

J.R. WHITE



READER



**PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS &  
DISCUSSIONS  
FOR LAND & FREEDOM**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE ‘ANARCHIVE’  
“Anarchy is Order!”

*I must Create a System or be enslav'd by  
another Man's.  
I will not Reason & Compare: my business  
is to Create'*  
(William Blake)

During the 19th century, anarchism has developed as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, disappear little by little under the dust of history.

After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives—a ‘new’ kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as ‘Anarchy is order’, ‘Property is theft’,...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disappearing. The ‘anarchive’ or ‘anarchist archive’ Anarchy is Order ( in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the ‘**principles, propositions and discussions**’ of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don’t belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists and other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the ‘new anarchism’ outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain

standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

**‘Anarchy Is Order’ does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.**

**Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing texts from the CD (collecting all available texts at a given moment) that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts to friends and new ones to us,... Become your own anarchiv!!!**

(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and autors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchiv offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

*“...demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;  
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to  
squash us like horseflies;  
and the will- ‘o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance.”*

(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don’t mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism, cooperation can be sent to [A.O@advalvas.be](mailto:A.O@advalvas.be).

A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

**WELCOME!!**

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The Significance of Sinn Fein  
**PSYCHOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC.**

**J R WHITE**

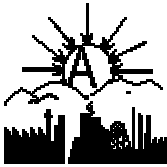
**(Published Martin Lester, Ltd, Dublin 1919.)**

To the Jack White page

<http://struggle.ws/anarchists/jackwhite.html>

Part of the pages of the Workers Solidarity Movement

<http://struggle.ws/wsm.html>



(AUTHOR'S NOTE: This paper was written about Christmas, 1918, shortly after Sinn Fein's triumph in the recent election. The letter of the prophecy that the British Government would not hesitate to suppress by force a rival assembly in Dublin has been falsified by events. The accuracy of several other forecasts, however, is already manifest.)

PSYCHOLOGICAL

PSYCHOLOGY is the science of the soul. The soul for the purposes of the present article means the sum of the powers and faculties in a human being, by which he feels and thinks and acts. Can we get some grasp of the relation of these faculties to each other in an individual and then apply them to present conditions in Ireland in such a way that both the race and individuals may

understand themselves and their inter-connection better?  
I think we can.

The most elementary psychological division in an individual is between his sub-consciousness and surface consciousness. By the former I mean here not so much those freakish powers of memory and prevision, which are manifested in mediumistic or hypnotic trance, as the whole sum of instincts and tendencies which are inherited, or, at any rate, inborn in the individual, which are so much part of him that he may be quite unconscious of them, and is certainly unconscious of how they arose. By the latter I mean those beliefs, opinions, tendencies, and habits of reasoning which are formed by contact with outer environment, which depend on outer experience and observation, and may be in direct opposition to inner instinctive emotion.

Happy and rare is the man in whom the two consciousness are reconciled and harmonious, who finds, or makes, his outer environment the expression of his deepest instincts and desires. As the world is now, indeed, any such complete reconciliation is impossible for any man or woman in whose sub-consciousness there well up deep and creative emotions.

The sub-conscious soul life is checked and thwarted by environment. People of strong feeling must try to remould it nearer to the heart's desire. Immovable, by the effort of a few solitary individuals, the best of these are forced to compromise, or, failing that, shatter to bits, not the world, but themselves. The revolt against environment to be effective must be collective.

We see to-day two main kinds of collective revolt, that of subject races and subject classes. They may be (indeed, generally are) quite distinct. A class may revolt against the pressure of a social system, although the race of which it forms part has evolved that system as part of its character and culture. Or a race may revolt without formulating any distinct class protest. The race revolt corresponds to the subconsciousness, drawing its impetus from inborn racial instinct. The class revolt is an affair of the surface consciousness, concerned with the modification or reconstruction of external conditions. Where the two revolts unite in one the whole National Being is engaged.

But what is the relation between the two aspects of revolt thus fused, differing as they do in their motive and inspiration. W. H. Myers has defined genius as a "subliminal uprush," that is to say, the emergence of elements which remain latent below the threshold of consciousness in less gifted men into harmonious fusion with the reasoning and expressive powers of the surface personality. Where such harmonious fusion is absent we have not genius, but madness or hysteria. It would seem, therefore, that the inborn race-inspiration of Ireland, which Sinn Fein represents, has got to be harmonised with the conclusion and demands of Irish Labour, drawn from and directed towards external environment. Failing that, Labour's efforts will lack the subliminal element of genius, and Sinn Fein be in danger of lapsing into hysteria.

The Irish race is pre-eminently intuitive, that is to say, it feels its conclusions rather than thinks them, and often proceeds direct from feeling to action, which subsequent events fully justify, though reasoned calculation would



have condemned. Its genius in this respect rests on a radical difference of psychology, a sealed book to John Bull, and to all peoples devoid of the education of untamed suffering necessary to read it.

In civilised life, as we know it, it is usual to base mental conclusions on actually observable facts or their easily predictable consequences. Practical men and nations sneer at the colouring of thought by emotion, and consider that practical thought should confine itself to hard external facts. The conflict of this outlook with the Christian teaching that the Kingdom of Heaven is within and cometh not by observation should be obvious; but to those who resent the implication that Christianity is concerned with practical affairs or that it is man's business to establish the kingdom without as well as within, it may be well to point out that the teaching of elementary psychology is equally plain. The limitation of thought to the data of external experience implies stagnation. Mere knowledge taken alone is a matter of receiving, not of initiating. Feeling makes the movement with which knowledge deals. The intellect by itself moves nothing, and the quest of reality, though it may be greatly assisted thereby, would never be undertaken by the intellect alone. Without emotion, will would be dormant and the intellect lapse into a mere calculating machine. The whole of man's environment is built up, however short it fall of the mark, at the spur of emotion in search of his happiness and well being. To deny the place of emotion, therefore, as an element in constructive thought is to cut off the stream of life from its source. Consciousness is always trying to run ahead of the data of reason as given in the past and present. The soul of Man, while it feels there is more to love and more to know, can never be satisfied by turning over all possible

rearrangements and combinations of its effort up to date. It must make a new effort, to create by its own intensity something nearer to the heart's desire, To deny the reasonableness of emotion is to give no rational sanction for the condition of progress. So much for the criticism sometimes seen in the English press that Sinn Fein is an emotion not a policy. What has already been said and what follows is an attempt to show in its true light the vast significance of Sinn Fein's function in re-introducing pure emotion as a factor in Western world-politics.

The longer dwelt on, the deeper does that significance become. It will be more fully unfolded in the political and economic sections of this paper. Before leaving the psychological, however, some aspects of national emotion as a cohesive force as well as a driving force may be noted. The individual can only trace the roots of his own tendencies in the past history of the race to which he belongs. Sinn Fein and the Gaelic League, therefore, in isolating the national spirit from foreign influences and reviving the national past, not only enhance the consciousness of each individual, but bring to bear a great combining force to weld individuals together. *Quot homines tot sententiae* may be roughly translated "as many opinions as there are minds to form them." The intellectual element can neither initiate nor spontaneously combine. This is the explanation why anti-militarists and international socialists, however clear their intellectual grasp of their tenets, succumbed and fell into line with the predatory emotions of the few in their respective countries. The binding-force of a common emotion was too weak until the opening of the great dynamo in Russia. For good or ill, not intellect but emotion is the element of agreement and combination

among men, whether their combination is that of wolves who hunt their prey, or of bees who make their honey in common.

Two great emotional forces make for this unity in Ireland, her nationality and her religion, and since they are neither of them aggressive and predatory, and both of them dependent on attraction rather than compulsion, her unity is spontaneous, and so proof against external force, and her influence is the great bulwark against the dominance of the brute combination resting on compulsion in the Western world.

In conclusion of this section: the functions of Sinn Fein and Irish Labour have been compared to the dual functions of the mind, receiving its material from the inner or sub-consciousness on the one hand and external environment on the other. Sinn Fein seeks to restore the soul, Labour to recreate the body. Will soul and body fit? Whitman's line springs to my pen. "I swear to you the body is the soul." Irish Labour is in tune with that great uncompromising movement of the world's workers, which prepares a freer body for all and each of the nations of the world. In the past the soul has assumed an air of some superiority to the body, in dogma, in untested moral dictation, in the subordination of economics to politics. But this is the day of the resurrection of the flesh, the uprising of the despised mass of humanity condemned to bodily labour and denied a self-directing soul. In freeing their bodies so shall they free the souls of themselves and all of us who were pitifully less in that we thought ourselves greater than they. Let the seekers for the soul of Ireland observe this new up-heaving body of Labour with deference, for in it lies a new world soul, and Ireland's own.

## POLITICAL

The connection between politics and economics is so close that the division between them must be one of careful definition to avoid being one of loose thinking. In treating, therefore, of the political aspect of Sinn Fein, as distinct from the economic, I propose to call politics all movements based on the tacit acceptance of the continuance of the basis of Government with which we are at present familiar. This may be described as Parliamentaryism, democratic in form, in that the opinions of the people, or a great majority of them are nominally reflected in the legislation imposed on them, or, at least, in the election of the legislators. Whether the present method is or can be democratic in substance may transpire as I proceed, and the relation of Ireland to politics, her great and growing disabilities may serve to point the distinction between "democratic" politics and economics in the sense I employ the word. If political forms, as I hold, are dissolving for lack of economic substance, observation of the process of dissolution will serve to clear the issue, and help to reveal economics as the basis of the politics of the future. It is not, of course, to be inferred that there has been no economic basis to politics as we have known them; far from it. But the instability of that basis has been the cause of the instability of the whole world-order and the terrific upheaval which it has just undergone. That things cannot resettle on the old basis would seem to be a sufficiently obvious, even respectable, opinion, for has not Mr. Lloyd George told us to look for "fundamental

reconstruction." But the principle of the new foundation, and wherein it differs from the old, is far to seek in the utterances of English politicians. Ireland's aloofness from the recent World War has certainly not been imputed to her for righteousness outside her own borders. Yet, perhaps, this aloofness may be explicable by other reasons than callous indifference to the rights of small nations other than her own. She may have felt herself planted on the new foundation which Mr. Lloyd George omits to define, and been wisely, even altruistically, anxious to conserve it for the benefit of society at large. "Fundamental reconstruction" is handicapped if all the foundations are in the melting pot together. In the general collapse of those built upon the sand, any house with even a partial foundation of rock has the more need to stand.

What, then, is the justification for the attitude expressed in the phrase: "It is not Ireland's war." When the outbreak of the war violently threw society off its balance, the sluice gates built by democracy for its own protection were destroyed, and the current of the people's force was guided into the various streams of bellicose nationalism. Despite an intellectual realisation of the seeds of World War contained in the Capitalistic system, the great majority of International Socialists succumbed at the first blast of the trumpet, and the Internationale ceased to be anything but a name. The psychological reason for this collapse has already been given, that the combining power of emotion was on the side of race and overbore the intellectual grasp of a doctrine not yet ingrained in the subconsciousness. But why did Ireland's racial emotion enable her to stand firm? In the answer to this question lies the key of the door between Anglo Irish politics and world-economics. It was not necessary for

Ireland to have so much as heard the word Socialism to have a healthy distrust of Imperialism and pierce the disguise of its blandishments. And Imperialism is at once the father and the child of Capitalism. So Ireland fought without talking for the ideals which most of the Socialists talked about while fighting for their opposite. But since this Section sets out to deal with the political significance of Sinn Fein, let us get to the point and say at once that Sinn Fein's political function can only be not only to break the political link with Westminster, but to abrogate politics on the basis with which we are familiar. And since the formation of the new basis can hardly lie with other than industrial organisation in the first place, we believe the function of Sinn Fein to be to encourage and co-ordinate such organisation. There are half a dozen insuperable reasons why Ireland's united emancipation as a nation must attend a programme world-wide and man-deep in its appeal, disintegrating from within the enemies that are invincible from without, and welding into one the separate elements of her own being in a manner that Sinn Fein alone can never achieve. Take the question of Ulster. Speaking as an Ulsterman with up-to-date knowledge of Ulster conditions, I assert that the only chance of combining the two racially distinct sections of Ireland is a programme which will make the liberation of Ireland arise automatically from the emancipation of the Irish workers. It is necessary to find something to unite the soul of Ireland, North and South, to prevent the partition of her body. National emancipation arising out of human emancipation was the ideal which worked the combination in '98, and it must be the same again. But if any are sanguine enough to believe that a population of somewhat unimaginative Scotch Protestants will embrace the ideals of Celtic nationality simply because it is Celtic, let them do so. Let us follow the recent

development of that nationality itself in its struggle for freedom, and see if any but the explanations of two Socialists, Connolly and Karl Marx, will fit the past and present facts or provide for the conquest of future obstacles. What is the position of Ireland today? To quote the Belfast Newsletter - "With regard to Ireland, the election has cleared the air. It is now an open issue between the maintenance of the Union and an Independent Irish Republic." And in the new Westminster Parliament there is now a clear majority of Unionists over every other Party. There are also, I am informed, 80,000 British troops in Ireland. Glancing abroad we find Mr. Daniels proclaiming the need of a supreme American navy, M. Clemenceau declaring himself a realist and planning that the war to end war shall in no way disturb the old game of military preparedness; not to mention the unanimous intention to make Germany pay, after an armistice signed on the basis of no annexations and no indemnities, to the tune of something approaching the total national debts of the principal allied belligerents. These facts are worth mention, as indicating that the temper of the world's present rulers and their aims are not such as depend on moral persuasion themselves, or offer rosy prospects for its success as the sole weapon of their opponents. Nevertheless, no man is more convinced than the writer that an Independent Irish Republic has got to be and will be, the present English Government's refusal, notwithstanding. But how? How was Ireland solidified into the Western bulwark against servile Imperialism? By a rising, of which the driving force was the Labour Citizen Army. How was the great Capitalistic menace of conscription defeated? By a strike of Irish Labour. I have no wish to minimise the part played by other sections of the community, but I believe I give honour where honour

is due to the class that has been and must continue to be the corner-stone of Ireland's resistance and liberation. The facts, so far, fit Connolly's theory that in the struggle for liberty of any subject nation the owning and employing class are forced by economic pressure to make terms with the oppressor with whom and whose system they become linked by a hundred golden threads of investments and the like. Thus, the onus of the struggle is thrown more and more on the working class. But what of Sinn Fein? I reply the vast majority of Sinn Fein do belong to the working class in the widest sense of the term, and that in so far as they are unable to exercise alone a force greater than aeroplanes and machine guns they will be compelled to unite with the workers who can exercise such a force or relinquish their object. Ireland has in the recent election disavowed the class that has made terms with the oppressor. Sinn Fein stands for the principle of no compromise in their stead. But assuming the disappointment of hopes in President Wilson, where shall Sinn Fein look for the accomplishment of that principle in practice? Sinn Fein must buy its Socialistic education, but any instructed Socialist could foretell that Ireland has nothing to hope from President Wilson, granting him, for the sake of argument, the best intentions in the world. Mr. Wilson is not a divine being, but the President of a Capitalistic Republic, and any League of Nations under the patronage of Capitalistic Governments can only be a league of exploiting rulers against exploited peoples, from which Ireland can expect nothing but reinforced coercion, for, to quote Connolly again, the cause of oppressed nations and oppressed classes is one and the same.



Thus it is that the really instructed International Socialist is the best and only practical Nationalist. Karl Marx declares that the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, though international in substance, must first be national in form, as the proletariat must first settle accounts with the bourgeoisie each in its own country. Lucky for Ireland, she has settled that account with the ballot box instead of the bayonet. She now is near presenting an united front against the English bourgeoisie, with their eternally irreconcilable ideas. Here a remark attributed to Jaures is apposite: *La classe ouvriere Brillanique c'est une classe bourgeoise* (The English working class is a bourgeois class), and so as long as they are fed with the crumbs of their master's exploitations, the mass of them seems likely to remain. But the crumbs will run out, and there is a small but virile minority, not the Pacifists, who are tired of crumbs already.

To return to my statement that Sinn Fein's function was transitional. The policy of abstention from Westminster is excellent as far as it goes. The question is, can it go any further in the direction of setting up any form of "Parliamentary" Government in College Green, and would it be in the line of progress if it could? I answer both in the negative. It is as little to be supposed that the British Government, as at present constituted, will hesitate to suppress by force a rival assembly in Dublin, as that the Irish people will be overawed or thwarted by that force. They will simply be driven to other means against which The force is powerless, less invitingly simple, but infinitely more stable than a Parliament on the bourgeois model. A true self-determination of a whole people cannot be achieved under the forms of Government that have heretofore passed for democracy.

Parliamentarianism, as it has been spoke, is as obsolete as a wooden plough. Democracy was the watchword with which the bourgeoisie obtained power. By the same watchword they seek to hold it. They mean by democracy that the people should vote, and work, and pay for them; their democracy is far more outraged by its concrete fulfilment as in Russia than by its abstract denial as in the old Germany. Even were Sinn Fein bourgeois in feeling or aim, as it emphatically is not, nothing but concrete democracy can possess the attractive or resisting power to realise Sinn Fein's undoubted aim of an Independent Ireland. Concrete democracy means the abolition of wage-slavery, which in Ireland, more even than in most countries, because of the numerical weakness of Labour, would be postponed, sine die, by any Parliament. The abolition of wage slavery, the workers' independence, can no more be achieved through an Irish Parliament in the first place than Irish Independence could have been achieved through an English one. The only education for liberty is liberty, taken possession of and practised. Sinn Fein intends rightly to deny the substance of English rule by refusing to pay taxes. So must the workers deny the substance of Capitalist rule by refusing to pay profits. And so far from this refusal to pay profits being a separate issue from Ireland's national independence, it is on that refusal that her united freedom must depend. The ascendancy caste in Ulster are the fortified outposts of England's rule in Ireland, and well are they rewarded for their position of honour. Ulster is the profiteer's paradise. Labour, except in Belfast, and largely even there, is almost unorganised. There are engineers in Ballymena today getting 31s a week, when the Belfast rate where this trade is organised is £3 12S. So intense has been the ignorance and bigotry, that not long since in Ballymena

Labour organisers had to get police protection back to the station after attempting to address a meeting on purely Labour matters. But this very abnormal backwardness is the very factor making for revolutionary progress. Psychology is a science as exact or more exact than physics. If water accumulates to a certain level in a reservoir and is excluded from a dammed off area it will rush in with redoubled force when the dam is removed, and the level of the water in the excluded area will rise temporarily above the remainder. The emancipation of Labour has reached a certain level in all the world except Ulster. Ulster is becoming aware of the fact slowly but surely. Her workers have not yet realised that they have dammed themselves off from the twentieth century by their concentration on damning the Pope, but, then, they have not yet fully realised the existence of the 20th century any more than the non-existence of the Pontiff of their imagination. I submit that the actuality of the former must oust from their consciousness the phantasm of the latter, that this realisation of injurious illusion must come with a sudden impetus in proportion to their distance below the level of the time spirit. Their very lack of organisation combined with the force of belated indignation, will tend to make them skip the stage of trade-union organisation for sops and assert the reality which their Protestant spirit has been perverted to obscure and deny, the self-acting freedom of each individual in the collectivity. In other words, the abolition of a wage-slave class, and the control of industry by its creators.

Ireland has a greater task than the setting up of a bourgeois democracy on the English model, for she herself is the scene of the exposure of that democracy's deep-rooted fraudulence. Under it, the gang possessing

economic and political control abrogate democracy as soon as they see their control threatened, and prepare to throw machine-gun bullets when they can no longer throw dust in the people's eyes. It should not be necessary to offer further proof of this to Irishmen. The Lame gun-running, the Curragh mutiny, the wholesale arrest of Sinn Fein leaders, and their imprisonment at this moment are proof enough.

The continuance of subject classes and nations is too necessary to bourgeois society for Governments representing that society to permit their genuinely democratic emancipation. In Ireland they have repeatedly abrogated it themselves and supported and rewarded its abrogation by their "fortified outposts." In Russia they demand and are endeavouring to enforce that the working class should withdraw from the concrete democracy they have conquered to reconquer it by abstract democratic means. The Bolsheviki are tyrants and anarchists who suppressed the constituent assembly, and Russia must be rescued for democracy, which means the restoration of Capitalistic industry and the recovery of their interest for a host of cosmopolitan fundholders. We all know the force of habit, and a social order is infinitely more tenacious of its habits than an individual. The forms of Government reflect the social habits of life. Any fundamental change in the economic order of a State must create for itself a new form of Government, and insistence on the old form is a subtle but utterly disingenuous means of smothering the new order at birth, of spoiling the new wine by pouring it into old bottles.

So much for the sacredness of constituent assemblies, called into being before a fundamental and progressive

change has had time to leaven the habits of a people and create a governmental form to express itself.

We thank, therefore, both Sinn Fein for separating Ireland from the form of Parliamentaryism which has hitherto blessed us, and the British Government for its determination to prevent us saddling ourselves with a native version of the same blessing. Between them they help us to build better than they know. They keep open the field and compel the preparation of some form of Government based on the sure foundation of contact with the actual lives of the people, and expressive of their needs. And if such Government should develop on the lines of the Russian Soviets, it will be from no unreflective imitation, but because the said Soviets are the natural means for co-ordinating the social activities of free men and supplying their common necessities.

## ECONOMIC

At the commencement of the "political" section of this paper, I defined as politics all movements based on the tacit acceptance of the continuance of the basis of politics with which we are at present familiar. Throughout the section in question I attempted to show the instability of that basis, and to indicate the subsidence on to a new foundation already in progress. But the representatives of the unstable equilibrium who did not shrink from the war are not likely to shrink from maintaining it if they can by means of the peace. A Capitalistic peace is indeed a far greater menace than a

Capitalistic war, for the latter separates its authors into hostile camps, and promotes enquiry among their victims as to the causes for which they are asked to die. Whereas the former bids fair to substitute for the unstable balance of power between Capitalistic States a League of Governments foisted by armed force on the bewildered and unrepresented peoples of the world. The discredited secret diplomacies of Europe, or such of them as have not been overthrown by revolution, band themselves together to prevent the revolution of their own States and promote counter-revolution in the others. This amiable intention is advanced to within measurable distance of realisation under a thickening screen of camouflage about brotherhood and altruism, amid the plaudits of all the Broadbents of Anglo-Saxondom on both sides the Atlantic. When an indiscreet Latin gives the show away by advocating the old militarism pure and simple, they drown his words with their hosannas and go on diverting the troops from the Eastern battleground to Russia. It is high time for Ireland to realise that the stupefied people are entrusting the old gang of their overpaid and under-controlled servants with an enormously enhanced power to enforce their will and instead of becoming infected with that stupefaction, to consider what she is going to do about it.

It is no longer with England alone that Ireland has to reckon, but with a League of Allied Nations, banded to defend and continue the Capitalistic system. Ireland must restate her national position in international terms, and she has only to think it out to be able to do so in a way which will at once integrate her nationhood and disintegrate the national and inter-national cohesion of her foes. In pointing to England as the sole enemy, Sinn Fein may be said to be right for the past, but wrong for

the future, for there are two Englands rapidly separating into hostile camps along economic lines. Ireland suffered in the past at England's hands the simplest form of economic subjection - the conquest and confiscation of her land. By the superimposition of the feudal system of land tenure on the Irish clan system of communal ownership, the land passed into the hands of the few and with it the basis of all the means of subsistence. The dispossession of the many is the first step in their enslavement, and the worldwide exploitation of Labour to day is the logical outcome of the system of private ownership and hereditary lordship of land. By victory in the Land War the Irish farmers may be said to have pulled out the roots of the feudal system, but not to have destroyed its poisonous fruits. The restoration of the land to those who work it is only the first round in the contest between Capital and Labour, and there is a danger that the winning of the first round may be a positive handicap to success in the second, if the comparative prosperity of the farmers tends to make them unite to enforce the status quo on the labourers. Here we have an example of the way in which material prosperity can militate against spiritual freedom, and it may be well to clear our minds on the subject. The spiritual life of a nation is not something apart from its material welfare.

Just the reverse. It is that form of self-expression which ensures the vital and material well being of the whole of a nation. Materialism means the assertion by a part of interests incompatible with those of the whole. From this definition we may pass to see how spiritual in the fullest sense of the word is Ireland's destiny, for her national emancipation has awaited through the centuries the dawn of the day of liberation for the whole of Europe, perhaps for the whole world. Sinn Fein points rightly to England

as the introducer of a disease foreign to Irish life. But does Sinn Fein realise that since the disease has become worldwide the cure must be worldwide, too. In Russia the disease has been diagnosed as a cancer of worldwide extension, and so far as the authority of the Bolshevik Government extends the cancer has been cut out. That authority is steadily extending till we have a leader in the Times, headed "Bolshevik Imperialism." The uprising of the workers of the world against that very Capitalism which is the underlying cause of England's stranglehold on Ireland, both for strategic and economic reasons, moves on apace. Did Sinn Fein grasp this, we believe it would look less to the President of a Capitalistic Republic and more to the principles which alone have power to dissolve Ireland's chains.

The war after the war is in full blast, and it is in very truth the war to end war by removing the tension of unstable social equilibrium in every country which is transmitted to their external relations. Abolish commercial competition, and you will thereby abolish the race of competitive armaments, which is its reflection.

Let us examine the special position of Ireland in view of the present paramount influence of the Sinn Fein Party with regard to the world class-war. The class-war is a reality which cannot be conjured away by denial or asserting, what is true, that it is morally deplorable. Its removal must attend first its recognition by the social mind and then the elimination of the perfectly definite facts which give it being. These facts in the main are three: (i) The private possession of land, factories, and raw material; (ii) the increment to private persons, directly or indirectly of the profits of what is privately



owned, in the shape of rent or interest, and (iii) the confused mind and incomplete organisation of the workers, which keeps them in subjection as wage slaves, and unable to demand and distribute for themselves among themselves their full share of the profits they create.

In most industries to-day the industrial side is sufficiently in the hands of the workers for its actual operation, to enable them, were they sufficiently awake, to assume control and run it themselves. But the industrial is only one aspect. There is also the clerical and administrative. In a country where the clerical and official classes make common cause with the industrial workers, the inauguration of production for general use as opposed to production for profit would be far easier than in a country where as, so far, in England the clerks and officials throw in their lot with the owners and employers. Given, then, that close alliance between Sinn Fein and Irish Labour, which seems obligatory in face of the common enemy, unless each wishes to be defeated in detail, the number of clerks and civil servants in Sinn Fein are a factor making for the mitigation of the class-war by throwing weight enough to win a bloodless victory on to one side. And the confusion inseparable from a purely proletarian revolution with the class of trained administrative ability in the other camp might well be avoided.

This point may be further illustrated by reference to the controversy now raging in England around the Whitley Councils. For the benefit of the uninformed, these Councils are being set up for the meeting of employers and workers round one table to discuss jointly the conditions of employment of the latter. Such questions as

hours of labour, appointment of foremen, and even introduction of machinery are covered by their terms of reference, which, however, exclude any admission of the workers' representatives to the counting-house side of the business, such as the obtaining of raw material, the making of contracts, distribution of goods, or allotment of profits. The advanced wing of English Labour is opposed to the whole Whitley scheme, holding, not without reason, that the contact of the workers' representatives with the employers on the Councils would result in the sapping of their class loyalty in exactly the same manner as has already been notorious among Trades Union officials. Men like the Shop Steward leaders argue that to accept the limitation of the Council's reference to conditions of wage-slavery is to compromise the principle of demand for full control. No doubt, the Councils will be accepted by the great body of English workers and the result, which the clear-sighted foresee will ensue, that the workers will thereby assist in riveting the chains of wage-slavery on themselves. Unless the administrative and manual sides of industry make a joint effort for control, the admission of the manual workers to a share in the regulation of their toil is calculated only to secure their consent to their own subjection.

Sinn Fein is rejecting the principle of the Whitley Councils as applied to Anglo-Irish relations. It refuses to sit around the same table at Westminster with the "bosses," and it does well. But does it realise that attached to the centre of English Government is the great part of the economic fabric of Ireland, and that the more complete the severance from England, the more pressing is the need to organise Ireland on an alternative economic base. We predict for Sinn Fein a testing by fire

of its leaders and supporters. Those that emerge true to the principle of independence will do so convinced of the need to found that independence with its roots in the soil of Ireland's emancipated and co-ordinated agriculture and industry. The soil is not yet prepared. Ireland cannot be independent while she is still dependent on English and West British capital. But for success, the success that is surely coming, Ireland's independence must rest four-square on the overthrow of Capitalism, native or foreign, co-operative production in agriculture and industry, co-ordinated distribution, and such local and central Government as will facilitate production and distribution at home and regulate exchanges abroad.

# THE MEANING OF ANARCHISM

J.R. WHITE

(1937)

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To the [Jack White](http://struggle.ws/anarchists/jackwhite.html) page  
<http://struggle.ws/anarchists/jackwhite.html>

Part of the pages of the [Workers Solidarity Movement](http://struggle.ws/wsm.html)  
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## PART I

There has been bloodshed between Anarchists and Stalinist Communists in Catalonia. Many are asking:

- (1) Is there so deep-rooted a difference of principle as to provide a philosophical basis for a physical clash?
- (2) What is the fundamental principle of Anarchism?
- (3) If the Anarchists have a definite and different philosophy, will it work in this wicked world? I propose

to contrast Anarchism with Socialism and Communism, confining my use of the word Socialism to include points where Socialists and Communists agree.

The socialists say: The State has been formed on a class basis to preserve the domination of one class by the domination of the others. To achieve liberation, therefore, we must get possession of the State. When we become masters by election or by insurrection we will abolish its *raison d'être*, which is the division of society into a possessing and an exploited class. Then the State will wither away and will give place to an economic administration of things, which will no longer have to safeguard the privileges of a minority but to minister to the needs of all. But to abolish the State one must first capture it and use it to destroy the cause which has given it birth - the inequality between the majority which produces everything and the minority which consumes a disproportionate amount of the product of the majority's labour. That is why it is all important to secure the election of as many MP's and Municipal Councillors as possible. Their installation will mean so much less to accomplish on the day of the revolution, when we shall have in the persons of our elected representatives guards within the citadel to throw open the gates to us.

To this the Anarchists reply: The State contains a corrupting influence in itself. The people have always been deceived (when they are not machine-gunned) by the revolutionaries who in their ignorance the people have hoisted to power. Consequently, to destroy the State, one must not begin by becoming, the State; for in doing so one becomes automatically its preserver. One

becomes so by force of circumstance, without conscious dishonesty, inevitably, because things appear under a different aspect and so many difficulties and duties crop up that no revolutionary turned politician can remain a single minded revolutionary. The State corrupts the purest and the best. So to keep our revolutionary virtue, we must not expose ourselves to its pernicious infection. It is not from above with the machinery of the oppressive State, that one can abolish class society. It is from below that we must wage the war against the privileged class and undermine the foundation of their privileges. *"We will expropriate them by law,"* say the Socialists. *"We can do it without you and your laws,"* reply the Anarchists. *"We know how to strip the bourgeoisie by direct action. Our direct action is a series of attacks incessantly renewed, delivered at one point today and another tomorrow; an endless sequence of major and minor crises, schooling the exploited in practical war against the exploiter and preparing them for the final crisis of the general strike. We feel no need of voting to impose masters on ourselves. We are anti-parliamentarians, abstentionists. In one thing we are faithful Marxists: Did not Marx say, "The emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves"? Well, we are workers and we will emancipate ourselves. As for you Socialists who offer to liberate us, if we listened to you we should only prepare one more disillusionment for the proletariat. For once become a Government, you would do to us who are the people just what every Government has always done."*

It would seem that the Anarchists have justification for their mistrust, not only in the lessons of history but in the nature of things. Anarcho-syndicalism applies energy at the point of production; its human solidarity is cemented

by the association of people in common production undiluted by mere groupings of opinion. Affinity of interests is more stable and more powerful than affinity of opinions. Disunity begins where differences of abstract opinion can no longer be harmonised and resolved in collective work. We cannot surrender the cause of human freedom to any combination of incongruities, to any "popular front" whose incompatible elements can guarantee nothing but the obligation to compromise. In any popular front, groups and elements are accepted whose economic interests run counter to those of the proletariat. In the people who compose it there are intellectual and moral affinities, which may disappear under pressure. It is dangerous to place people between the appeal of the conscience and reason and the appeal of these interests. These fragile affinities cannot exist in the groupings of anarcho-syndicalism; stronger than any bond of sentiment or of reason there is a bond of interest which unites them, the only stable and solid bond of unity.

The Socialists reply that Anarcho-syndicalist propaganda, just because it makes flank attacks and raids on Capitalism, because its primary object is the defence of local and regional interests, is inadequate to make conscious revolutionaries. Anarcho-syndicalism is good for guerrilla but unsuited to serious organised warfare. Its efforts must automatically be lacking in concentration. Co-ordination and centralisation of effort can be the work only of a Party whose horizon is not limited to a town or an industry but embraces all the complex factors of a national or international situation. In our common interest of the revolution, Socialist and Anarcho-syndicalist action must combine.

The Anarchists answer the Socialists: *"Where is your logic? You assert that in the society which you intend to build, economic groupings will be the only ones and public authority will be limited to the necessary administration to ensure the production and distribution of objects necessary to people's existence. Why then wait for the revolution to give to economic groupings their vital creative function? Let them take the importance today they will have tomorrow. You admit the State is the effect of class exploitation and its function is to maintain it. We prefer to attack the cause. Leave the workers to fight their own battle on their own ground. Don't ask them to idle themselves with political masters, who the day after they conquer state power will want, like all conquerors, to remain the masters. Between employer and worker there is a brutal vis-à-vis. Against the tremendous power of the State one must stoop to tactics; sometimes one has to combine these tactics with those of other Parties. The proletariat finds it hard to follow these long range operations, or it gets concerned with their detail, missing their whole scope: thus it risks contradicting a political habit of mind, which slowly atrophies the revolutionary spirit. The working class, economically organised, is sufficient unto itself, it needs only to be conscious of its power; electoral and parliamentary combinations can only delay the day of self-realisation."*

Steklov, in his history of the First international, speaks of the split in it as caused by the past of the international proletariat rising in revolt against its future. He means by this that Bakunin and the Anarchists thought it was possible to jump straight from the decay of feudal aristocracy, which from 1848 began definitely to



collapse in favour of bourgeois industrialism, to the proletarian revolution.

*"The broad masses of the workers,"* says Steklov, *"for the time led astray by Bakunin, returned to the broad river of International Socialism."* Dare we reply that the broad river of revolutionary destiny, for a time mapped correctly by Marx over a stage of its course, shows signs of reverting to a deeper bed charted by the genius of Bakunin.

Marx was, "par excellence", the prophet of the industrial proletariat; any developments depending solely on that proletariat had to await its growth and class conscious solidarity; and that growth and solidarity had to await in turn the maturity, not to say the overripe bursting, of the bourgeois order. This patient dependence on ripening external conditions gives to Marxism an element of fatalism in sharp contrast with the unconditioned spontaneity of Anarchism.

*"Anarchism does not wait. It acts in the individual and in small groups to build up social forms, which shall be, as near as possible, embryos of the fully developed Anarchist society."*

*"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,"* and any philosophy of action preaching present revolt as the best preparation for future revolution on a wide scale starts with an appeal to the fighter and people of action rather than the theoretician, which is psychologically sound. To the seer the Kingdom of Heaven is always at hand, and its proximity calls for immediate preparation. And though the seers are generally wrong in their time

forecast, they are often more right than the scientist about the fundamentals of cataclysmic change.

Bakunin was a seer, Marx was a Scientist. Bakunin was greatly influenced by the just and elemental protests of the peasants ruined by dawning Capitalism, and he believed he could enlist the revolting bourgeois intellectuals in the service of complete social liquidation. He was wrong as to the time. But Marx was wrong in his scientific belief that revolution would spread automatically out of the most highly industrialised countries. The revolt not of Germany or France but of Ireland and Russia during the Great War is one up for Bakunin's rapport with elemental human and one down for Marx's analysis of the scientifically conditioned mass.

*"What!" I hear someone exclaim. "You place the Irish National Rebellion on a par with the Russian proletarian revolution and use both to discredit the accuracy of Marxian analysis! What heresy run to insanity is this?"*

Just a minute, friend; I am pleading for two things: spontaneous voluntarism versus scientific social conditioning, and the elemental vitality retained by a peasantry, as indispensable features in revolution. I am suggesting that though the industrial proletariat has the strongest incentive to make the revolution, they are too mechanised and lack the vital force ever to do so unaided, and that therefore a social science based on industrial economics alone as the determining factor is inevitably misleading. Do the facts support me or do they not? Has successful revolution ever been achieved in a highly industrialised country? It has not. If we analyse the factors in the most recent revolutions we are

familiar with, those of Ireland, Russia and Spain, in conjunction with the frustration of revolution in highly industrialised countries, we may have to conclude it is something deeper than bad tactics and treacherous leadership which has thrown out our calculations.

Perhaps the Marxians and even Marx have omitted elemental and human factors, which can express and manifest themselves better through the vehicle of Anarchism. I am not saying Marx was wrong. Obviously he was very largely right. I am suggesting that he did not say the last word about the individual and collective "unconscious" when he interpreted so scientifically the consciousness of the industrial worker.

If we compare the Irish and Russian revolutions, the former has two advantages over the more exclusively proletarian nature of the latter. It preceded it in time, the Dublin rising of 1916 antedating even the Kerensky Revolution by about a year, and it is surpassed in its voluntarism. It was essentially an insurrection of a conscious and voluntary minority forestalling and creating mass conditions rather than await their ripening. If Nationalism has any function in paving the way for International Revolution, Ireland showed that function at its best. In Ireland, Republican Nationalism combined with Irish International Socialism (Connolly and the Citizen Army) against the common Imperial enemy, and in so doing made the only repudiation of the Great War in Western Europe long before the chaos and social military breakdown caused by the war compelled that repudiation, as in Russia, and later to some extent in Germany.

This voluntarism, scorning to calculate consequences and creative of new mass conditions, is the essence of Anarchism with its distrust of majorities and "l'illusion majoritaire" and its respect of spiritual quality rather than numerical quantity. The Anarchist recognises, implicitly if not explicitly, that there are two reasons, one emotional and creative, arising from inner spontaneity, the other "rational" and dead because its premises are in the past or present status quo and it is therefore reduced to calculate consequences in terms of the past or present status quo rather than create new forms.

The State worship of Communist and Socialism has its source in the failure to lay enough stress on the inner spontaneity of people, and a consequent enslavement to outer externalised forms, such as the State as the source and key to power. The people's only road to real freedom lies in the voluntary co-ordination of their maximum individual spontaneity. All social panaceas that seek to supersede that co-ordinated spontaneity, even as a means to the alleged end of restoring it, must lead not to freedom but to the loss of such freedom as the people have achieved and to increasing depths of tyranny.

## PART II

Having brought the Anarchism v. Socialism argument, with which this article opened, to its psychological and philosophical head, let us apply it to recent history in Spain, recent history still pregnant with problems of world-shaking importance.

If people's inner spontaneity is a factor of importance in revolution, increasing in direct ratio with the mechanical perfection and international consolidation of the forces of Fascist repression, are we not apt to overlook the surprises in the unknown destiny of people in our scientific forecasts of the mechanical destination of society? May not our oversight damage our insight into unexpected factors in revolutionary development? We must not divorce the spiritual qualities of a people from our scientific assessment of their place in economic evolution. Almost we might say that if human spontaneity has to become more dynamic and intense to triumph over intensified and universalised reaction, each succeeding revolution must be more Anarchist in its principle and practice than the last. Socialistic centralisation would thus become counter-revolutionary in effect and have latent affinity with counter-revolutionary forces, no matter how revolutionary its slogans or even its intentions.

Now Spain is deeply impregnated with the psychology, the principle and the practice of Anarchism. It would, I think, be false to insulate this principle and practice of Anarchism from the Spanish racial characteristic of human dignity. The sense of human dignity seems to be consubstantial with every Spaniard and undoubtedly it inspires the Anarchist goal of general freedom and solidarity and the educational voluntary associative methods leading towards it. The situation in Spain today compels us to ask the question: What is the surest guarantee against the triumph of Fascism? Is it the Anarchist psychology and tradition of the Spanish people expressing itself in its own Anarcho-Syndicalist forms or is it centralised State Socialism imposed, or alleged to be imposed, in the interests of maximum military efficiency

and the maximum efficiency of production to feed the fighting fronts? May not this efficiency be too dearly bought, if it is bought at the price of damping the revolutionary enthusiasm of the Spanish people and splitting their revolutionary unity even in the interests of a unified command? One might even add with trepidation a further question: Whither is this State centralisation in the interests of Spanish "democracy" leading? We are assured it is aimed at, and will lead to the speedy defeat of Franco, Have not the Second and Third Internationals agreed to meet to further that most desirable object? So, I note, have the Ambassadors of the capitalist Powers already met and conferred with the Valencia Government. Let us hope they have agreed to co-operate in the speedy defeat of Franco. That, however, is uncertain. One thing is certain. Anarchist leaders have been displaced, imprisoned, murdered, groups of Anarchists have been massacred by Socialist-Communists and the Anarchist idea of revolution, collectivisation of industry and as far as possible the agricultural village-communities, is being stopped and undone. The Anarchists had defeated not only Franco in Catalonia but had superseded the economic order, which Franco is fighting to save and restore. Now the Socialist-Communists are saving and restoring it instead, not for him, of course, but to speed up his defeat. Meanwhile large sections of the Spanish people have misunderstood; things were too puzzling.

When they saw their workers' military and economic committees dissolved, their workers' militia abolished, themselves disarmed and finally the telephone building which they had won by repeated attack from the Fascists in July, forcibly seized from their syndicate by the Govt assault guards, they came out on the streets and erected

barricades. They thought their revolution was being destroyed instead of saved. Their misunderstanding was increased by the arrival of French and British warships in Barcelona and the landing of French marines, while the open allies of Franco, the Germans and Italians, continued to blockade them outside the three mile limit. The strange coincidence of the arrival of the French and British warships just at the moment when the workers came out on the streets to save a revolution they believed to be threatened, has been mixed up in their simple proletarian minds with the previous fact that the French and British had been blockading them all along under cover of a non-intervention pact and that the Valencia Government sent troops and threatened to send more to suppress what they thought was the defence of their revolution.

These simple people have been called "uncontrollables." In point of fact they were very easily controlled and went back to their work after six days of almost entirely defensive fighting. One can only hope they will not regret their docility.

I note that the epithet "uncontrollable" is reserved for my Anarchist comrades. Their fellow criminals in the joint misunderstanding are mostly "Trotskyites." A "Trotskyite", so far as I understand the term is someone who thinks Marx meant what he said when he spoke of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the transition period from Capitalism to Communism. Mr. Emile Burns, in his book *Communism, Capitalism, and the Transition*, has put the matter in a nutshell, not only as regards what should happen in theory but what did actually happen in the Russian Revolution. He might have been writing of the revolution that the simple

Spanish "Trotskyites" thought they were defending. *"All executive positions,"* writes Mr. Burns, *" which had formerly been filled by appointment from above had to be made elective and the elected persons had to be subject to recall at any moment by the bodies that elected them; therefore from the first day of the revolution the command of armed forces was taken over by elected deputies; the factory workers were armed and fought all the most vital battles; the officials in State Departments were replaced by workers; the managers in the factories were replaced or controlled by councils of workers; the existing Law Courts were abolished and Workers' Courts with elected judges took their place; wherever Soviet order was established, elected workers' Committees took the place of appointed officials."*

Now that is precisely the kind of order that the Spanish "Trotskyites", in common with other Spanish "uncontrollables", thought they were fighting to preserve and maintain from May 2nd to 7th in Barcelona.

But I would hate to be thought a "Trotskyite", for I remember it was Trotsky who helped to smash all that sort of thing at Kronstadt. So I must perforce be an "uncontrollable."

What is the difference between a "Trotskyite" and an "uncontrollable"? I expect I am simple, too, but I will give the only definition my simplicity can rise to. A Trotskyite is a Marxist who has stuck to Marx, who believes for instance, that it is their converging or conflicting economic interests which will determine sooner or later - perhaps sooner, alas! - whether the Capitalist "democracies" will or will not help the Spanish people, led by the present Valencia Government, to



defeat Franco and the relics of the clerical aristocratic order, which he seeks to preserve.

Not being a Marxist, I offer no opinion.

And an "uncontrollable" is an Anarchist who has stuck to Anarchy and who is not, therefore, primarily concerned with the shades or strata of Capitalism, but with revolution by direct action; who believes with Marx indeed that emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves, but with Bakunin, Kropotkin and Maletesta, that free humanity must be substituted for the State, and that when Anarchists take part in a Government, they allow themselves to be deflected from their proper task and become corrupted by association with an instrument of tyranny. The first false step in Spain was the association of Anarchist leaders with the Government and the State. Had they given all their energies to co-ordination and unified command of CNT Collectives and Anarchist military units, instead of sacrificing Anarchist principles and control to compromises with a Government, the uncontrollables would have remained in control of themselves and ready for co-ordinated action with other sections instead of being sacrificed to a State dictatorship through a political party.

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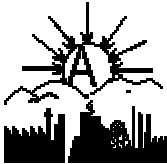
# ANARCHISM - A PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION

CAPTAIN J.R.WHITE'S VIEW

[From Spain And The World, February 5th, 1937]

To the [Jack White](http://struggle.ws/anarchists/jackwhite.html) page

Part of the pages of the [Workers Solidarity Movement](http://struggle.ws/wsm.html)



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The following is the speech made by Captain White at the Meeting held at Conway Hall, January 18th under the auspices of the London Committee of the CNT-FAI. We believe it should be of interest to readers as it is written by a man who though not an Anarchist, feels that there is something in that philosophy which attracts. We suggest that the attraction is due to the fact that Anarchism is based on human justice, Freedom and Equality; necessary conditions if are to live as human beings and not as inanimate objects - Editor

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Our comrade, Emma Goldman, is an anarchist and I should like to give a word of explanation why I stand beside her on this platform. I want to sketch in what, as I understand it - and my knowledge of theoretic anarchism is as yet very small - is a fundamental of anarchist philosophy. I believe, then, I am right in saying anarchism is a philosophy of action, because it is pre-eminently the philosophy of individual spontaneity. Every free and spontaneous individual knows that it would be highly desirable and convenient if knowledge could always precede action, and we could advance rationally step by step to a foreseen goal; life, and especially the deeper aspects of life, will not permit this; in the deepest crises and conflict of life, whether individual or social, action has to precede knowledge, and if we wait too long to calculate results and fail to obey our emotional impulses to stand for what is right, or resist intolerable wrong, regardless of consequences, we miss the psychological moment; somehow we are devitalised by our own prudence, and we are left to face wrong, more deeply entrenched by our inaction, with less "elan vital" in our ourselves to give us assurance of future victory. Reason, or rather the passive attempt to calculate consequences without creatively contributing to them by the magic of the deed, has betrayed us. The highest reason is incarnate in action and often cannot explain itself till after the actions. Reason is latent in the pent-up emotion that drives to action. It is emotional reason, creative reason; the other kind of reason is dead.

At moments of revolution, the higher emotional reason is especially necessary, because it breaks through the old forms which are the premises of the dead reason; it creates new forms, which have their seed primarily not in the mind but in the heart of man. He may not be able

to foresee or define the new forms; but he knows the old forms are dead and will destroy his heart and spirit unless he bursts through them.

### NON-INTERVENTION A VERBAL SCREEN

Nothing has been sadder to watch for the past five or six years than the way in which fascism has gained victory after victory by acting from its evil heart, while socialists and democrats reasoned and talked; in Germany and Austria. Fascism waited its moment and struck, quite regardless of the pathetic faith of its opponents in the compelling rightness of democratic theories. In the international parleys about Spain, talk of non-intervention has been nothing but a verbal screen for armed fascist intervention on an even larger scale.

We have to look to the internal struggle in Spain for the first real meeting of fascist action by revolutionary action, first in the magnificent struggle of the Asturian miners, so ruthlessly suppressed, and later on the July 19th of last year in the historic defeat of the fascist coup by the workers of Barcelona. At last the philosophy of action of the fascists had met a revolutionary philosophy of action strong and direct enough to master it. In one day fascism was conquered in Barcelona. Machine guns and batteries of artillery were taken by the invincible rush of the people dependent for the most part on nothing but their bare hands with about one rifle per 40 men. The guns were turned against the barracks, their walls were breached and their stores of arms captured while the rank and file of the troops joined the people. In three days fascism was liquidated in Catalonia.

In addressing an audience like this to make known the work of the CNT-FAI, it is a little difficult to put one's finger on points whether of theory or practice, which differentiate the Anarcho-Syndicalism or Libertarian Communism of Spain from, say, the more highly centralised system of Russian Communism. I have not the knowledge to descant on the points of theoretic difference, and, if I had it might be inadvisable to do so.

It might, however, be interesting to trace the historical foundations of anarchism in Spain and to indicate the roots of anarchist divergence from the brand of communism with which we are more familiar in this country. Mr John Stacey writing in the Left Book Club News of the working class movement of 1860 says, *"it is a pity that into the new born movement of that date had strayed the brilliant, erratic, disastrous Russian aristocrat, Michael Bakunin. He became far more influential in Spain than the Marxists. He split the International and set a great section of the Spanish working class movement in the rigid anarchist mould."* Whether Mr. Stacey is right in speaking of the anarchist movement as "Rigid," we will investigate later. I can only say that if I agreed with him I should be on this platform now.

## OUT TO ORGANISE A NEW SPAIN

I want, if I can, to give you some notion of the respective characteristics of the authoritarian and libertarian groups in Spain, not in any spirit of invidious comparison, but to illustrate as far as possible the difference of outlook and temperament. Sir Peter Chalmers-Mitchell, writing in the

Times of his experience in Malaga in the early days of Franco's rebellion, mentions two points in comparing the UGT and the CNT-FAI which are, I think, characteristic. Both, he says, organised Militias, but the former tried to attract recruits by promising them permanent service in the Standing Army afterwards, while the latter were bitterly opposed to all Standing Armies, and even their leaders refused to accept Commissions.

In their attitude to economics, he adds the former tended to concentrate on raising wages at the expense of capital, while the latter were out to organise a new Spain based on creative work.

Many impartial observers have spoken of the self-imposed discipline in the factories taken over and controlled by the workers, and realised that underlying this voluntarily discipline was great enthusiasm and revolutionary faith; hence the impression of dignity emanating from the workers.

While no doubt the voluntary discipline and the enthusiasm that begets it is not confined to the CNT-FAI, it is unquestionable that the policy of the Industrial Revolution simultaneous with the anti-fascist fight is the anarchist policy carried into practice in spite of the opposition of the P.S.U.C.

As to the dignity emanating from the workers, I saw enough with my own eyes while in Spain to verify the proof of the reports I have quoted. I found Barcelona, a clean, well run, orderly city, with trams and trains running to the minute, restaurants and cinemas open, and all run as collectivised institutions by their courteous and efficient staffs. Never before had I met waiters and even

shoe-blacks consistently refusing tips, so great is the self respect engendered in the workers by their new status of the collectivised owners of the industries they control.

We are then bound in justice to give to Anarcho-Syndicalism and the CNT-FAI the credit which is their due for the magnificent creative work which results from their philosophy, individual and social.

Of all the Spanish workers, well may we say, with Langdon Davies, *"We turn in humility to the humble fold of Spain, Republican, Socialists, Communists, Syndicalists, Anarchists, who are groping in horror with their bare hands to save the Light from flickering out. We turn in anger to those in England who want the Light to die and we cry in words to which Spain is giving a new meaning: 'No Pasaran.' 'They Shall No Pass.'"*

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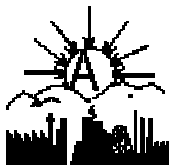
**THE CHURCH: FASCISM'S ALLY**  
**AN INTERPRETATION OF**  
**CHRISTIANITY**

BY CAPT. J.R. WHITE

Source : Spain And The World, March 5th 1937,  
courtesy of the Kate Sharply Library.

To the [Jack White](http://struggle.ws/anarchists/jackwhite.html) page  
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I should like to discuss this subject from the standpoint of a Christian Anarchist, which, if I am to have a label at all &ndash; and I hate all labels &ndash; is the nearest label to fit me. From that standpoint I define my conception of Christianity as perfect Freedom, which coincides with my conception of Anarchy. In my opinion there are two conceptions of spirituality: the one that only in the fullest attainment and expression of his freedom can man attain to the spiritual life, individual and social. And the other that he must seek the high goal

of his spirit not by self-expression and freedom, but by self-repression and obedience to external authority.

I believe the first conception to be that of Christ, and the Gospels read with any intelligence, and the second to be so foreign to the whole spirit of Christ that it is not only un-Christian, but positively anti-Christian. It follows that any Church which bases itself on the second, that of obedience to the external authority and denial of the individual's right to experiment and judge for himself, above all in those realms of faith and morals where his own soul must find its own unique path, is not, in my opinion, a Christian Church, even though it arrogantly claims the monopoly of Christian inspiration.

### SUBORDINATING INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

From this standpoint I could have foretold the association of the Roman Catholic Church with Fascism, not only in Spain, but everywhere else, on philosophical grounds, because that Church and Fascism have the same fundamental philosophy of subordinating individual freedom to the totality of Church and State.

For the present, however, I must stick to the subject and cannot do better than by examining a controversy between a Cardinal Archbishop of the Spanish Church, Cardinal Goma, and Senor Aguirre, leader of the Basque Catholic Nationalists, who support the people's cause in Spain. This controversy brings out clearly the conflict between the Pope and almost the entire Hierarchy and controlled Press of the Catholic Church and the small but honourable number of Catholic priests and laymen, who

have dared to follow their conscience against the overwhelming weight of their Church's authority. It is a conflict not only of ideas, but also of facts, and I hope to show that the Cardinal cannot defend his perversion of ideas without a direct and complete falsification of the facts.

Senor Aguirre writes to the Cardinal:

"The war has arisen between an egoistic Capitalism, which has abused its powers, and a deep feeling for social justice. It is not a war of religion."

Now you will see at once that in an argument whether, the Spanish struggle is or is not a war of religion, some definition of what is meant by religion is necessary, and my preamble about two different and irreconcilable conceptions of religion, namely, of, freedom and authority, were not out of place.

"I do not believe that there are a dozen men who have taken up arms; to defend their property or to defend themselves from the persecution of those who hold or administer property.

I admit social injustice is one of the remote causes of the struggle, but I

categorically deny that this is a class war. A pretext is not a real cause, and the championship of the working classes has been only a pretext for this war."

The full insolence of the Cardinal's inversion of the facts lies in the last sentence, for it implies that on the sham pretext of labour demands for social justice, the Spanish people took up arms and started a war. Now let us have the truth, which the Cardinal inverts, in the words of Father Lopo, one of the few priests who have been faithful to their people.

"When the people were roused to demand their rights, when they asked for the universally claimed transformation of the land-owning System; when they asked for access to the great heartless machine of industry to humanise labour there - when we stopped our ears; we gave them a few crumbs in the name of charity and refused to envisage the solutions which reason and justice forced on every Christian conscience;

And there appeared immediately in the midst of the conflict a word lacking all meaning and reason for those who were to use it as a terrible weapon of attack. There appeared the word 'Order'; they talked of the established order and fortifying

themselves against the workers, they called them with infinite scorn, 'enemies of order.'

'Let everything go on as it was', was the supreme aspiration of those who were comfortably placed in life, who: were little if at all perturbed by the Existence of the disinherited; yes, disinherited, a term and a conception which fill the mind with horror, so clearly do they speak of fratricidal and anti-Christian cruelty."

I am reminded of Francis Adam's lines:

*Sometimes the heart and brain  
Would be still and forget  
Man, woman and children  
Dragged down the pit  
But when I hear them declaiming  
Of Liberty, Order and Law,  
The husk-hearted gentleman  
And the mud-souled bourgeois  
A sombre, hateful desire  
Creeps up slow in the breasts  
To wreck the great guilty temple,  
And give us rest.*

"The great guilty temple," there is the position in a nutshell. Guilty priests of that guilty temple who refused

to envisage, who from atrophy of soul and mind were, I believe, incapable of envisaging, the solution which reason and justice forced on every Christian conscience.

### WOLVES IN SHEEPS' CLOTHING

But when the disinherited, claimed their human inheritance, they were not allowed to claim it legally and peacefully, as they sought to do. They were attacked by their disinheritors. They had to fight to defend more than their property they had not secured: they had to defend their liberty and their lives from the Fascist wolves, led on by the viler wolves in sheeps' clothing: the guilty priests.

Not a dozen men, says the Cardinal, took up arms to defend themselves from the persecution of those who hold and administer property. We answer him, "Foul bloated blasphemer! The whole Spanish people took up arms to defend themselves against the treacherous, rebellious attack of those who held and administered property and cared little, if at all, for those they had disinherited.

"They took up arms," do I say? They took up sticks, they took up stones, they fought with their bare hands for they had no arms to take. And in the sacred passion of the right for which they fought, and the burning determination not to be robbed once more by the treacherous violence of the inheritance, of which they had been robbed for centuries, now almost within their grasp, they wrested the arms from the hands of their persecutors and created a great people's army.

## AND THEN WHAT?

The bullies and thieves could not depend on their own, conscript army to shoot down their; brothers. They imported more and more infidel Moors to massacre their own countrymen in the name of the most high God.

But the Moors were not enough. They had to pawn their country to foreign butchers, till whole army corps of Germans and Italians came to help the holy 'massacre.

I pray to the God of Justice, whom I believe can never be mocked in the end, that the peoples of the whole world will rise at last to take just vengeance on the spiritual criminals, who in frightful blasphemy pervert religion and encourage, the slaughter of the poor and humble, whom it is their duty to defend.

# WHERE CASEMENT WOULD HAVE STOOD TODAY

BY CAPTAIN J. R. WHITE

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Being the substance of an address delivered to the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club on the 20th Anniversary of Casement's death

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To the [Jack White](http://struggle.ws/anarchists/jackwhite.html) page

Part of the pages of the [Workers Solidarity Movement](http://struggle.ws/wsm.html)



When Mr. Fowler was kind enough to invite me to give this address he described it as the Casement Commemoration panegyric.

I accepted with pride, because I knew Roger Casement, not perhaps intimately but with streaks of intimacy, when we travelled together and stayed in the same hotels during the formation and inspection of the first Irish volunteers or listened to Cathal O'Byrne's Antrim ballads in the house of F J Bigger at Belfast.



Yet it is not my intention to deliver a panegyric. I believe that no man alive or dead can be truth fully portrayed by a panegyric, which I take to mean a pæan of undiluted praise, and I have the strongest and deepest objection to the all too common Irish habit of breaking a man's heart by misunderstanding while he is alive and canonising him as soon as he is dead. I might almost say, because he is dead.

I think it is a finer tribute to Casement to treat him as what he was, a great and typically Irish human figure, an Irishman who took the leading part which he did take in the birth of the new Ireland because all through his life, he was being spiritually reborn as an Irishman himself from the physical womb, so to speak, of his English and Imperial connections.

That is why he felt so acutely the depth of the conflict between Britain and Ireland, because the conflict was not only outside him but inside himself. This is an aspect of Roger Casement's war-torn life, which I believe I understand because I share it. I too have been reborn not of the flesh but from the potent magic of the Irish spirit, nowhere stronger than on Ulster soil, from an Englishman, or an Ulster planter, into an Irishman, and I know that the rebirth entails no light pangs of labour. Casement describes this travail of soul in himself very movingly in a letter to Mrs. J. R. Green, dated 20th April 1906. He writes *"If things go as I wish I shall be back in Africa before long. It is a mistake for an Irishman to mix himself up with the English. He is bound to do one of two things-either to go to the wall if he remains Irish or to become an Englishman himself. You see I very nearly did become one once. At the Boer War time, I had been away from Ireland for years, out of touch with everything*

*native to my heart and mind, trying hard to do my duty, and every fresh act of duty made me appreciably nearer the ideal of the Englishman. I had accepted Imperialism. British rule was to be accepted at all costs, because it was the best for everyone under the sun, and those who opposed that extension ought rightly to be 'smashed.' I was on the high road to being a regular Imperialist jingo-although at heart underneath all, and unsuspected almost by myself, I had remained an Irishman. Well, the war, [i.e., the Boer War] gave me qualms at the end- the concentration camps bigger ones-and finally, when up in those lonely Congo forests where I found Leopold" -he refers, of course, to King Leopold's crimes against the black workers in the Congo rubber plantations- "I found also myself, the incorrigible Irishman."*

Now what does Roger Casement, up against the horrors of man's inhumanity to man which he witnessed in the Belgian Congo, mean by finding himself an "*incorrigible Irishman.*"

Surely he means an incorrigible hater of tyranny, an incorrigible lover of freedom and human brotherhood, and that at any time or age means an incorrigible rebel translated into modern language and conditions, up against the inhuman and would-be international tyranny of Fascism, it is not far from meaning an incorrigible Socialist, for as freedom broadens down from precedent to precedent so do the enemies of freedom close their hellish ranks to deny and defeat it. Can there be any doubt where Roger Casement would have stood to-day in the great fight between tyranny and human freedom and equality in which he stood so manfully in his own day for the oppressed negroes of the Congo, and the freedom and dignity among the nations of his own

oppressed and subjugated Ireland. The causes of oppressed nations and oppressed classes were then two causes, and Casement stood for them separately, as it were, in separate compartments. But another Irishman, James Connolly, saw their essential unity. "*The cause of oppressed nations and oppressed classes,*" said Connolly, "*is one and the same.*" Now in international Fascism, aggression against free nations, and oppression and exploitation of the working class have joined in one evil whole, for all to see. I ask you what would Roger Casement, who fought for the tortured and exploited Congo negroes, have thought of the crime against the independence of Abyssinna and the crushing by poison-gas of that gallant resistance of her badly-equipped people? What would Roger Casement have thought, and where would he have stood in the inevitable sequel, when the League of Nations failed to check, and ultimately condoned, this hideous crime, and international Fascism felt itself strong enough to make its insolent attack on the freely elected democratic government of Spain? Would he have stood on the side of Monarchist generals and cosmopolitan millionaires trying to stamp out freedom by the aid of infidel Moorish mercenaries? Or would he have stood with Connolly for the freedom of Spain, through the freedom and rise of status of its working class, as Connolly stood for the freedom of Ireland through the freedom of every Irish man and woman? There can be no doubt in any sane mind of the answer to that question, and it is fitting that we, met here as we are to honour Roger Casement's memory, should pay him living honour by our living contribution by continuing the cause for which he lived and died, rather than here dead lip-service.

*"In those lonely Congo forests where I found Leopold, I also found myself - the incorrigible Irishman."* But — someone may ask — are not many Englishmen and members of all nations lovers of freedom and fighters against tyranny? Undoubtedly they are, yet I think we have only to look at recent history, and to investigate a peculiar quality of Irish psychology at its best, to see that the Irish have some claim to supremacy as incorrigible rebels.

An Englishman may see tyranny and hate it, with his whole soul, but a certain discretion of mind remains in control of his soul and often limits his action against the tyranny within limits of prudence, not perhaps for any base motive of self-interest, or fear of the consequences to himself, so much as from unwillingness to put himself in the limelight and face the publicity inseparable from the exposure.

There is in the best type of Irishman—and Casement had it in supreme degree—a certain noble romanticism, a sense of the drama of the fight of good against evil, which supports him with a sense of the dramatic even if he stands single-handed against the world. The English with their truly wonderful team spirit and their fear of singularity or eccentricity, cannot understand it, and regard it as vanity, as in smaller types it undoubtedly is, and often vanity of a most disruptive and destructive nature. Perhaps there is no greater curse in Ireland than your 'half-smart man,' with more intelligence and individuality perhaps than the average team-disciplined English-man, but not enough to give him real vision. This quality then in smaller types makes them "too big to be used and too small to be useful," but in a man of Casement's calibre it lifts him above himself, and for a

great cause makes him careless of himself and his own safety, while positively enjoying the highest expression of his own spiritual being. He becomes identified with his idea and enjoys something of the bliss of union with something greater than himself, which the Saints enjoy in time Beatific Vision. I shall have something to say later on about Casement's death-I was within 50 yards of him in the Pentonville Hospital when he was hanged-and the strong sense I got then that this sense of something greater, this ecstasy or standing outside himself, supported Casement in death. For the moment I want to stress this peculiar Irish quality of which I think he was an outstanding example, this sense of his own drama in taking his destined part in a great world-drama. I don't think the English ever understand it and we don't always understand it ourselves. In small men it may sink to love of the lime-light; but in great men I think it may rise to what Christ meant when he told us not to hide our light under a bushel but to set it on a candlestick. And even the gallows proved nothing but a noble candlestick for Roger Casement.

I am going to return again and again, as to what I believe is called the "leit motif" running through a musical theme, to those words of Casement's, *"In those lonely Congo forests where I found Leopold, I found also myself, the incorrigible Irishman,"* and I am going to do so with a purpose which you will see before I have finished, a purpose which will call upon you Irishmen gathered here to-night, you Irishmen whose lives and work are cast for the present in England, to honour Casement's memory in the most loyal and living way that is possible, namely, by continuing Casement's work.

What was it that Casement found in those Congo forests? To quote from the recent life of Casement written by Mr. Geoffrey Parmiter: "The volume of reports concerning the horrible conditions on the Congo was such, and public opinion in England was so inflamed that on 8th August, 1903, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, sent a circular despatch to the English representatives accredited to the Governments who were parties to the Act of Berlin, for communication to those Governments. This despatch stated that the attention of the Government had been repeatedly called to the conditions existing in the Independent State of the Congo, both as regards the ill treatment of natives and the existence of trade monopolies. A distinction was drawn between isolated acts of cruelty committed by individuals and a system of administration which involved systematic cruelty and oppression. It was pointed out that it had been proved in the local courts that many acts of cruelty had been committed, but in view of the conditions it was fair to assume that the actual number of cases of cruelty far exceeded the number of convictions obtained.

The reply of the Government of the Independent State of the Congo was couched in a tone of sarcastic impudence and its reference to the lack of adequate evidence in support of the charges made, left Lord Lansdowne in no doubt as to what he should do.

Roger Casement was already in the Congo before the receipt of the Belgian reply; he had been sent there by Lord Lansdowne to investigate conditions and report on them as soon as possible. I can only give short extracts indicating the appalling conditions which he found.

"While at Bohobo Casement heard that a large influx from the I..... district had taken place into the country behind G..... and thither he at once repaired, a distance of some 20 miles. He found that these people had fled from the white man and taken up their abode with their friends. 'They went on to declare,' writes Casement, 'when asked why they had fled, that they had endured such ill-treatment at the hands of the Government officials and the Government soldiers in their own country that life had become intolerable, and that nothing remained for them at home hut to be killed for failure to bring in a certain amount of rubber, or to die from starvation or exposure in their attempts to satisfy the demands made upon them. 'The statements made to me by these people were of such a nature that I could not believe them to be true. The fact remained, however, that they had certainly abandoned their homes and all that they possessed, had travelled a long distance, and now pre-ferred a species of mild servitude among the KÉÉ. to remaining in their own country!' He found these unfortunate refugees, industrious and peaceable folk, engaged in various trades. Casement, followed by his bull-dog, entered one of the blacksmith's sheds in which were working ten women, six men, and five lads and girls, and sat down, when five men came over to speak to him. He asked them why they had left their homes, and sitting there in that rude hut, carefully and patiently he took notes of their answers, repeatedly asking for certain parts to be gone over again. They all gave as a reason for leaving their homes that it was the rubber tax levied by the Government posts. They were referring to the system which was prevalent, whereby the natives were forced to bring in certain definite quantities of rubber a week. The rubber was not paid for, neither was the labour of collecting it, and if the natives failed to bring in their

quota they were severely punished. No effort was made on the part of the authorities to conserve the rubber supply, with the consequence that the rubber gathering labours of the natives became increasingly more difficult and burdensome. When Casement asked them if they would like to return home, they said that they loved their country, but they dared not return home. At another group of houses, an old chief gave him further details of the iniquities practised by the white men, the Belgian administrators.

"He told Casement that the natives were sent out to get rubber, and, if they returned with an insufficient amount, a European officer would stand them in lines one behind the other and shoot them all with one bullet. This took place actually in the stations of the Europeans, and more often than not was done by white men. In all the stations round about, Casement gathered further evidence of the abominable conditions in which the natives were forced to live and work, and his soul must have revolted within him. But in the later part of his journey he came across things more unspeakable than anything of which hitherto he had knowledge. That his experiences during his Congo journey had a profound effect on him, we are well aware from his diaries and letters to his friends, but we can only vaguely guess what this effect must have been. Reading the cold print of Casement's report to-day is disturbing enough, but to have heard the oral testimony and to have seen the living evidence must have been a rare torture to one of Casement's temper and sensitiveness."

Casement writes in his report " a careful investi-gation of the conditions of native life confirmed the truth of the statements made to me that the great de-crease in the



population, the dirty and ill-kept towns and the complete absence of goats, sheep or fowl—once very plentiful in this country—were to be attributed, above all else, to the continued effort made during many years to compel the natives to work India rubber. Large bodies of native troops had formerly been quartered in the district, and the punitive measures undertaken to this end, had endured for a considerable period. During the course of these operations there had been much loss of life accompanied, I fear, by a somewhat general mutilation of the dead, as proof that the soldiers had done their duty. Elsewhere Casement quotes a statement by an officer of the Government service, that each time a corporal was sent out to get rubber, so many cartridges were given to him. He had to bring back all not used, and for every one used, he must bring back a right hand. If a cartridge was expended at an animal in hunting, a hand would be cut from a living man to make good the deficiency.

Such were the conditions which Casement found in the Belgian Congo. His report was published as a White Paper in 1904, and Casement leaped from obscurity to international fame.

Naturally enough the report was not favourably received at the Belgian Court, and a determined effort was made to discredit Casement, even the Irish-Americans joining in the attack. But the fury of these continuing onslaughts only increased Roger Casement's reputation and prestige. On 30th June 1905, he received the CMG. His report written in such moderate language is, with E. D. Morel's "Red Rubber," a classic indictment of the conditions in the Congo under the august rule of Leopold II, King of the Belgians. Out of the storm of protest which the

publication of the report aroused, was born the Congo Reform Association. This association worked for nearly ten years to bring about a better state of affairs in the Congo basin.

I have sketched, by quotations selected from Mr. Parmiter's book, the part which Casement played in exposing perhaps the greatest scandal of the last half of the nineteenth century. At the time I had been through the South African War and, though I had experienced one or two outbursts of the "incurable Irishman," and made some feeble protests against having to ride up to a Boer farm and give the woman of the house 20 minutes to put a few sticks of furniture on a wagon before we set light to her house, I did not connect up all the crimes and cruel-ties of Capitalistic Imperialism in one evil whole, derived from one cause.

When I heard about the Congo atrocities, I remember being bewildered and surprised. Surely, I thought, the men responsible for such inhuman conduct must be exceptions, degenerated below the norm of the human species by too long a stay in a tropical climate or segregation from gentle humanising influences. Vast as the organised devastation of Kitchener had been in South Africa to starve the Boers into surrender, we had not killed or mutilated human beings except in fair fight; we had only slaughtered all the animals, burnt all the houses, and carried the women off to concentration camps, where we gave a specially low scale of rations to those whose husbands were still in the field against us, and where actually the number of women who died of disease was double the number of their men we killed in battle.

Occasionally I had stirred in my doped sleep and gone to sleep again; nor did the revelations of the Congo do more than make me congratulate myself with truly British Pharisaism that we, the British Army and Empire-exploit-ing class were not as other men were or even as these degenerate Belgians.

In passing, let me say I am still a little puzzled as to how the British as a race will come off in the great Day of Judgement of the people and the rulers of the people that has obviously begun. I think it is true that both as regards humanity and justice the British in their dealings with subject peoples do maintain a code of decency within limits, which may mitigate the judgement that is coining to them and all the rulers of the earth. But I think it is equally true that the British ruling class combine with a certain code of justice and decency, a cunning in compromise and a hellish skill in ruling by dividing subject nations and classes against themselves, which have now reached their limits and, having been their strength, will now be their undoing.

They of all people have reduced "Divide et impera", "Divide and rule," to a fine art. In their dealings with subject nations, the partition of Ireland is the outstanding instance of their method. They planted their henchmen in Ulster and supported their own privileged class in organising those henchmen in the Ulster volunteers to resist not only the will of the Irish people but the law constitutionally enacted by the British Parliament. Let us never forget that it was in indignant resistance to that Fascist Revolt-the first outcrop of naked Fascism in the world, organised by a privileged class and supported mutinously by the officer east at the Curragh, that Roger Casement first came prominently to the front in Irish

politics. The rulers of Britain hanged him, while they honoured Edward Carson. Lord Birkenhead, née Galloper Smith, helped to hound Casement to his death. Well as Padraic Colum wrote:

They shall die to dust

Where you have died to fire,

Roger Casement.

Nor, I believe shall we have long to wait to see the feet of clay, on which all the Empires stand precariously today, crumble into dust. Perhaps for the British Empire the partition of Ireland may prove the pit into which it will fall. Already we hear rumours of Defence Pacts with the South, and newspapers, close in the councils of the Government and the General Staff, hint broadly at the necessity share in that work, in the raising and drilling of the Citizen Army-Ireland alone in Western Europe repudiated as a reborn nation the mechanical slaughter of the last great war and saved herself from conscription. The fitting climax would be for Ireland to become united in united resistance to inclusion in the next great war, not for her to achieve a spurious unity for the convenience of the strategic needs of the Empire. Casement had a favourite parable, expressing the relations of Ireland and the Empire concerning a little fish called a Diodon, which is occasionally swallowed alive and whole by a shark. And the Diodon has been known to gnaw its way through the shark's belly, emerging alive and unhurt, but

leaving the shark dead. The implication of that parable is plain, if we are to be continuous with Casement's estimate of the relations of Ireland with the Empire. Our job is to gnaw through the shark, to make no terms with British Imperialism, not to gain our unity and a deceptive pretence of freedom by lying down quietly in-side the shark's belly.

I have spoken of the skill of the British ruling class in ruling subject nations by division. I have given the partition of Ireland as the supreme illustration.

Now let me say a word about their similar skill in dividing subject classes. The names of MacDonald and Thomas, coaxed, flattered or indirectly bought to betray their class, immediately suggest themselves. And the recent fate of Thomas suggests that the betrayal of his own class as a prelude to being the agent of the ruling class in the economic war on Ireland was a double though inter-connected crime which brought its own nemesis in disgrace and exposure. I have been struck by other instances of a nemesis which seems to pursue the enemies of Ireland and strike, with a strange fitness of punishment to crime, at those who slander Ireland's champions.

Thus it was Basil Thompson who circulated filthy stories about Casement before and during his trial. And it was Basil Thompson, who met his own downfall for alleged sexual improprieties committed in Hyde Park. To say the least of it, to be the instrument of the British ruling class in persecution of Ireland or Ireland's champions seems unlucky.

We must now pursue our enquiry. As I said at the beginning this is not a panegyric of Casement; it is an analysis. It seeks to be more than an analysis. It seeks to be a synthesis of those qualities and affiliations which Casement showed in his time, carried forward to show us where Casement would stand if he were alive today, so that though his body has smouldered away in quicklime in the yard of the Pentonville hanging shed, we may honour his memory by co-operating with his continuing spirit. The spirit of the dead continues; in their own personal survival I hope and am inclined to believe, but without doubt in their influence on the lives of the living. Their influence can be for good or evil. If they are canonised and blindly worshipped, if it is regarded as heresy or blasphemy to add a jot or a tittle to their lives, they become mummified and petrified in their own past and a positive obstruction to the continuance of their own work in a growing, changing future.

I am not of the faith of the majority of this audience, yet I think most of you will agree with me that, if the deep truths of religion are to be preserved to-day, what is needed above all is a religion, which, while standing firm as a rock on the eternal verities, realises that the outer firm of those eternal verities changes with the evolution of society. The fact of aristocracy may be an eternal verity, but that aristocracy cannot be dependent on birth, wealth and privilege, and any church which identifies itself with the aristocracy of wealth and privilege must inevitably betray its mission to lead the people into social forms which are a fuller expression of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Casement was an aristocrat of the spirit; in appearance he was kingly and he had a courtesy of manner to high or low which was truly royal. Yet his was the kind of

aristocracy that led to the gallows as the kingly spirit of Christ led Him to the gallows.

We hear stories of the "reds," as Lord Rothermere calls them, in Spain, firing at statues or images of Christ. I do not know if such stories are true, though I do know that many of the stories of the Rothermere press have been proved on investigation to be shameless and deliberate lies. But even if this sad thing has happened, which is the greater blasphemy? To fire at a stone or marble statue of Christ or to bring thousands of Mahomedan mercenaries to butcher living men, alleged to be made in God 's image, because they defend their own freely elected democratic government?

Life never stands still and if we embalm the dead in the ceremonies of their own time alone, we rob not only ourselves but them of their influence, which, to live and grow, must obey the first law of life, adaptation to chang-ing environment.

Therefore let us remember and understand the wise and penetrating words of Connolly, "The true disciple is he who goes beyond his master," and link them lip with the words of a greater than Connolly, which have the same essential meaning, "for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life."

I think what Casement found, and what every man of any experience finds, who faces life with his eyes honestly open, is that Capitalism, though it may worship God in the letter-in the forms and ceremonial observances of religion -in the spirit worships Mammon and for the motive of profit will commit the most frightful, almost incredible crimes, against God and man.

That is what Casement found in the Congo. May we not assume that it was his reaction from these crimes committed for material profit, and his realisation that the same motive of profit underlay the South African and all Imperialist wars, that made Casement realise himself as "an incorrigible Irishman." Even Mr. Parmiter, who has written a very fine and sympathetic life of him finds him somewhat too incorrigible for his taste.

"It was this championship of the oppressed," writes Mr. Parmiter, "coupled with a devoted love for his native land, Ireland, that was his guiding star all through his life but he suffered from the inherent weakness and warped judgement of the fanatic."

How familiar one becomes with that note of patronising regret, applied by those who make a nice compromise between God and Mammon to those whose natures are so "fanatical" that they realise it is not possible to serve both. I, myself, have one criticism and only one to make of Casement. He loved his native land better than he loved humanity. Though he recognised the international bearings of Ireland's problem, he recognised it in terms of the balance of Imperial Power and not in terms of the rise of International Socialism to destroy all oppressive Empires. He sought to obtain a guarantee of Ireland's independence by offsetting the German against the British Empire. I knew what was in his mind before the declaration of the Great War from his articles and personal talks with him.

Casement wished to serve Ireland, not the Kaiser, but if I am to present my admiration of the man with sincerity, I must not withhold the criticism which I think is justified in the light of the past, the present and the future.



Casement did not see the interdependence of Ireland's national freedom with the freedom of the International Working Class. He might have said with Connolly: "We serve neither King nor Kaiser, but Ireland," but he did not see that the inner division of competitive anarchy and class subjection, which constitutes the heart of capitalism, must first be reproduced on a world scale, before any country can be free in the freedom of the whole of its people. He did not see that there can be no peace under capitalism.

He did not live to see, nor in his failure to analyse the essence of capitalism did he foresee, the horrid phenomenon of Fascism, trying to maintain the profits of Capitalism by crimes and cruelties as black as those which he exposed in the Congo, but extending over Europe, Asia and Africa. But there can be no shadow of doubt where Casement, who stood, though in separate compartments, for the freedom of oppressed nations and oppressed classes, would have stood against the Fascism that seeks the permanent enslavement of both.

Is it too much to say today that a knowledge of Marxian philosophy, sufficient to give spiritual anchorage in the swelling world chaos and to see the destiny and mission of the working class in emerging from that chaos, is necessary to keep any sensitive and imaginative person from despair?

Mr. L. S. Woolf, a Liberal publicist, writes in his introduction to " The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War":-

"During the war of 1914 to 1918 Europe took a big step on the road back to barbarism; in the years 1923 to 1933

it has taken another and even bigger step. What we are now witnessing and living through is a rebellion of all that is savage in us, of all the savages in our midst, against civilisation. The war was the first stage in this decline and fall of Western Civilisation, and the shock which that war gave to the whole of our society offered an opportunity to the barbarians to carry their work of destruction a stage further. We are at present in the middle of this second stage. The barbarians are already in the ascendancy; they have broken through the frontiers of civilisation and they are now destroying it from within."

In the above quotation Mr. Woolf tacitly identifies civilisation with capitalism; and having failed to grasp that capitalism was always inherently barbarous, is reduced to despair by the increasing violence and barbarism accompanying its decay, and the efforts of Fascism to maintain its decaying and outworn existence.

He sees with horror the war waged by Fascism on all liberty and all culture; but he fails to see the new forces that are arising in the midst of the breakdown, and gaining new strength in the battle to solve the problems which the existing ruling class has failed to solve, and carry forward human culture to new heights.

Casement 's social analysis did not take Marx into account, but his fidelity to Ireland earned him the glorious bodily death of a martyr, not the death of the soul which so many of the liberal bourgeoisie suffer today in the downfall of all their hopes and ideals, which in their divorce from the new forces of the working class seem to them to be dead beyond hope of resurrection. I think Ireland gives that reward to her faithful sons- a

goal to live for, and a death continuous with the purpose of their life. Such a death is robbed of terror. The night before Casement's execution, I was transferred from Swansea Prison to Pentonville, put in the hospital which is within fifty yards of the hanging shed and graciously permitted to exercise in the hospital garden which extended to within ten yards of Casement's new-made grave. The purpose of the authorities was obvious, but failed entirely of its object. There was a poor wretch, due to be hanged at Swansea for kicking his wife to death, within a day or two of my transfer to Pentonville, and I was dreading his execution with a sick horror beyond description. It is a terrible thing to be snatched out of life lived with no purpose and forfeited for some surrender to brute passion.

But I felt no horror at Casement 's passing. I felt his death was as purposeful as his life, and perhaps more powerful than his life for the achievement of his purpose. And here I am, twenty years later, helping, I hope, to achieve that purpose by doing what I can to interpret the spirit of the man whose bodily remains lie in Pentonville yard. I believe the British Government refused permission for their transfer to Ireland. Luckily they cannot yet refuse permission for the spreading of Casement's spirit in England. They have not yet reached that stage in the Fascist destruction of culture.

It is our task to see that they never do reach it; and here I believe the Irish in England, the Irish in Britain, have a vital part to play. Let us be the incorrigible Irishmen that Casement realised himself to be. But to play our part we must organise and make our weight felt on concrete issues.

I believe we should act quickly. If we delay too long Fascism will be upon us in England, as it is already upon us in Northern, and to some extent, in Southern Ireland, robbing us of freedom of speech and freedom to organise. Have you read the report of the N.C.C.L. of the Civil Authorities Special Powers Act in Northern Ireland? Such a pseudo-legal instrument, giving elected Ministers power to depute their authority to the military or police without appeal or redress, is pure Fascism, and the recent Sedition Act in England is the thin end of the wedge of the same thing.

We must resist the approach of Fascism before it is too late. We must resist it as Irishmen, and as men, who are proud of being Irishmen, because we believe Ireland, in fighting for her own freedom, is fighting for the freedom of humanity.

I venture to give you six points on which I believe we can find a basis of unity between all sections of true Irish Republicans, and also a basis of unity with the forces of freedom and progress in Britain. Here are the six points I suggest : -

- (1) For a United Independent Irish Republic.
- (2) For the withdrawal of the British troops from all Ireland, and against the inclusion of Ireland in the war plans and preparations of the National Government.

(3) For the immediate cessation of the economic war on Ireland, and the abolition of the claim to annuities.

(4) For the repeal by the British Parliament of the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts which abrogate all constitutional and civil liberty in Northern Ireland; and the withdrawal by the Irish Free State Government of the Constitution Amendment (Public Safety) Act, the use of which has been recently revived, and for an amnesty of all persons imprisoned in Ireland under the operation of these Acts.

(5) To protest against the disenfranchisement of the minority in Northern Ireland through the Government's gerrymandering of the constituencies, and to demand the restoration of the former constituencies and of Proportional Representation.

(6) For the surmounting of sectarian barriers by the initiation of a joint campaign with the Trades Union Movement for the organisation in British Unions of the Irish Workers in Britain, and by co-operation with British movements against Fascism and War.

If you agree with them I suggest that at some future date you call a joint meeting, with other Irish Republican organisations in London, to endorse or amend them. And that if we can achieve unity amongst ourselves, we extend it to co-operation with all the forces, whether in Ireland or in this country, that are fighting the advance of Fascism and the drive to inevitable war.

That, in my opinion, is the highest tribute we could pay to the memory of Roger Casement, who died for his country, and to the last was hounded down by the dark forces he had exposed in Africa.

Let us make the light shining from the candlestick of the Pentonville gallows shine wider and brighter, and link its rays not only with those of Connolly, of Fintan Lalor, Mitchell, Davis, and Pearce, but also with those of every fighter for freedom past or present.

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