better.

This means that a peaceful solution of the partition question IS POSSIBLE, but it depends on the creating of a strong united MASS MOVEMENT, in Britain and in Ireland.



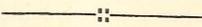
VII.—Conclusion

WHEN Ireland is free and united her common people, in town and country, will be able to give scope to their initiative by transforming Ireland into the land of Republic envisaged by Pearse and Connolly. Her people will set themselves on a distinctive Irish road to peace and plenty; that road passes through its own scenery but its goal is similar to that sought by the British working people. Ireland needs freedom in order to make progress. Progress in Ireland would be of the greatest help to the people of Britain.

No British trade unionist or member of the Labour movement could object to what the Irish people want in Ireland; it is the Irish equivalent of the security and prosperity he wants in his own country, in the end only to be secured through an Irish form of socialism.

Therefore, let all the Irish in Britain combine with and win the British working class to wage a continuous and intensifying war against the partition of Ireland. When that has gone, and Ireland strides forward to prosperity, the Irish question will have been answered, and the interests of the two peoples will never again seem to be at variance, for antagonism will be replaced by co-operation, mutual suspicion by mutual help.

Instead of emigration of Irishmen seeking work, and a return flow of aristocrats avoiding military service, there will be interchange of tourists, business people, and skilled experts of both nations. Instead of suspicion there will be mutual confidence: There will be no national jealousy, only friendly rivalry and mutual respect. Gigantic works of construction will be undertaken in co-operation, and collaboration with other countries will seem as natural as daylight. Nobody will dispute Ireland's complete freedom to regulate her own affairs, and that freedom will as indisputably be used to advance co-operation between the nations. Ireland has played a great part in the world in the past. In the dark ages of Europe she was the beacon in the west. But the age of her full greatness is yet to come.



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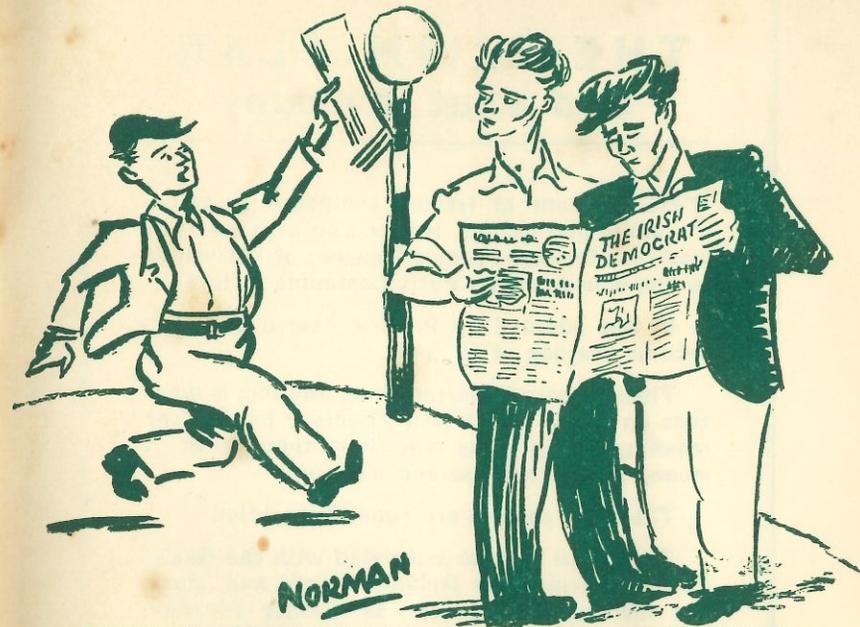
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