

# AN SOLAS

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IRISH WORKERS GROUP

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FRISK WORKERS GROUP

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COVER BY S.R.

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EDITORIAL

Not a day goes by but the Irish papers carry reports of the comments of one or two, sometimes as many as half-a-

dOzen "prominent personalities" on the situation of unrest that exists in Ireland. The 26-Co., "semi-detached statelet" may be well down the field in relation to many other states in the world where education, social services, housing, etc., are concerned. When it comes to strikes however and the number of man-hours lost per capita of population per annum during the past few years, the Free State leads the field easily. Our "prominent personalities" have all been able to stomach the first set of conditions without a bother for donkeys years; they weren't affected by them. They are now jumping onto platforms and into pulpits all over the land to decry the 'irresponsibility' of the working class, which dares to try and maintain or even improve its lot in a situation where opportunities exist for doing so.

We do not believe that the will of the workers engaged in the present struggles will be influenced greatly by the statements of the various anti-national and anti-worker elements who've spoken out. These latter included his reverence up in Armagh. Only two days after the Irish Times wondered editorially if the Church wasn't falling down on its job and failing to offer correct guidance to "the nation" in "its" difficulties - lo and behold! the bould Conway himself dutifully joined in the chorus of calls for "responsibility" and added his own wee fog of pious verbiage to the clouds building up over the industrial front.

On at least two occasions during recent months the Irish Times editorially has evoked the possibility of the imposition of military dictatorship in the 26-Cos. Maybe the Irish Times has some informants in Groone's Hotel, where heads of the police, politicians and army officers drink and talk every other night till the early hours? Or maybe the Irish Times in its frustration at the intractability of the workers simply gets some little measure of satisfaction and relief out of brandishing the possibility of a take-over by the heroes of Parkgate St., - most of whom have never seen a drop of blood shed in their lives.

One thing is certain: capitalist ruling classes everywhere when seriously threatened by popular discontent have always thrown the trappings of democracy aside and revealed their rule in all its nakedness for what it is - a dictatorship of their class, armed with all the machinery of violence and prepared to use that machinery to the full in order to hold on to State power.

Pushed far enough by a militant and increasingly class-conscious and politicised working class the Free State capitalists will dispense with such 'luxuries' as elections,

parliament, freedom of expression and assembly, etc., The proposed legislation to outlaw unofficial strikes and impose penalties on any individual or organisation supporting such strikes is a step in this direction. It is a step which must be met by the resistance of the working class. This resistance can best be mobilised by stepping up the struggle for the establishment of a revolutionary workers' party armed with a clear Socialist alternative to Lenass's policy of national sell-out and anti-working class legislation.

The old post-Civil War set-up in Free State politics and in Irish politics generally is going out fast. Young people are not interested in 'last surviving' this-that -or-the-other. The results of the presidential election are still further evidence of this all too obvious fact. The recent fiftieth anniversary celebrations of 1916 only served to bring home to large numbers of people the realisation that the "3/4 Republic" has nothing in common with the Ireland Connolly and Pearse envisaged.

More and more people are beginning to understand that there is more to freeing Ireland than just having a change of flags; that as long as there is capitalism in Ireland it will be a subject country. The City of London and British monopoly industry will control it just as effectively as if a British occupation army garrisoned every town in the whole 32 counties

Connolly's writings have undergone a great revival of interest recently. His words are being recalled because of the prophecy they contain: that unless the social system were changed nothing at all would change. Connolly's ideas and methods are being studied increasingly by young workers from Protestant as well as Catholic backgrounds in both of the Irish sub-States. In these young people lies Ireland's future hope.

Fifty years ago the Irish working class threw up the first Red Army in Europe in the form of the Irish Citizen Army. Connolly projected the idea of this force firing the first shots in a struggle which would not end until capitalism was ended throughout the length and breadth of Europe. Can those who take up the study of Connolly today be animated by a lesser vision? We doubt it, in an era when the interests of the workers of all countries are even more obviously bound up together than in Connolly's day. There cannot be a free Ireland, a socialist Ireland nor any other kind of Ireland in a world devastated by nuclear bombs. Connolly in his day preached internationalism. The need for internationalism in the working class movement is if anything even greater today.

For the capitalists of Europe survival in the world's markets and the further development of the means of production necessitates the integration of Europe. Lemass is forced in the interests of the class he represents to prepare for entry into the new European super-market and -state. In preparation for this he has signed the Free Trade Agreement which begins shortly to take effect and which means the re-integration of the Free State into the United Kingdom.

Irish workers must build a revolutionary party of their own class and pose their own alternative for Ireland: a workers' republic as a free participant in a socialist United States of Europe.

LITERATURE

<u>Notes from Mountjoy:</u>	Lian Mellows	1/-
<u>Wolfe Tone</u>		6d.
<u>A History of Ireland (unfinished) by F. Engels</u> (English translation by A. Clifford)		2/-
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## FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE EASTER RISING.

by Chris Gray.

"We went out to break the connection between this country and the British Empire, and to establish an Irish Republic. We believed that the call we then issued to the people of Ireland was a nobler call, in a holier cause, than any call issued to them during this war, having any connection with the war. We succeeded in proving that Irishmen are ready to die endeavouring to win for Ireland those national rights which the British Government has been asking them to die to win for Belgium. As long as that remains the case, the cause of Irish freedom is safe."

James Connolly's last statement at his court martial.

The Easter Rising of 1916 marked the opening of the most determined and concerted attempt so far in history to establish an Ireland independent of British control. The Great Rebellion of 1798, which, if successful, would have produced an Irish Revolution equal in stature with those of France and the United States of America, was crushed; the English capitalists and the landlord politicians who presided over their interests concluded that it was possible to swallow Ireland whole<sup>(1)</sup> and deprived the country of political independence. During the first half of the nineteenth century most Irish industry outside north-east Ulster fell victim to the "national selection" of international capitalist competition, and decayed, leaving only brewing (Guinness) distilling and shipbuilding as fields for the industrial bourgeoisie in the south<sup>(2)</sup>. Britain allowed the population of Ireland to decline (via famine and emigration) in the interests of improved agriculture, while the population of England and Wales rose. The country outside north-east Ulster provided food for Britain and labour for British industry, while industrial Ulster and the remaining industries of the south developed as integral parts of British capitalism.<sup>(3)</sup>

In these circumstances the politics of established Irish capitalism, at the close of the nineteenth and the opening of the twentieth century, were Unionist. This attitude cut across religious differences: why exchange the birthright of the British

market ( Empire included) for a mess of Fenian pottage? As for those capitalists whose money lay in commerce or transport, those by and large followed the cap-in-hand policies of the Nationalist Party led by John Redmond. Similar views prevailed among the rural middle class: the Munster graziers, dependent on the British market, supported the imperialist connexion(4) the gombeen men (usurers) and the Catholic tenent farmers, who had benefitted from the succession of Land Acts passed in the second half of the nineteenth century, supported Redmond and later the British war effort against Germany(5). Only in the west, in the so-called "Congested Districts" did the landless peasant problem exist in anything like the old proportions at the turn of the century, and even here Parnellite anti-clericalism in the form of William O'Brien's United Irish League(6) went down before the Redmondite-Church combination, which reaped the benefit of agitation on their left in much the same way as Harold Wilson on his royal road to leadership of the Labour Party(7).

The original Sinn Fein organization was founded in 1905 at the Rotunda in Dublin, when Arthur Griffith delivered a speech which has become known as "The Sinn Fein Policy". Griffith hailed the economist Friedrich List as the virtual creator of German capitalism(8) and, following him, demanded protection for Irish industry and all the marks of an independent capitalism - stock exchange, Irish banks serving Irish industry, everything, in fact, short of a Republic. (Following his analysis of the Hungarian experience vis-a-vis Austria, he favoured a "duel monarchy"). He condemned the impotent bowings and scrapings of the Irish Party at Westminster and proposed instead the creation of an Irish legislature drawn from local authorities, which had passed into nationalist control in 1898. Griffith did not wield much influence until after the Easter Rising.

Besides Sinn Fein there were the Fenians, middle-class radicals and their followers who had upheld the revolutionary tradition throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, when England's power was at its height, and whose hour was destined to come round again as the British Empire slipped from its dominant position in world politics. Tom Clarke, the old Fenian, returned from America in 1907, and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the secret society to which most of the leaders of 1916 belonged, was once again in business.

In contact with the above tendencies, though not formally connected to any of them in a political sense, were

the various bodies devoted to the revival of the Irish language and Irish culture.

The cause of Irish labour also advanced towards the turn of the century, borne upwards on the crest of the movement for unionization of the unskilled(9). James Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party in Dublin in 1896 with a programme of complete independence for Ireland as the prerequisite for the conquest of political power by the Irish workers. Following him Jim Larkin built up the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and led it in the epic transport strike of 1913 against the Dublin employers,

With the approach of the First World War, however, it looked as though the position of the Redmondite Nationalist Party was quite secure. The British Liberal Party, observing the firm stand of the Dublin capitalists in 1913, judged that they could safely grant a measure of home rule to their Irish cousins. Instead they found they had raised a hornets nest.

This hornets nest in the form of warlike preparations in Ulster was the inevitable consequence of the uneven development of industry in Ireland, plus the existence of a ready-made mass ideology in the shape of militant protestantism. Despite the desire of Arthur Griffith and others to find some means of accommodating the "Orange Manchester" inside a protectionist Irish capitalism, the marriage was just not on: even assuming a favourable attitude on the part of the British government, which was at that time out of the question, "Ulster" was not prepared to run the risk of becoming the milch cow for the development of southern industry. Sir Edward Carson put the matter in a nutshell: "If you want Ulster, go and take her or go and win her. You never wanted her affections. You wanted her taxes".(10)

The formation of the Ulster Volunteers led to similar moves on the nationalist side. James Connolly's Citizen Army was soon in the field, born out of the 1913 transport strike as a workers defence force against police attacks on pickets, etc. Shortly afterwards the southern middle class came on the scene with their Volunteer force, and Redmond promptly captured control of it, much to the chagrin of Clarke, Pearse and the I.R.B. leaders. The latter attempted a counter-stroke, but in the ensuing split lost about nine-tenths of their following.(11)

Meanwhile the British Liberal Government hedged, temporized and finally granted Home Rule, only to suspend it for the duration of the First World War, which had by now broken out. Nor did they take up Redmond's suggestion of leaving the defence of Ireland to the National Volunteers. But despite the fact that Redmond's actual achievements were nil, he enjoyed a great measure of support; farmers benefitted from increased food prices, and in the years following 1914 300,000 or so Irishmen marched off to fight for the Grand Ould Dane Britannia. (12)

As regards the preparations and course of the Easter Rising this has been well covered elsewhere and I do not propose to spend time on it here. (13) What is necessary is an estimate of the role of James Connolly in the Rising, since on this hinges the whole attitude of socialists to what happened.

Connolly's attitude to the national revolution was expressed as early as 1896 when he founded the I.S.R.P. In the inaugural manifesto, although the goal is defined as an Irish socialist Republic, the tone is broadly social-democratic (of the sort roughly handled by Marx in the "Critique of the Gotha Programme" when applied under different conditions in Germany.) We are told that the party believes

"That the agricultural and industrial system of a free people, like their political opinion, ought to be an accurate reflex of the democratic principle by the people, for the people, solely in the interests of the people.

That the private ownership by a class of the land and instruments of production, distribution and exchange is opposed to this vital principle of justice, and is the fundamental basis of all oppression, national, political or social.

That the subjection of one nation to another, as of Ireland to the authority of the British Crown, is a barrier to the free political and economic development of the subjected nation, and can only serve the interests of the exploiting classes of both nations.

That, therefore, the national and economic freedom of the Irish people must be sought in the same direction, viz. the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic, and the consequent conversion of the means of production, dis-

tribution and exchange into the common property of society, to be held and controlled by a democratic state in the interests of the entire community."(14)

Lest there be any ambiguity, separate provisions demand the nationalization of railways and canals an "abolition of private banks and money-lending institutions and establishment of state banks, under popularly elected boards of directors, issuing loans at cost.

Connolly's attitude to the progressive middle classes and their allies, represented at that time by the Fenian movement, was also clear. It was the reverse of sectarianism (see the articles in Alice Milligan's paper "Shan Van Vocht") (15) At the same time he criticized not only the Home Rule Nationalist Parliamentarians, but also the very concept of an independent Irish industrial capitalist production, which had already been reached, Connolly demanded to know where the necessary raw materials and markets were to be found for a nascent Irish capitalism. It was this criticism of the very basis of Sinn Fein's economic programme that was lost sight of by the Irish workers at a crucial phase of the struggle, namely the assumption of power by Eamon de Valera in 1932.

Given this position on the Irish problem, the alliance with Clarke and Pearse was the logical outcome. And given the relation of forces in 1916, the discrepancies between the programme of the I.S.R.B. and the 1916 Proclamation became intelligible. A very important factor in the situation was Connolly's political isolation at the time, despite the existence of the Citizen Army. Connolly, indeed was in such despair over the prospects of a rising that he was at one point preparing to come out with the Citizen Army alone (16). The reason for this despair was his mistrust of Pearse and Clarke, who were, he thought, too closely in concert with the MacNeill-Hobson faction to achieve anything(17). Another difficulty was with the leadership of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union: the Union's reformist leaders objected to the use of Liberty Hall as I.C.A. headquarters, and to the hoisting of the green flag - a danger to the building up of Union funds and membership following the 1913 strike - , and they brought matters to a head shortly before the Rising. This put Connolly in a difficult position, as he could not do what Lenin did in a similar situation in 1917 - appeal to the rank and file(18). It is possible to speculate on the effect on

this problem, and indeed on the future course of events up to and including the treaty, if Larkin had been there to back Connolly up. But Larkin was in America. Even apart from these difficulties the I.R.B. commanded the larger military force and were in a position to call the tune. Hence the imprint of Fintan Lalor rather than Karl Marx on the style of the Proclamation.

A possible criticism of Connolly might be that he left behind no political testament, no further line of march for the Irish workers. The statement at the head of this article is in fact an answer to certain charges brought by the prosecution at the court martial, as Desmond Greaves has pointed out(19). There are obvious objections to the idea of a testament - Connolly's condition, lack of time, belief perhaps that others would carry on his work. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the socialist content of the 1916 Rising has been effectively obscured, whilst the leaders have joined the long line of rebels and martyrs, and reinforced the heroic but politically variegated tradition of Irish revolutionism. It is this latter aspect of 1916, amply demonstrated by the anniversary celebrations this year, which acts as a barrier to the advance of socialism in Ireland.

The 1916 rebels were not popular during their week of glory, but the manner of their execution altered the course of history. By 1923 the situation had changed completely - or had it?

#### 11.

"As the drain of Irish wealth to England ceases, and opportunities occur for utilising Irish savings at home, means will be found for organising fresh Irish enterprises, in a way which will prevent them from being absorbed into the great English trusts. Irish banking will develop. Savings which are now invested in foreign securities or left with banks which put them into English loans and mortgages, will be made available for promoting industrial undertakings in Ireland, whether by short loans or permanent investments. Irish loans will be set working on some better business basis than the limited liability company with its frictions and dangers. Irish ships will sail the seas under Irish management and for the benefit of Ireland. Special combined

efforts will be made to develop national resources. There are harbours to be improved, lands to be drained, and hills to be covered again with forests".

"Dalta", "An Irish Commonwealth" (1920), p.102 a noble vision! What actually happened? The political make-up of the Irish nationalist movement from 1918 to the Truce differed considerably from that of the men of 1916. This was partly due to the broader base of the movement, but also of the conversion of various bourgeois elements who had hitherto held aloof(20). The following analysis given in the introduction to Liam Mellowe's "Notes from Mountjoy Jail" summarizes the situation appropriately:

"The contradictions which British Imperialism exploited were those between the various classes in the national movement. The various classes were attracted to the national movement because the national movement served their class interests. But the interests of the different classes required different degrees of national independence for their satisfaction....

The Anglo-Irish property owners never abandoned the Imperialist side. After the Treaty they supported Collins and Cosgrave. The biggest Irish property owners did not as a rule support imperialism actively, nor did they support Sinn Fein although Griffith represented their interests. After the Treaty they gave their active support to the Free State.

The medium sized Irish bourgeoisie detested imperialism, joined the national movement, and took control of it. They had never asked for more than a modest degree of Home Rule. They were now satisfied with the Imperialist concession of Dominion Status which would permit them to become the ruling class within Ireland. On the other hand the nationally conscious workers and small farmers, who had done most of the fighting, demanded an independent Irish Republic, and they were willing to resume the war if the British did not meet that demand". (21)

But the Republic was destroyed with the help of English guns. Consequently Irish banking, and indeed the whole monetary system, remained tied to England. This suited those with money to spare and ready to invest in England, for a bigger return than in Ireland, but it did not favour

the growth of Irish industrial capitalism. The 26 County manufacturing base was pitifully weak compared with that of Britain. The only comparable industry was brewing, which in 1926 contributed as much as 41% of total net output. Next came bread, biscuits and flour confectionery-- 11% , next printing and publishing -- 8% ; then tobacco (7½) and butter, cheese, condensed milk and margarine (4½).<sup>22</sup>

During the Cosgrave period a policy of cautious and selective protection was introduced for such commodities as boots and shoes, candles, bottles, soap, sugar confectionery, motor bodies, and a number of other industries. This gave rise to a barrage of requests from Irish firms for protection to be extended to them also, which barrage was diverted by the setting up of a Tariff Commission to investigate each application.

Some idea of the plight of the country during the black years of Cosgrave rule is gained from the following description by T.P. Coogan in his book "Ireland since the Rising":

"From September 1922 to July 30, (The only period for which figures are available) Civil War casualties were approximately 665 killed and 3,000 wounded. Ireland had been hard hit economically by the war with the British; the Civil War brought the country to its knees. Hundreds of thousands of acres went out to cultivation. Of the total population of 2,750,000 in the Free State, 130,000 were unemployed. Damage to Irish property amounted to £30 million: and on top of this came the bill for the prosecution of the war".<sup>(23)</sup>

Some effective action was taken, notably by the Minister of Agriculture, Patrick Hogan, who, among other things, started up the manufacture of sugar, and through the setting up of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) in connexion with the Shannon electrification scheme <sup>(24)</sup>. These two projects marked the beginning of Irish State Capitalism --the Irish being the body concerned in the former case; But these measures failed to halt the flow of dunds and workers out of the country, as witness the following emigration figures <sup>(25)</sup>:

1925	30,180
1926	30,041
1927	27,148

1928	24,691
1929	20,802
1930	15,966

By 1932 emigration had fallen practically to zero as a result of the American slump. This paved the way for a radicalization of politics--just as it had in the opening years of World War I when emigration was also curtailed. The upshot was the defeat of the Cosgrave government and the assumption of power by Eamon de Valera.

De Valera came to power on a programme of industrialization, an end to partition, and retention of the land annuities by Irish instead of English authorities. (These annuities were the price paid by the Irish farmers to get rid of the Anglo-Irish landlord class). The decision to retain the land annuities led to the imposition of special duties on goods from the 26 Counties by Britain and the commencement of the "Economic War" which lasted until 1938. Internally De Valera's main innovation was the Control of Manufacturers Act (1932-34) which required boards of directors to be Irish-controlled and at least 51% of the share capital to be Irish-owned. (These measures applied only to new companies). The main tariff-assisted industries were tanning, boots and shoes, wholesale clothing, woollens and other textiles. Another state body was set up -- Bord na Mona (Turf Board). Licences were granted to firms in industries where the market was big enough for a single producer only. Government advice and finance was offered to firms through the Industrial Credit Co. (founded 1933).

However, De Valera took no steps to set up a national currency or impede free movement of capital out of the 26 Counties. The second course would have led to the development of state capitalism and to an intensification of the already fierce class struggle, while both policies would have increased the wrath of British Imperialism, with the prospect of armed intervention a la Churchill. De Valera suppressed the left-wing Republican organization "Saor Eire", and followed this up by a ban on the IRA in 1936. In the end it appears that the Economic War foundered on the blows delivered to Irish agriculture by UK tariffs (plus the lack of alternative markets). This led to opposition from the right -- the big farmers lost most-- and in order to save his political position and protect Ireland against the threat of fascism De Valera went to London and made a

deal with British Imperialism. (26)

This deal is known as the 1938 Trade Agreement, and Britain got decidedly the best of it. Admittedly, De Valera got control of the three ports (Bearehaven, Cobh and Lough Swilly) but a cursory glance at the Trade Agreement proper will show a mass of varying preferential rates of tariff which the UK Government has the power to manipulate at will (27). In addition the deal provided for British inspection of Free State forces and limitations on arms manufacture in the 26 Counties (28) .

As a result of further industrialization, forced by the dislocation of trade during the Second World War, and intensified by the post-war boom, industrial capital appeared to have established it self. But the growth of the home market which was achieved occurred on the basis of proliferating consumer tastes which outran the supply of goods. Irish capitalism could sustain itself in a climate of austerity but proved incapable of making the transition to the "affluent society" unaided (29). Also Fianna Fail failed to stem the tide of emigration (30). Nor were their all-party coalition opponents any more effective. Balance of payments difficulties occurred--accentuated by the fall in the value of 26 County sterling balances following British devaluation -- and by the late fifties the economy was in serious trouble.

It was their crisis which ushered in the third phase in the history of Irish capitalism: the influx of foreign capital. "Between 1955 and 1964", writes T.P. Coogan, "some 200 industrial enterprises were set up, providing new jobs for 26,000 people and representing an injection of £48 million in new capital. The largest single source of this investment, providing 40 per cent of the total, is Britain. Germany has provided 19 per cent and the United States 15 per cent. Japan, Belgium, Holland and France have also made valuable contributions to the capital structure of Irish industry. The failure rate has been less than three per cent of the total" (31). The influx of foreign capital on this scale spells the end of the Sinn Fein ideal as expressed by Griffith, "Dalta" and others. The death-knell of Irish capitalism was sounded in 1959 by the repeal of the Manufactures Acts. Henceforth under the present political conditions native capitalism can only exist in the interstices, as it were, of a market maintained

by foreign concerns. And the policy of attracting foreign capital has severe disadvantages as well as advantages, namely the amount of state aid necessary to attract it in the first place (32), plus the obvious temptation to withdraw it in case of difficulties experienced by the foreign parent company.

The signing of the latest agreement with the United Kingdom, the 1965 Free Trade Agreement, is a recognition that the attraction of foreign capital, while undoubtedly necessary to the twenty-six County economy, is no real solution to its problems. The 26 Counties felt a cold blast of wind recently in the shape of the Wilson import surcharge; as the saying goes, when England catches cold, Ireland gets pneumonia. The Free Trade Agreement intensifies the neocolonialist relationship of the Twenty-six Counties to Mother England. Sections of Green capitalism are now about to be sacrificed in return for dubious gains to the agricultural community, thus giving tit for tat for sufferings of the ranchers in the Economic War. The agreement also means increased difficulties for the small farmers, who cannot afford the capital expenditure necessary to compete with the large farms. These latter will continue as before to swell the ranks of Irish workers in the UK and elsewhere, and the Gaelic-speaking areas of the West will continue to lose able-bodied men and women. Lenass, of course, can use this emigration to maintain political stability.

The logic of the Free Trade Agreement is a return to the Union of 1801: as the two miniature economies of the Irish statelets become more and more alike, the Bordes ceases to have economic relevance, especially with the end of southern tariffs. If, as is almost certain, the United Kingdom goes into the Common Market, the 26 Counties must follow, which means the intensification of all the various tendencies listed above.

What of the Irish working class and the tasks of socialists in the present situation? I have already mentioned the need for a correct evaluation of Connolly's contribution to the analysis of the Irish question. But although independent Irish capitalism is an impossibility, the national question in Ireland remains very much alive, and Republicanism is and will remain the ideology of Irish workers. The task of socialists on both sides of the Irish

Sea is to establish a bridge between Republicanism and socialism, to demonstrate to the working class that consistent Republicanism involves not only an Irish Workers Republic but also alliance with English, Scots, Welsh and other foreign workers.

It is clear that both the main political parties in the 26 County Statlet are objectively Unionist --whatever the Republican pretensions of Fianna Fail. Hence it is useless to demand "Irish industries" from the Twenty-Six County Government. But the bourgeois left, Sinn Fein, is of necessity anti-imperialist. Hence the relationship between socialists and Sinn Fein is of crucial importance.

Despite the leftward turn of Sinn Fein in recent months (reports of strikes featured in the "United Irishman" etc. it is highly doubtful whether it will succeed by means of its own propanganda in achieving a 32 County Republic. To do so it would have to forestall the reintegration of Ireland on an imperialist basis which is the logic of the recent actions of Messrs Wilson, Lenass and O'Neill and Co. There is no evidence to suggest that Sinn Fein is attracting sufficient support in both statelets to unite the country peacefully or otherwise. In this context the failure of the IRA's 1956-62 Campaign is instructive: British Capitalism can still offer more to workers than Green Capitalism--hence the strenght of Unionism in the Six Counties (33)

At the same time "Orange Socialism" is no solution to the problems of the Irish working class. The imperlaist reunification of Ireland may save the skins of the various bourgeoisie in power in Ireland and United Kingdom, but it still leaves workers exposed to all the injustices of a capitalist economy in a world of competing imperialisms, and increasingly subject to the paraphernalia of income policies state regulations of trade unions, attacks on social security etc. Hence Irish socialists should declare for a 32 - County Republic, support the Sinn Fein programme for National Unity and Independence (34) declare for a Republican Government to create Irish industries for Ireland, help the small farmers, and oppose Irish membership of EEC. At the same time it is necessary to make clear to the working class that Sinn Fein will not be able to carry out their independent capitalist programme--i.e. that objections raised by Connolly are still valid--, that the very attempt to do so will be at the expense of the working class, and that the

only possible Republic is a Workers' Republic with workers' control of production, distribution and exchange, in alliance with the working classes of other European states, especially Britain.

This last point is vitally important. The very survival of an Irish Workers' Republic depends upon it, just as the survival of an English Workers' Republic (ditto Scots or Welsh) depends upon the existence of a friendly power in Ireland. Connolly himself put this well:

"No Irish revolutionist worth his salt would refuse to lend a hand to the Social Democracy of England in the effort to uproot the social system of which the British Empire is the crown and apex, and in like manner, no English Social Democrat fails to recognise clearly that the crash which would betoken the fall of the ruling classes in Ireland would sound the tocsin for the revolt of the disinherited in England"(35).

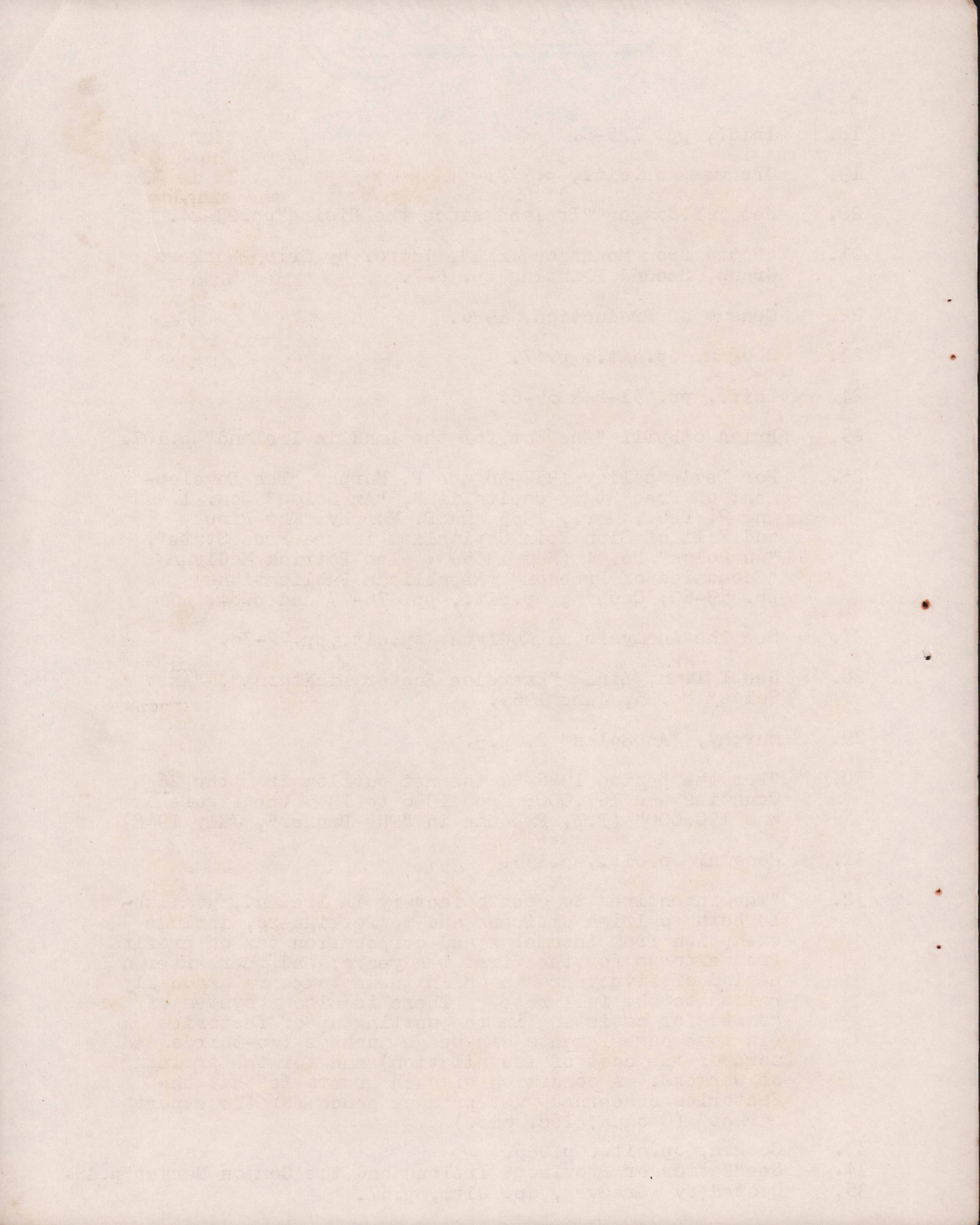
This means mutual support for each other's struggles, trade union co-operation and above all co-operation between socialists. The smaller Irish working class needs the support of its cross-channel brother, and vice versa. A special responsibility rests on the shoulders of British socialists for seeing that a repetition of the shameful betrayal of 1913 does not materialize, as is only too likely in view of the different tempo of class struggle in the two countries. British socialists should also make clear their opposition to the Free Trade Agreement which comes into force this July 1st, and badger their MPs to support the motion in parliament for an enquiry into the Government of Ireland Act of 1949, which will serve as a means of exposing the whole system of imperialist rule over Ireland.

#### Notes.

1. Strauss, Erich "Irish Nationalism and British Democracy" p.46.
2. MacNeive, J. "Concise Economic History of Ireland" ch. 13, pp. 65-71.
3. P. Murphy, "The Development of Free State Capitalism" (Part 1.) "An Solas" No.1, February 1965.

4. Strauss, op.cit., p.205.
5. "The landed gentry, the well-to-do merchants and most of the strong farmers supported the drives that were organised to provide comforts for British soldiers. We did our best to frustrate such activities". Dan Breen, "My Fight for Irish Freedom", p.23.
6. Founded Co. Mayo, 1898.
7. Strauss, op. cit., pp.211-12. For a summary of land purchase see Strauss, op. cit., p.199, and MacNeive, op. cit., p.90: "by 1921 three-quarters of the arable land of Ireland had passed into the ownership of over 200,000 tenants" (MacNeive loc. cit.)
8. "The Sinn Fein Policy", p.11.
9. "The Parnell split, destroying the hegemony of the Parliamentarians, released many new forces and opened the way for an independent working-class party which would be more than a sect. Within a few years were founded the Gaelic League, the Celtic literary societies, the Irish TUC and Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party". Greaves, op.cit., p.58. See also Emmet Larkin, "James Larkin", p.25 and Prologue, pp.xii-xiii.
10. Strauss, op.cit., p,232.
11. Breen, op.cit., p.20.
12. Desmond Ryan "Ireland, Whose Ireland?" p.34
13. See Desmond Ryan "The Rising", Greaves, op.cit., Max Caulfield "The Easter Rebellion, R.M. Fox "The History of the Irish Citizen Army", Sean Murray "The Irish Revolt, 1916 and after" (re-published 1966 by the Irish Workers Group, introduction by G.Lawless).
14. Greaves, op. cit., p.62.
15. Ibid., p.65. See also James Connolly "Socialism and Nationalism".
16. Fox, op. cit., pp. 14-15.
17. Ibid., p. 120.

18. Ibid., pp. 125-6.
19. Greaves, op.cit., p.339.
20. See T.P.Coogan "Ireland since the Rising"pp.23-24.
21. "Notes from Mountjoy Jail", intro. by Irish Workers Group, Second Printing pp. 6-7.
22. Census of Production, 1926.
23. Coogan, op.cit., p.47.
24. Ibid., pp. 51-2 & 55-6.
25. Brian O'Neill "The War for the Land in Ireland" p.107.
26. For Dev's policy 1932-38 see P. Murphy "The Development of Free State Capitalism", "An Solas" Nos. 1 and 2, Feb., Mar., 1965 and P. Murphy "The Rise and Fall of Sinn Fein Capitalism in the Free State", "An Solas" No. 4 (May 1965) : also Patrick McGlynn "Economics of Freedom" (Republican Publications) pp. 59-60; Coogan, op.cit., pp. 76-77 and p.84.
27. See the Analysis in McGlynn, op.cit.,pp.72-78.
28. See Dalton, Lian "Exercise Easter Lightning", "An Solas" No. 5, June 1965.
29. Murphy, "An Solas" 2, p.9.
30. "For the period 1926-36 the net outflow from the 26 Counties was 167,000; from 1936 to 1946 the figure was 190,000" (T.W. Freeman in "The Banker", July 1948)
31. Coogan, op.cit., p.155.
32. "The incentives to open a factory in Ireland, available both to Irish citizens and to foreigners, include exemption from incometax and corporation tax on profits from exports for the first ten years; and thereafter a period of five years in which these taxesare gradually raised to the full rate. There is also a system of grants for assisting in the setting up of factories (in some cases grants can be as much as two-thirds and more of the cost of installation) and for the training of workers. A condition of such grants is that the factories concerned must produce goods for the export market" (Coogan, loc. cit,)
33. Coogan, op.cit., p.296.
34. See "Nation or Province? Ireland and the Common Market"p.19.
35. Quoted by Greaves, op. Cit., p.67.



environ men and which have hitherto ruled men now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature, because he has now become master of his own social organisation...It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom".<sup>2</sup>

Sean Hutton says "Without the given end the dialectic is less than useless". We can reply existentially: "Like all radical humanism, Marxism rejects the idea of an in-human objectivity... It is the needs of people, the revolt of a class which define aims and goals. It is from within a rejected situation, in the light of this rejection, that a new state appears desirable"<sup>3</sup>. The Marxist philosopher Lukacs writes: "The final end is not a state which awaits the proletariat, at the end of the movement, independent of this movement and of the path it follows, a state of the future... The final end is rather that relationship to the totality (of society considered as a process), by which each moment of the struggle acquires its revolutionary direction".<sup>4</sup>

A social science which starts by studying the parts must always see them as more or less inevitable and given, because the pressures on them are always overwhelming. Marxian dialectics, on the other hand, starts from studying the totality (society considered as a process). This is the level at which men are not powerless cogs in a machine, but at which, if they act collectively and consciously, they can call the whole structure and direction of the machine into question. Criticism of the parts alone is bound to be woolly and unrealistic - nuclear weapons, colonial exploitation, unemployment etc. all make perfect sense given the system as a whole. Marxian history is not a science - the observation of details from outside - but arises from revolutionary dialectics, showing the contradictions within the whole man-made process. Without his vantage point as an active revolutionary in the class struggle of his time, Marx could never have understood and written his historical works. History does not tell us what to seek in the future but our standpoint in a current struggle to shape the history of the future gives us a perspective onto the history which men in the past made. This perspective in turn teaches us about the boundaries of possibility and the inevitability of change.

The second main point in Hutton's article is that the pure economic determinism of the founding fathers was found wanting and had to be adulterated by 'revisionist' followers.

I myself agree with E.P. Thompson in thinking the 'base

superstructure analogy to be unfortunate and misleading. "In all their historical analysis Marx and Engels always kept in view the dialectical interaction between social consciousness... and social being. But in trying to explain their ideas they expressed them as a makebelieve model... In fact no such basis and superstructure ever existed." "The dialectical intercourse between social being and social consciousness is at the heart of any comprehension of the historical process within the Marxist tradition... The tradition inherits a dialectic that is right, but the particular mechanical metaphor through which it is expressed is wrong. This metaphor from constructional engineering must be inadequate to describe the flux of conflict..."<sup>5</sup>

In fact Hutton is factually inaccurate when he sees a mechanical determinism as the original from which 'revisionists' have deviated, for the truth is the reverse. For Marx the 'economic base' the 'forces of production' are not, as bourgeois economists would have them, natural facts and laws external to men, but are the total social existence of men as active creative beings. He is asserting that men develop their ideas (whether true or false) in the course of their ACTIVITY in the world, not as observers abstracted from it. Men's understanding is often false-BECAUSE the actual contradictions and limitations of his activity produce the impression that external forces are working on him. The supreme expression of this alienation is in wage labour, where the products of men's hands become the wealth of the capitalist, and are used to enslave them further. Those products combine to form those 'market laws' which rule their lives. It was the young Marx who said "When consciousness takes hold of the masses it becomes a material force". It is absolutely fundamental of Marxism that Socialism can only be brought about consciously, and that socialist consciousness is not developed as a reflection of events but in the course of struggle AGAINST them.

It was Bernstein and the revisionists at the turn of the century who tried to reduce Marxism to a mechanical model according to which socialism would come about gradually through the natural unfolding of events, without the active intervention of the working class. Far from Lenin (and Luxemburg) having, as Hutton suggests to perform gymnastics with 'pure historical determinism' they were in fact re-

turning to the original foundations of revolutionary Marxism as against the vulgar materialism of the revisionists. Vulgar materialism of course became the orthodoxy under Stalinism, and dialectics was corrupted or ignored.

So we see that the materialism and the dialectics of Marxism are not separate theories, but bound together—asserting the contradiction between man as the only active and creative force, working within the limitations of nature and of a society established by previous generations and by the unwilling products of competition. The contradiction can only be resolved in revolutionary action.

## 3.

There was a time when religion was the subject of strong assertion or determined rejection. I am surprised to see that for Sean Hutton it has become an optional extra; "A total explanation can only be given in terms of time past, present and future—and if one accepts an existence outside of time, in terms of this as well"

A belief in a God who intervenes in history must change one's entire perspective. It is no longer we who set up our own ends and it is no longer we who are absolutely responsible for our world responsibility for the religious stops at the soul, at charity and the good will.

Above all for Marxists, God is the product of alienation. "The more of himself man attributes to God, the less he has left in himself" 6

Religion is indeed man's self consciousness and self awareness as long as he has not found his feet in the universe... Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering.

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions, it is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of man, is a demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a call to abandon a condition which requires illusions".<sup>7</sup> We do not wish men to become gods— but to build a world where there are no gods

whether called by that name, or disguised as 'providence' 'fate', 'historical inevitability' or as 'the laws of the market', or Adam Smith's 'hidden hand'.

Constance Lever.

NOTES

1. K. Marx: Theses on Feuerbach 1845.
2. F. Engels: Anti Duhring.
3. Simone de Beauvoir: Ethics of ambiguity.
4. G. Lukacs: History and class consciousness.
5. E.P. Thompson: In New Reasoner 1,1957 and in Socialist Register 1965, P351.
6. Karl Marx: Economic and Political Manuscripts. 1844
7. K.Marx: Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.

The object of this article is to examine the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald and to see it in relation to his life and to the times in which he lived. Though this is a political magazine, the article makes no direct political comment. None is necessary: the story of Fitzgerald's life is in itself a telling indictment of the society which first moulded him, then destroyed him.

#### DEATH OF A WRITER

By Paddy Lynch

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on September 24, 1896, the only son of Edward and Molly (nee McQuillan) Fitzgerald. He was to say in later life: "I am half black Irish (McQuillan) and half old American stock with the usual exaggerated ancestral pretensions. The black Irish half of the family had the money and looked down upon the Maryland (Fitzgerald) side." His father, Edward Fitzgerald, was a genteel, sensitive failure who drank more than was good for him. Though he tried, he just could not comprehend money, with the result that it was left to the McQuillan family to pay for the Fitzgerald children's upbringing and private education. Solidly bourgeois, the McQuillans had emigrated from Fermanagh in 1842 and, starting from scratch, had built up a modestly impressive chain of grocery stores. Hardboiled business people that they were, they made no bones about what they thought of a man who, breeding or no breeding, couldn't even support his wife and children.

The result was a continuous family quarrel in which the young Scott Fitzgerald found himself siding with the McQuillans - to him they represented the American success story, the great American Dream of Rags to Riches. His grandfather, the self-made man, was his hero. All that really seemed to matter in life was the acquisition of material wealth. As if to bolster up this early credo, Fitzgerald, as a student at Princeton, found that his marriage overtures to the beautiful, wealthy, 17 year Ginevra King were spurned precisely because he did not have enough money. He wrote bitterly in his Ledger: "Poor boys shouldn't think of marrying rich girls" - he had learned at an early age that in free-enterprise, capitalist America, money sang. As if to illustrate this point even further, the very woman whom he eventually married, 18 year old Zelda Sayre of Montgomery, made no bones about the fact that she had expensive tastes and had no intention of settling down into a dreary middle-class domesticity: there would be no marriage until Fitzgerald had proven his talents as a moneymaker.

It was this that forced him to settle down to write his first novel, "This Side of Paradise" (in actual fact a rewriting of an earlier, unpublished work, "The Romantic Egotist"). It was accepted by Scribners in September, 1919, just a few days before Fitzgerald's 22nd birthday, and was

published in March 1920. The first printing sold out within twenty four hours and by the end of the year it had sold almost 50,000 copies. F. Scott Fitzgerald, writer, had arrived.

Though "This Side of Paradise" was to have a considerable influence on writers such as John O'Hara and Katherine Bush and, indeed, on American writing in general, it was not, when all is said and done, a particularly good novel. Though individual passages were superbly written, it was largely without any cohesive form, consisting of a loose collection of letters, tales, poems and often dreary monologues, all held together by a semi-autobiographical hero. It was, however, the first popular example of the *Entwicklungsroman*, an already well-established literary form in Europe which held that to know what man is one must first examine his infancy, his childhood, and his adolescence. (Dickens' "David Copperfield" and Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" are typical European examples.)

It caused a storm, for it treated the behaviour and attitudes of young people with a frankness and a realism hitherto unknown in American writing. Fitzgerald was only telling the truth, but the truth was unpalatable. "This Side of Paradise" was the first American novel to put down in print the implications of the new adolescent freedoms which were partly the result of the cataclysm of the first World War and partly due to the fact that American middle-class youngsters were now no longer obliged to pass quickly from childhood into responsible adulthood but instead postponed marriage and a job and went to college. Its heroines were of this new school, non-conformist and emancipated, and their behaviour caused many a raised eyebrow and many a cry of "corruption", especially in the rigidly puritan East. Stories circulated about the young writer's drinking exploits, about his "fastness" with women, and, of course, about his atheism. (In his Ledger, opposite the date of his 21st birthday, he had noted laconically "My last year as a Catholic.")

Not that this storm bothered Fitzgerald. He was now intent on becoming a full-time writer, a hazardous occupation since the very nature of the American system, based as it was on private enterprise, demanded production, and this applied even to art. Thus he was forced to rely on potboiler short stories to keep the money rolling in and he became a regular contributor in these early years to "The Saturday Evening Post" and "Scribner's Magazine". Some of the stories were good, some bad. His finest, written in March, 1920, was "May Day", which among its incidents described a parade of ex-doughboys up 5th Avenue and their looting of the offices of a left-wing newspaper. In this story are to be seen the first indications that Fitzgerald's early belief in the American Dream is beginning to turn sour: his excitement at being part of the get-rich-quick Great Society is gradually being replaced by a sense of disillusionment and betrayal.

In the meantime Zelda had capitulated and in April 1920 they got married in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Fitzgerald now hoped that he could give up magazine writing and support himself and his wife on best-selling novels and Broadway plays. It was, however, a vain hope, and he was to spend

the next half-dozen years engaged in the soul-destroying task of grinding out the hack magazine stories which would pay his bills. Although "May Day" had given a clear indication that Fitzgerald was on the point of breaking with his earlier belief in the Great Society, these stories, taken at face value, were a step back. They did not mean, however, that Fitzgerald himself was returning to his old views. It was simply that he found it easy to write about wealth and glamour, about "the crying horns and the whisper of dancing feet". But these stories, along with "This Side of Paradise", were to brand him forever as the representative of the Jazz Age. F. Scott Fitzgerald was its symbol. Even today when people talk of that feverish period of libertinism which was ushered in with the ending of World War I, Fitzgerald and his beautiful flapper wife Zelda are inevitably referred to. Yet his next two novels "The Beautiful and the Damned" and "The Great Gatsby", as well as his unsuccessful play, "The Vegetable", consciously exposed and rejected the attitudes and the values of the Jazz Age. They were an indictment of all that he had so enthusiastically glamourised in his earlier work. Yet when he died his obituarists associated him with a genre of fiction which he had not been writing for many years; they wrote of him as the spokesman for the rich and the well to do, the snobs and the diletantes, the Flappers and the Jazzers - but he had abdicated his position many years previously. And they never knew. Fitzgerald, if one may paraphrase Paul Rosenfeld, finally broke the mould and freed himself of the compulsions of the civilization in which he grew up. It was a pathetic story he had to tell, the legend of a moon that never rose; and that was precisely the sort of story a certain America did not want to hear. They closed their ears. They never knew.

Fitzgerald wrote: "America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was going to be plenty to tell about it. The golden boom was in the air.... all the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them - the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and as damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants. In life these things hadn't happened yet, but I was pretty sure living wasn't the reckless, careless business these people thought." These words, written just before "The Beautiful and the Damned", mirror the atmosphere of moral decay, of empty excitement, of recklessness, which pervades this powerful novel. Its hero, Anthony Patch, was a rich young Harvard dilettante, a dissipated man about town who drifted into a casual affair with a poorer, more innocent girl than himself whom he treated despicably. The woman whom he actually loved found out about the whole sordid affair and ceased to have any respect or feeling for him. The result was ruin.

Fitzgerald took this expose of the amorality and decadence of the Great Society a step further with his play "The Vegetable", which consisted of a slashing attack on the moral values of national politics in general and on Warren Harding's Presidency in particular. It was not a good play. In fact it was a downright bad one, though, as Henry Piper has pointed out, if it had appeared a year or so later it might have found a more responsive audience, since when it opened in the autumn of 1923 Harding had been dead

only a few months, Teapot Dome had not yet assumed the proportions of a national scandal, and the average theatre-goer was not yet ready to ridicule the White House. But though "The Vegetable" was a failure, it did at least show that Scott Fitzgerald had seen through the lie of the American dream of success, the dream that he had once so exalted a long time ago in the Fitzgerald-McQuillan household. He is to spend the remainder of his life searching in vain for something to replace it. He tries to find it in the American Communist Party and fails. He tries to find it in alcohol; it kills him.

His next novel was "The Great Gatsby", but he made little progress with this at first since the failure of "The Vegetable" forced him to spend the period of 1923-24 writing magazine stories and articles in order to clear his debts. On top of this, his house at Great Neck had become the focal point for the New York party-set, and their weekend parties had a habit of stretching from one weekend to the next. He decided to make a clean break, and on May 3, 1924, Zelda and he moved to the French Riviera. Five months later he sent to his publishers the completed manuscripts of "The Great Gatsby". It was his most brilliant novel, both in form and content. T. S. Eliot called it "the first step the American novel has taken since Henry James." But the American people were not ready for it; nor did they want it. They were not prepared to see the man whom they had set up as the Court Poet of the Great Society blame that society, blame its politicians and its policemen, its lawyers and its society leaders, its tycoons and its pimps, for the death of the mysterious Gatsby. They were not prepared to accept that Gatsby's death was caused by the fact that he had been forced to accept the mores of that society, that he was engaged in the search for the Grail, not the Holy Grail of mediaeval literature but the 20th Century one of material wealth.

They rejected the novel. It sold badly, very badly, and once more Fitzgerald was forced to return to what he called the "heartbreaking" task of grinding out yet more banal, second-rate short stories. He was now fast approaching the period of his collapse, mentally and physically. He was travelling about France, aimlessly. In the winter of 1925-26 he knocked off five poorly written magazine stories. He was not able to settle down to write anything of a serious nature. He was drinking heavily and doing the party rounds, finding himself more and more often in trouble with the local police as a result of his alcoholic sprees. On top of this, Zelda was manifesting the first signs of her impending schizophrenic collapse. Fitzgerald's confidence in himself began to fail. Magazines began to reject his short stories. His disillusionment with the wealthy now became replaced by a deep-rooted bitterness engendered by his belief that they had created this sham society which was dragging him down. The collapse of the stock market in 1929 and the ensuing miseries of the '30's seemed to him to justify the warnings contained in his writings of the dangers of reckless, uncontrolled wealth. Perhaps inevitably Fitzgerald was attracted to Marxism and his Baltimore home, "La Paix", became the meeting place of the local Communist Party cell. But Fitzgerald was no Communist. It was only his disillusionment and his bitterness which led to his brief flirtation with the Left.

He was not, in fact, against the private possession of wealth but was opposed, rather, to the unbridled arrogance which seemed to go hand in hand with being wealthy. He was middle-class by upbringing and he could never forget it. He was bourgeois through and through and he believed wholeheartedly in the bourgeois idea of free enterprise. No matter how much he might attack the excesses of the American dream, no matter how bitter he might feel - "The best of America was the best of the world.... it was a willingness of the heart."

These words, written shortly after his break with the American left, mark the second major turning point in the evolution of Fitzgerald's attempts to find a personal credo. The period of compromise has begun. Though Fitzgerald can never again accept the American Dream, he can accept idealised aspects of it. For him these are epitomised in his vision of the poor boy rising from rags to riches, but rising only to tragedy for this he believes is what the American Dream is really made of. It is an unhappy, unsatisfactory compromise which drops him even deeper into the troughs of despair. The story of these and of the next few years is best summed up by his own Ledger: "Drinking and general unpleasantness. First trip jail. C--- R---- and dive in Lido. Second trip jail. General carelessness and boredom.... no real progress in anything." The novel he was working on, "The Boy who killed his Mother", was begun, put down, begun again. He told his agents of hard work, of the novel going well, of it being "wonderful". The Ledger told another, sadder tale: "Being drunk and snubbed.... Fairies... breakdown.... Zelda dancing and sweating... Rows and indifference." Then, on April 23, 1930, Zelda had another breakdown and early in 1932 a third. Fitzgerald's world was tumbling around his ears. But in the middle of this hell he managed to salvage a few months peace and in the summer of 1932 began "Tender is the Night". In a frenzy of work he completed the first draft by September 1933 and the novel was published the following April. It bore no relation, however, to the much talked about "Boy who killed his Mother", whose very existence remains somewhat in doubt.

"Tender is the Night" marked a step forward artistically for Fitzgerald in that, through the use of a tragic theme, he was able for the first time to treat objectively the relationship of an individual to society. He was able to make use of his own personal experience but at the same time did not allow this to colour his handling of the novel's content. In Henry Piper's words: "Throughout Fitzgerald's career the mark of his achievement as an artist would be the degree to which he could make use of and at the same time transcend personal experience." From now on his heroes were to be his old heroes of the past, the bright young men who succeeded in making the American Dream come true. But now they were tragic figures. He had seen the rich and grown disillusioned: the tragedy of these young men was that they were to become rich.

Fitzgerald's reputation was still on the downslide. "This Side of Paradise" sold badly. By 1935 the only magazine that was regularly publishing his fiction was "Esquire", and then only to the tune of \$200 - \$300, less than on tenth of his old price. He had but five years to live,

and they were to be the saddest years of a short, sad life. He was on a perpetual binge and suffering badly from D.T.'s. Zelda was in a mental institution - three times she had attempted suicide. His world was in ruins all around him. A mere fifteen years previously his first novel had been a bestseller. He had been a 23 year old genius, the most promising young writer of the era. And now - nothing. His novels flopped; no one wanted his short stories; his marriage had broken up; his wife was in an asylum. He was a wreck, mentally and physically. Yet now, when life was at its bleakest, he wrote his famous 1935-36 "Crack-up" essays. Just as in "This Side of Paradise" he had been able to transcend his own personal experiences and write objectively about a man's relation to society, so in these essays he sat back and took, in a detached, impersonal fashion, a long, clear look at himself: "I only wanted absolute quiet to think out why I had developed a sad attitude towards sadness, a melancholy attitude towards melancholy and a tragic attitude towards tragedy.... why I had become identified with the objects of my horror and compassion.... identification such as this spells the death of accomplishment." He no longer regarded himself as a tragic hero, a fact which was to make "The Last Tycoon", in spite of his utilisation of certain aspects of his own life, the most detached and genuinely tragic of all his novels.

In July 1937 he went to Hollywood to try his hand (for the third time) as a script writer. Although for a while it looked as if, with the help of Sheila Graham, the young English girl with whom he was now in love, he might at last break free from his drunken melancholia, the old, old story repeated itself. Budd Schulberg, with an innocently-offered glass of champagne, started him off on a spree of epic proportions which ended in February 1939 in the alcoholic ward of a New York hospital, dangerously ill with pneumonia. He was given a year to live if he did not stop drinking. In spite of this bleak warning the winter of 1939-40 was one prolonged, drunken nightmare. But in the summer of 1940 he seemed to snap out of it and he settled down to work on "The Last Tycoon". It was a remarkable novel, written by a man who had finally succeeded in destroying himself and who knew it. Based on Irving Thalberg, the boy genius of M.G.M. who died at 36 having made literally hundreds of box-office hits including "Ben Hur", "The Big Parade", and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame", it told the story of Monroe Stahr, the poor boy making good. He was the self-made man, doomed to fulfill his tragic destiny as a successful man of affairs. "Show me a hero and I will show you a tragedy."

"The Last Tycoon" was never completed. On the 22nd December, 1940, F. Scott Fitzgerald had a heart attack while escorting Sheila Graham to the opening of a new film. He died two days later in her living room. Like his own Gatsby he had tried to come to terms with the Great Society and had failed. It had destroyed him as it had destroyed Gatsby. Once, back in 1925, he had come near to the truth when he wrote a short story which opened with the words: "let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me." It was left to Ernest Hemingway to put his finger on it eleven years later in "Snows of Kilimanjaro".

"The rich were dull and they drank too much, or they played too

much backgammon." They were dull and they were repetitious. He remembered poor Scott Fitzgerald and his romantic awe of them and how he had started a story once that began "The ~~very~~ rich are different from you and me." And how someone said to Fitzgerald, "Yes, they have more money." But that was not humorous to Fitzgerald. He thought they were a special, glamorous race and when he found they weren't it wrecked him just as much as any other thing that wrecked him.