

[*Manchester Guardian* (Liberal Daily), April 15]

REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT IN IRELAND

It is customary to sum up under the inclusive term Sinn Fein all the complex forces, intellectual and emotional, creative and disruptive, peaceful and violent, which are manifest in the left wing of Irish politics to-day. The name Sinn Fein is applied loosely in England to all who repudiate both British rule in Ireland and the methods and ideals of the old Parliamentary Nationalist party. But this simplification is seriously inaccurate in point of fact.

An analysis of the big leftward drive in Irish politics reveals four elements at work. There is the Gaelic League, now suppressed, a cultural society which has undoubtedly given ideas and inspiration to the separatist leaders; there is Sinn Fein proper, which is in essence an orderly political party; there are the Volunteers, who form the military wing; and there is organized labor as the industrial force.

The Gaelic League has been vigorous for about a quarter of a century with Dr. Hyde as its moving spirit. Its object has been to arouse national interest in the national culture, to remind men of the vast treasure house of Irish literature, and thus, incidentally but certainly, to give an intellectual and artistic stimulus to the politics of separatism. Undoubtedly contact with the romantic conceptions of the sagas has strongly influenced the young intellectuals among the Volunteers. Padraic Pearse, who led the Republican forlorn hope in Easter, 1916, had taught the ideals of antique heroism at his school at St. Enda's, and, just as Demosthenes used to appeal to Athenian pride and valor in the name of the

past and of Marathon, so Pearse called his Volunteers to their desperate adventure for the honor of the Ireland that was long dead, while Connolly summoned his men for the Socialist Ireland that was to be. Both men appealed to natural law as against positive, the one inspired by the idea of the noble savage, the other by the dream of an ennobled civilization.

Sinn Fein is a purely political body. Parliamentary candidates stand as 'Sinn Fein,' and the national parliament, 'Dail Eireann,' is the work of Sinn Fein. Dail cannot, of course, now meet or work, since nearly all its members are either in prison or 'on the run.' Sinn Fein, the great party, has grown out of Sinn Fein, the intellectual clique whose first president was Edward Martyn, and whose chief of staff has always been Mr. Arthur Griffith. It began as a body which would strike liberal opinion as reactionary. For, though it was separatist, it was not republican, and formed an expression of a doctrinaire type of nineteenth-century nationalism. It was suckled on Protectionist economics and reared in a German kindergarten. Thus it was distrustful of labor and distrusted by labor, and thought in terms of a national solidarity which accepted capitalism and harmonized the interests of employers and employed. Sinn Fein has never designed armed warfare against Great Britain; its belief has been that alien government could be made impossible by sabotage of the administrative machine without taking life. Mr. Griffith worked out in a series of articles on 'The Hungarian

Method' suggestions for the application of his policy. Accordingly Sinn Fein, which contains many pacifists, had no connection with the Easter Rising of 1916. But it profited immensely by the rising and the consequent British policy. To Sinn Fein probably may be attributed the recent raids on income-tax offices, for that was in their tradition of hindering government without taking life. But the carrying on of the attacks throughout the countryside against the police has been the work of the Volunteers.

The Volunteers are, by the irony of time, the direct descendants of Carsonism. For the National Volunteers were formed as a counter-force to the Ulster fire-eaters, and the force that has driven British administration out of large districts in the West of Ireland might never have existed had it not been for the military exploits of the present Lord Chancellor. With the decay of faith in English pledges and Nationalist party methods the Volunteers drifted to the left, and Redmondite control grew weaker and weaker. Extremists of the force, under Pearse, disobeyed their real president, John MacNeill, and forced the Easter Rising with Connolly. To-day the Volunteers are extremely strong in numbers and in spirit. They must not be identified with Sinn Fein, and I have been informed that the military wing would not welcome an excess of Cabinet control. How far the political and military arms work together it is impossible to say; obviously there must be some *liaison*. It is surmised that members of that extremely secret body, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, are influential in the Volunteers.

Organized labor in Ireland is definitely separatist and republican. But here again it must not be dubbed 'Sinn Fein' without qualification. As was stated, before the war labor was

bitterly critical of Sinn Fein and the capitalist economics of Mr. Arthur Griffith were angrily denounced. But the stress of events has driven the two forces together. The Castle habit of treating organized labor as something treasonable in itself naturally drove labor to Sinn Fein, and as a result the young men of Sinn Fein began to take their economics from Connolly or the coöperators, and not from Mr. Griffith. Thus the proposed social reforms of the abortive Dail were all on collectivist and democratic lines, and it was generally held that the Connolly view had come out on top.

Meanwhile the Castle continues to remind labor of the amenities of British Government. Outside Liberty Hall, the headquarters of the Transport and General Workers' Union, is a railway bridge on which a machine-gun emplacement can be seen. For months recently a machine-gun was trained on the doors and windows of this trade union office; it has now been removed, but the emplacement is there ready for use, and Liberty Hall is raided periodically. Things of this kind and the breaking up by soldiers of trade union branch meetings serve to convince labor that it can never get on with its appropriate industrial task until the national question has been settled. Hence the close alliance between labor and Sinn Fein.

On the other hand, the repressive policy toward Sinn Fein, which involves heavy business losses to Sinn Fein members in case of arrest and imprisonment, keeps self-seeking rich men out of the party. This delays the natural regrouping of social forces which must inevitably take place when the national question has been settled. Even now strife does break out. Irish labor is largely organized by towns on the one-big-union principle, and at Dungarvan, County Waterford, all the

workers, being members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, recently came out together. There was a long and bitter dispute in which the Sinn Fein employees were said to be more resolute against surrender than the unionists. Such happenings do not strengthen the bonds in the republican movement and point to a certain rift in the future. But for the time being the movement, with all its diverse elements, is held together by the

government. The Castle does not seem to have learned the first maxim of the autocrat — divide and conquer. For in all its policy and practice it drives home the fact that until the problem of nationality has been settled, functional associations, whether cultural or industrial, are held up in their work.

That is what solidifies the republican movement; but if once the external pressure were removed I believe that disintegration would rapidly ensue.

[*The Frankfurter Zeitung* (Radical Liberal Daily), March 28]

WITH THE RED RHINELAND ARMY

ESSEN, March 25, 26.

THREE distinct phases have occurred in the bloody battle which has been waging now for more than ten days in the industrial centres of Rhenish Westphalia. The criminal adventure of the militarist insurgents in Berlin instantaneously obliterated every sign of discord among the working people of the Ruhr district and forged them into a solid mass. When a detachment of troops marched in, singing *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz*, with its black, white, and red banners unfurled, arrogantly challenging the laboring population, it was the signal for a bloody outbreak in which the workers quickly triumphed. Reaction was crushed. A confusion of ideas, quite comprehensible when we recall the suffering and privations of four long years of warfare, has converted hatred of military aggression and oppression into hatred of the uniform itself, which the incidents of the past few days have maddened the workers into regarding as a symbol of the old régime. This started a war without quarter between

the workers and anyone who wore the uniform — the blue clad police, the green clad constabulary, and the gray clad National Guard. There is no doubt but what nine tenths of the militant workingmen seized arms in the honest belief that they were fighting reaction. This inspired them with wonderful enthusiasm and enabled them, within a few days, to get control of the whole industrial district. When the police and troops retired to the northern fringe of this region, along a line connecting Linz and Wesel, the third phase opened. A campaign to resist a reactionary insurrection developed into a fight to establish a dictatorship of the radicals, a Communist Soviet government. As late as Monday, the newspapers were forbidden to use the words, 'Red Army.' Subsequent successes speedily persuaded the Communists, who took shrewd advantage of the existing confusion to seize command of affairs, to adopt a bolder policy. They dropped the mask and fought in the open.

For a second time since the revo-