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Campaigning for a united Ireland: the Irish Freedom/Irish Democrat, an Irish diaspora newspaper in London, 1939-1973

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THÈSE

Pour obtenir le diplôme de doctorat

Spécialité **LANGUES ET LITTÉRATURES ÉTRANGÈRES**

Préparée au sein de l'**Université de Caen Normandie**

Campaigning for a United Ireland : The Irish Freedom/Irish Democrat, an Irish diaspora newspaper in London, 1939-1973

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Abstract

The subject of this study is an attempt to locate London-based the *Irish Freedom/Irish Democrat (IF/ID)* and its organisation Connolly Club/Connolly Association (CC/CA) in the British labour history. In order to set them in context, this thesis documents the role of this immigrant paper and its influence by providing a comprehensive overview from 1939 to 1973, with a focus on the period that preceded the Northern Ireland crisis. There had been various endeavours to establish diaspora nationalist newspapers in England in the past, but they had all been ephemeral. The *IF/ID* is the longest-serving Irish diaspora political paper in the world.

Compared to other Irish diaspora papers in Britain, this newspaper was unique as it emerged as a voice of a working-class movement - the first serious attempt to politically organise Irish working people to fight against imperialism in the very subject country. Their goal was to unite the two Irelands by mobilising workers in Britain. When the Irish working population was at the height around the mid-twentieth century, the organisation through its newspaper attempted to function as an organiser by linking the Irish question to the labour movement in England. In order to create a movement, they closely worked with other left-wing organisations and individuals, such as the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), Labour Party members, republicans, trade unionists amongst others.

However, the fact that each organ handled the Irish question differently caused confrontation and schism. The organs of the left hardly constituted a unified front as their complicated reality reflected on the newspaper. Amidst the endless plight and limited resources, however, the newspaper and its organisation endeavoured to function to the fullest extent within the existing framework of the period, embracing masses of working people, influencing the labour movement and ultimately attempting to democratise Britain.

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Acronyms

APL	Anti-Partition League
CA	Connolly Association
CC	Connolly Club
CDU	Campaign for Democracy in Ulster
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPI	Communist Party of Ireland
CPNI	Communist Party of Northern Ireland
CSJ	Campaign for Social Justice
DW	Daily Worker
EEC	European Economic Community
GL	Gaelic League
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
ID	Irish Democrat
IF	Irish Freedom
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ISDL	Irish Self Determination League
ITUC	Irish Trade Union Congress
IWL	Irish Workers' League
IWP	Irish Workers' Party
IWV	Irish Workers' Voice
LP	Labour Party
MCF	Movement for Colonial Freedom
NCCL	National Council for Civil Liberties
NHS	National Health Service
NIC	Northern Ireland Committee
NICRA	Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association
NILP	Northern Ireland Labour Party
OIRA	Official Irish Republican Army
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army

RUC	Royal Ulster Constabulary
SPA	Special Powers Act
TUC	Trades Union Congress
WTS	Wolfe Tone Society

I have used the terms Northern Ireland, the North of Ireland, the North, the six counties, Ulster interchangeably and referred to the rest of Ireland as the South and the Republic. Furthermore, the terms UK, Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) and England are also used interchangeably throughout the thesis.

Introduction

John Boyle O'Reilly said a daily newspaper is 'the biography of a day.'¹ To apply his words to the *Irish Freedom/Irish Democrat*, it was a biography of a month, mirroring the struggle of the Irish working class in England. This thesis examines the *IF/ID* in the period between 1939 and 1973. Because this paper functioned as a press organ for the CC/CA, a history of the publication essentially implies a history of the organisation and its developments as its thinking was directly represented in the newspaper. To accomplish this undertaking, this study performs a thorough historical and content analysis of the paper to demonstrate how the CC/CA expressed its aspirations and its paper documented Irish immigrants' lives and the conditions of Irish/Catholic people in Northern Ireland. Its primary objective is to provide a narrative that adds value to the fields of diaspora and activist journalism, working-class and labour movements, and Irish social history in Britain by providing thematic case studies.

In January 1939, politically active Irish immigrants in London launched a newspaper *Irish Freedom* in order to campaign under the banner of 'Ireland and Working Men in England, Unite!'. The newspaper was published in London from 1939 to 2007 (initially called *Irish Freedom* from January 1939 to December 1944, then the *Irish Democrat* from January 1945 to June 2007) by the Connolly Club, subsequently renamed Connolly Association in October 1943. Based in London, the CC/CA is the principal organisation that represented Irish Republican ideals in Britain. During the mid-twentieth century, it was the only Irish political organ in England at one point and the oldest campaigning organisation of the Irish in Britain that still exists, although its newspaper ceased to exist.

It is well acknowledged by historians and researchers² that all Irish-related research subjects and fields during the period between the aftermath of the time of the creation of the Free State in 1922 and the commencement of the Northern Ireland Troubles in 1969 are under-researched. Evidence suggests less books were published during this relatively quiet period.³ Similarly, political and

¹ Quoted in McNicholas, 2007, *Politics, Religion and the Press: Irish Journalism in Mid-Victorian England*, Peter Lang, Bern, p193

² For example, Diarmaid Ferriter who wrote *the Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*.

³ While researching at the archives, several archivists mentioned that less documents exist during these decades.

labour history of Irish immigrants in England in any period has not been sufficiently investigated, even though the Irish in England had been the oldest and largest immigrant group. That is particularly the case during the Second World War and subsequent post-war years although their economic contributions to their host country were substantial. The struggle of Irish people against the British authorities has been going on for a considerable amount of time which is intertwined with British working-class history. As the most numerous immigrants in England, Irish people always brought their politics with them when they arrived in the subject⁴ country. However, no work has been done on the Irish diaspora newspaper during the twentieth century.

Historically, the Irish diaspora press always functioned as a propaganda tool. For example, during the late nineteenth century, Irish newspapers in the US used the famine experience as a clarion call to mobilise Irish American support for the struggle for Ireland's independence.⁵ Over half a century later in England, an Irish immigrant newspaper challenged the British government by disclosing injustice and inequality against Irish and Catholic people within the context of democracy and civil rights and organised a mass movement. The war and post-war years were the era of the rise of anti-imperialism and decolonisation activities, and the *IF/ID* became part of this British Left movement. One of the methods the newspaper applied was to work broadly with other Left organisations such as Communist Parties, Labour Parties, trade unions and other progressive groups mainly in England but also in the jurisdictions of Belfast and Dublin through their contacts and network.

Unlike other Irish diaspora newspapers in England in the past, the *IF/ID*, representing a voice of working-class people, offered information and continuously interpreted events that were related to British imperialism and aspired to be a powerful cohesive force in its way as it challenged the British parliament to alter the law and politicians' perception and contributed as a sole organisation in this effort. The most innovative aspect of this organ is that it worked with British politicians directly. Their unprecedented footsteps deserve to be acknowledged. In principle, left-wing organs

⁴ Dissimilar to other colonised populations abroad, the case of Irish immigrants is unique as they were directly protesting against British imperialism in Britain.

⁵ Mulcrone, Mick, *The Famine Irish and the Irish-American Press: Strangers in a Hostile Land*, *American Journalism*, 20:3, 2003, p56

generally cooperated with others and had a broad strategy in order to achieve each organ's mission and goals. The newspaper aspired to work along with the labour movement in Britain for the interests of Irish immigrants as it unfolds in the following chapters. Its ultimate goal was to win support in Britain for the struggle of the Irish people for a united Independent Ireland and to stand for equal treatment for Irish workers in Britain. Involving highly educated individuals, academics, Communist Party and Labour Party members, republicans, trade unionists, and British workers, the newspaper was the first movement of this kind of non-sectarian⁶ initiative. CC/CA leaders certainly had closed-door meetings with CP counterparts, but their preoccupation was to organise, gather trade unionists to create a labour movement, while simultaneously working with British politicians to remind them to discuss the Irish question. The paper attempted to exercise influence through public opinion. The means of achieving its goal was through articles calling readers to act – to participate in various public campaigns and walks, to join the trade unions, to educate themselves and others with recommended books and literature. In this process, this strategic campaigning paper strove to lead the labour movement and aspired to transform it into a powerful agent of change. Considering all the ephemeral predecessors in the Victorian period which lasted only one or two issues or a few years at the longest, the fact that the *IF/ID* managed to exist more than six decades against all the odds is astonishing. This thesis aspires to fill one of these blank spaces.

Theoretical framework of the research

This thesis is structured around four fields of research and their theoretical underpinnings: history from below, activist journalism, exile politics and a diaspora group on the margins. The positioning of the theoretical concepts reflects the sequence of the main arguments, and the content of each following chapter. To start developing the arguments, the idea needs to be conceptualised.

Firstly, the angle of this thesis is history from below which seeks to take ordinary people as its subjects and focus on their experiences and perspectives. History from below is a relatively new

⁶ This aspect will be further examined in the following chapter.

discipline compared to history from above. It is ‘a term, and set of practices, open to interpretation.’⁷ This research project considers people’s history from a working-class perspective. History from below was in effect ‘championed by, and is now most closely associated with, these left-wing movements who sought radical political and social change.’⁸

The second level of the theoretical design, activist journalism, considers examining the labour movement and activist history. The most influential genres of activist history writing are those associated with the working class, with colonised peoples, such as ethnic minority histories.⁹ This research project looks at how the newspaper and its organisation as part of the left-wing political movement during the mid-twentieth century attempted to overcome obstacles to reach its goal.

Thirdly, exile politics stratum is designed to explain through the stage-based Marxist-Leninist political theory, the revolutionary people’s power of the CP and the approach of Lenin’s newspaper *Iskra*.¹⁰ The *IF/ID* strove to initiate a movement and challenged the British government. According to the Marxist stage theory, a ‘revolutionary situation could be brought about only by achieving a series of goals: equality, then national freedom, then social freedom, and eventually socialism.’¹¹ One of the fundamental aspects of the study of working-class movements is the analysis of their success. In order to assess it, it is important to understand what success implies in the context of the movements and how it achieves it. However, rather than focusing on the outcomes, this thesis concentrates on the process.

The last level of the theoretical point looks at the diaspora aspect, namely how the paper framed Irish grievances and the mindset of general diaspora population. As the majority of the Irish had been at the bottom of the hierarchy of British society, they had been the *de facto* breadwinner for the Empire for such a long time, if not centuries. Irish workers had been crucial to England and the English working-class system as the main workforce and lifeline. Marx and Engels analysed

⁷ Myers, Kevin and Grosvenor, Ian, (eds) 2018, *Collaborative Research: History from Below*, The University of Bristol and the AHRC Connected Communities Programme, Bristol, p11

⁸ *ibid.*, p19

⁹ *ibid.*, p18

¹⁰ This will be developed more in the following chapter.

¹¹ Hanley, Brian and Miller, Scott, 2009, *The Lost Revolution: The Story of the Official IRA and the Workers’ Party*, Penguin Books, London, p220

the role of Irish workers within the British system and the British working class in detail.¹² As German immigrants in England, they were intrigued and fascinated by destitute Irish people within the British system. They subsequently influenced and formed the way of James Connolly's thinking. The organisation was named after Connolly and the *IF/ID* was established on the basis of his Marxist Socialism. Connolly's contributions consist of two related aspects: one for Ireland, the other for the international working-class movement. As Desmond Greaves highlighted: 'The juxtaposition of two ideas, socialism and national independence, is at the heart of Connolly's contribution to Irish history.'¹³ Connolly believed that the masses in a Socialist-Labour-Movement would transcend sectarian divisions.¹⁴ Most importantly, the *IF/ID*'s role in this process was to function as an instigator which is the same ideology as Lenin's *Iskra*.¹⁵

Additionally, one of the confusions when dealing with Irish affairs or the Irish question was the usage of the language as all involved groups were not unanimous in their definition of Northern Ireland. How to define Northern Ireland? Is it a province or a region? Is Northern Ireland a national or colonial problem? Should we analyse it from a colonial or neo-colonial point of view? Who is in charge of solving the conflict about sovereignty? Was the IRA a terrorist group or a paramilitary one? Was the CC/CA dealing with exile politics or British politics? Even the British government was evidently ambiguous about the issue as Irish political documents are frequently mixed up or categorised in an unconventional manner at the archives. MI5 handled the Northern Irish affairs, but MI6 was also involved.¹⁶

Defining a problem and identifying a strategy in this highly complicated society requires careful consideration. In this process, Brendan O'Leary has pointed out that 'terminology raises complex questions about objectivity in Ireland.'¹⁷ James McAuley has also emphasised that British unionists and Irish nationalists hold 'conflicting views on the origins of the conflict, its causes and its solutions.'¹⁸ Scholars have been analysing the nature of the community divide in Northern

¹² Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich, 1971, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, Lawrence & Wishart, London.

¹³ Greaves, Desmond, 1961, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, p342

¹⁴ Jackson, T.A., 1963, *Ireland and Her Own*, Routledge, London, p368

¹⁵ This will be discussed in Chapter four.

¹⁶ MI5 focuses their efforts within the UK, while MI6 focuses on gathering intelligence outside the UK.

¹⁷ O'Leary, Brendan, 2019, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, xxxi

¹⁸ McAuley, *An Introduction to Politics, State & Society*, p136

Ireland and many interpretations exist. For example, John Whyte's study analyses four different interpretations of the conflict: nationalist, unionist, Marxist, and internal conflict. Roger Hull explains by using three viewpoints, Dublin, London, and Belfast as he coined the 'Dublin-London-Belfast labels,' which should be viewed as 'umbrellas under which the beliefs and demands of diverse participants to the struggle can be separated into three differentiated categories.'¹⁹ Many journalists who were based or have actually worked in Northern Ireland consider the IRA as a paramilitary organisation as they witnessed the situation firsthand. Robert Fisk states, 'I always refer to Northern Ireland as a war and not the Troubles.'²⁰ Marx and Engels attempted to place the Irish question into their theoretical frame. Marx wrote a letter to Engels in 1867: 'The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general.'²¹ They analysed it to a great extent, however, it was James Connolly who applied their ideas to Ireland.²² Following Connolly's trade unionism, the CC/CA adopted this interpretation when interpreting the Northern Ireland conflict, Ireland and Irish people's grievances in general: 'a struggle for a workers' victory also meant a struggle for national independence.'²³ Furthermore, being affiliated with the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF) during the time of decolonisation meant that the paper primarily used the colonial dimension and analogy, rather than focusing on sectarian or communal issues. According to Whyte, to apply a colonial label, it has to be 'illegitimate' and 'unlikely to last.'²⁴ However, many scholars agree that the conflict in Northern Ireland is too complex and a conventional 'analytical framework'²⁵ cannot be utilised. For this reason, without properly defining terms, policies cannot be determined, and collaboration would not be effective. Another example is that the word 'left' has different connotations in each locality. Greaves acknowledged that the definition of Right and Left in Britain and Ireland has a different denotation: 'The trouble with the English Left is that they think Left and Right in Ireland are the same as Left and Right in England, whereas in Ireland Left and Right revolve around the national question.'²⁶ A veteran of the labour movement also states that 'the left in Ireland was simply

¹⁹ Hull, Roger, 1976, *The Irish Triangle: Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p7

²⁰ *The Independent*, 4 November 2020

²¹ Marx, and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, p398

²² Whyte, John, 1990, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p175

²³ *ibid.*, p175

²⁴ *ibid.*, p175

²⁵ Hull, *The Irish triangle*, p3

²⁶ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p89

extreme nationalism' as 'the national question diverted potential revolutionary tendencies among the workers.'²⁷ Greaves remarked: 'the Left has frequent splits, the Right does not. It is because the Right shows the natural solidarity of the ruling class. Conservatives after all have something to conserve.'²⁸

This project is an attempt to chart the progress of an Irish immigrant newspaper, the *IF/ID*. What the paper through the organisation wanted to achieve was to end the partition of Ireland, and to unite Irish and local workers in Britain by winning support for the struggle of the Irish people. But how did they strive to unite Ireland and working people in England through the mobilisation of the working class? What were their objectives? Was the newspaper part of the working-class movement or was it a Communist Party paper? What challenges did they encounter? How did the paper proactively write and influence the labour movement? How did this newspaper contribute to the movement in England with their allies? How did they attempt to make the Irish question a political issue? What role did the newspaper play in cultural and sports nationalism? In addressing these research questions, its role, through newspaper articles, headlines and advertisements of the research period will be thoroughly investigated. This study also considers the newspaper's actual influence, other external factors and activities and their civil rights campaigns. In order to carry out their mission and to achieve their goals, this non-sectarian organisation needed to adopt a broad left-wing strategy, similar to all other left-wing organs during the research period by cooperating with their allies, namely the British and Irish Communist Parties, trade unions, the Labour Parties in Britain and in the two Irelands. The paper and CC/CA's activities were highly complex and interconnected with others. Although their allies' goals might be identical or similar with the CC/CA's, each organ's methods and means as well as their levels of commitment considerably varied. Additionally, this research project looks at confrontation and schism faced by the CC/CA, whether there was a conflict with their allies and how the organisation's decisions affected the newspaper.

Literature review

²⁷ Mitchell, Arthur, 1974, *Labour in Irish Politics 1890-1930: The Irish Labour Movement in an Age of Revolution*, Irish University Press, Dublin, p291

²⁸ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p89

The purpose of this literature review is to identify areas of prior scholarship and to locate my research within the context of existing literature. Because no work has been done on the mid-twentieth century Irish press in England, this section will look at the studies and topics in the relevant field.

Mediocre journalism?

As the press is a reflection of people's lives, it is a useful tool to analyse a specific group of people, their events and society in general. Moreover, when analysing it, it is important to put a human face on it. With regard to journalistic historiography, media scholars frequently point out that historians use newspaper articles only as references but do not consider the role of the media nor use them as proof of facts by properly examining them. When they do, it is too mechanical and tedious, and typically view them as mediocre materials. Marie-Louise Legg has claimed that newspaper articles are considered casually as 'easy copy and a low valuation'²⁹ and lamented that 'so much work on the press tends to be dull as human life is missing and the mentality of those who ran the press is absent.'³⁰ Stephen Koss observed 'too many studies of the press...have been more assembled than written.'³¹ Maurice Walsh also pointed out that newspaper articles are only used in Dorothy Macardle's *The Irish Republic* as references and 'newspaper evidence is rarely analysed.'³²

Although the press is one of the most indispensable sources in the context of immigrants' networks, Irish diaspora-related studies frequently contain no or little newspaper analysis. For example, *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities Since 1750*,³³ seldom use newspaper articles. David Fitzpatrick's political history title, *The Two Irelands 1912-1939* does not reference any newspaper articles. Whilst the Irish American press is relatively well explored in the US as their contribution is palpable in various industries and fields, studies on Irish immigrants frequently omit the importance of their newspaper. *Making the Irish American*, edited by J. J. Lee and Marion R.

²⁹ Legg, Marie-Louise, 1998, *Newspapers and Nationalism: The Social and Political Influence of the Irish Provincial Press 1850-1892*, p7

³⁰ Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism*, p9

³¹ Quoted in Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism*, p7 (Quoted from her PhD thesis)

³² Walsh, Maurice, 2008, *The News from Ireland: Foreign Correspondents and the Irish Revolution*, I.B. Tauris, London, p6

³³ MacDonagh, Oliver, et al, (ed.), 1983, *Irish Culture and Nationalism, 1750-1950*, The Macmillan Press, London

Casey, is a monumental book about the Irish immigrant impact on America which contains 29 chapters. Its dedicated chapters include Irish dance, music, and sports but it completely leaves out the place of journalism in the development of Irish America, although their powerful influence was unprecedented particularly in Boston and New York. The scarcity of news analysis studies means that it is hard to evaluate the effectiveness of newspapers on public opinion and whether political messages of newspapers were successfully carried out or not.

Diaspora journalism

A diaspora, literally means ‘to scatter’ in Greek, is defined as a community of people who do not live in their native country but maintain their community in the country they live in. By this definition, the *IF/ID* is considered a diaspora paper. However, similar to the Irish people’s ambiguous position in Britain, the terms diaspora, minority or immigrant journalism, may not be strictly fitting to describe the *IF/ID* as some might argue that Irish people are from the British Isles and anglophone. In the same way as Scottish and Welsh people in London, some researchers and politicians consider Irish people’s movement categorically and legally internal migration, even though Ireland was part of the UK from 1801-1922 and for the rest of its history, the South was and is a separate country. There are ample studies on Irish immigrants and their invisible status in Britain conducted by sociologists namely Mary Hickman and Louse Ryan³⁴, and historians David Fitzpatrick³⁵, Enda Delaney³⁶, amongst others, however, their press, both formal press histories and content analysis, has not been scrutinised yet.

Diasporic journalism, a relatively new academic field, keeps evolving. One of the most prolific diaspora media scholars is Ola Ogunyemi who focuses on African and Caribbean immigrant media in the UK. He identifies two broad roles played by diasporic media: an orientation role relating to information and advice to help diasporic groups adjust to the host country and a connective role relating to information about events in the homeland.³⁷ The diasporic news content is produced by

³⁴ Hickman, Mary, J, and Ryan Louise, 2020, ‘The Irish question: marginalizations at the nexus of sociology of migration and ethnic and racial studies in Britain’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 43:16, pp96-114

³⁵ Fitzpatrick, David, 1989, ‘A curious middle place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921’, in Swift and Gilley, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939*, Rowman & Littlefield, London, pp35-46

³⁶ Delaney, Enda, 2000, *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool

³⁷ Ogunyemi, Ola, (ed.), 2015, *Journalism, Audiences and Diaspora*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, p319

and for diasporic groups. Although the function of the *IF/ID* was primarily to serve the communities' crucial informational needs, it did not dedicate itself to writing about Irish community-related articles. In this context, it is debatable to locate the place of the *IF/ID* within this category as it was produced by Irish and British people and written for Irish, British and all people who support the principle of the self-determination of nations on a world scale. Carrying out some serious political missions in Britain, not in Ireland, the newspaper played multiple roles and aimed to function as a public service. Their mission was not confined within their own immigrant society but aimed to reach a wider audience and to democratise Britain. Compared to African and Caribbean immigrants as researched by Ogunyemi, Irish people's presence in Britain is rather evasive and their de facto British status³⁸ is one of the reasons why there is no solid study of Irish diaspora media/press or scholars who specifically focus on the Irish press in Britain.

As most Irish people generally considered being in Britain meant they were in exile,³⁹ their press could be defined as the diaspora media of the oppressed. In this context, other immigrant left wing newspapers namely Italian, such as Marcella Bencivenni's study on the Italian radical press in the US during the mid-twentieth century and Thomas L. Sakmyster's research on a communist newspaper for Hungarian Americans were characteristically identical. One of the most palpable aspects of the Irish press, particularly in the US, is that it highlighted writing on freedom.⁴⁰ Diaspora media has been considered 'as agents and objects of social change in immigration societies' as it can produce 'the interpretive frameworks through which audiences understand the world.'⁴¹ Although the *IF/ID* can be categorised as a diaspora newspaper, due to their invisible presence within the British system, the newspaper showed little interest in writing on assimilation-related articles. Assimilation is one of the most conspicuous subjects and objectives of diaspora journalism, in particular in the US. There are a few essays regarding this aspect, for example, Mick Mulcrone's study *the Famine Irish and the Irish American press*. Unlike Irish American

³⁸ According to the UK legislation site, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/>, the Ireland Act 1949 states that Ireland "is not a foreign country for the purposes of any law in force in any part of the United Kingdom."

³⁹ Dissimilar to the immigrants in the US and elsewhere, Irish people in Britain in general during the research period tended to view their status as the oppressed.

⁴⁰ Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad, 1985, *Proceedings Symposium: The Jewish Press: Why? Past, Present, Future*, p35

⁴¹ Ruhrmann, Georg, Shooman, Yasemin and Widmann, Peter, (ed.) 2016, *Media and Minorities: Questions on Representation from an International Perspective*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Berlin, p9

newspapers that typically urged their readers to take out citizenship and become good Americans,⁴² Irish newspapers in England never offered such advice because they did not need citizenship to stay in England. Even though after the South became independent and Irish citizens held an Irish passport, they never needed to obtain a British passport under the common travel area. They maintained their special status. Unlike Irish Americans who migrated to the US after making a solid decision to be settlers, Irish people in Britain kept their mobile status. The fact that the term Irish British does not exist indicates the first generation Irish never became British. Irish Americans and the Irish in Britain are characteristically very different in terms of the role played by the diaspora press and immigrants' aspirations, although their newspapers have some similarities in terms of content and development as they share the root cause.

Unlike Irish American newspapers, the *IF/ID* never encouraged readers to be good citizens. In the case of Britain, a good citizen means not to be British but to be a trade unionist. In addition to their invisible status within the host society, another characteristic of the newspaper is their working-class and socialist elements that made the discussion of assimilation insignificant. This is a typical feature, because, in socialist newspapers that are focused on working-class people, assimilation 'as a political issue is generally omitted.'⁴³ Jens Danielsen claims that 'because a worker's allegiance was to one's class and that of a socialist to the international movement, the retainment of language and culture did not interfere with the achievement of their goal.' Repressive forms for assimilation are considered purposeless as 'the decisive questions for the socialist workers were constantly: assimilated into what, on whose terms, for what purposes?'⁴⁴ The *IF/ID*'s purpose was not focused on assimilation but on the recruitment of trade unionists and leaders and bring them to the labour movement. Assimilation has never been the concern of the Irish press and people in Ireland, but their emphasis has been always politically motivated. The *IF/ID* showed no concern whether Irish immigrants were integrating well or discussing the arriving phase and assimilation stages. Their starting point was on the basis that they were already present and had been suffering from poverty, appalling living conditions, unemployment, and exploitation within the system for

⁴² Mulcrone, *The Famine Irish and the Irish-American Press*, p58

⁴³ Danielsen, Jens, Bjerre, 'Multi-Ethnic Cooperation in Europe and North America: The Case of Scandinavian Migrants', in Harzig, Christiane, et al, (ed.), 1985, *The Press of Labor Migrants in Europe and North America, 1880s to 1930s*, Publications of the Labor Newspaper Preservation Project, Bremen, p201

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p202

such a long time. Therefore, the *IF/ID* reflects the political climate and highlights the complexity of the diaspora press's role which was Irish, working-class and politically motivated in the enemy's territory. Throughout the modern history of the Irish settlement in Britain, as J. A. Jackson states, their interest had been consistently 'politics and the trade union movement.'⁴⁵ The *IF/ID* was a mixture of diaspora and left-wing newspaper.

Thriving Victorian/Chartist journalism

Although this is not my research period, it is worth reviewing what has been written about the radical press. The Chartist movement in Britain was a working-class protest movement from 1838 and lasted until 1857. Simultaneously, it helped to build support for trade unions and contributed to 'a new climate of hope by repeatedly arguing that social conditions could be changed through the force of combination.'⁴⁶ As chartists collaborated with radical political groups to spread the message, the working-class movement and the chartist or radical press, started developing in parallel with the general commercial press in the early nineteenth century. Under these conditions, the impact of the radical press was significant as it helped unify various groups of workers and 'contributed to the growth of working-class political and industrial organisations.'⁴⁷ As the radical press is associated with radical movements which focus on radical social change with the intention of creating equality for all people, it had many positive impacts. James Curran who is one of the most prolific media history scholars describes that the radical press reflected the growth of working-class organisations, deepened, and extended radical consciousness, and helped to build support for the working-class movement.⁴⁸ Its principal aim was to reach specific groups or organisations with various thematic areas of interest and to pose 'a more serious challenge to the *ancient régime* than the commercial press.'⁴⁹

Many studies have been done on the Victorian press in England. Patricia Hollis's *The Pauper Press: A Study in Working-Class Radicalism of the 1830s*⁵⁰ also mentioned various Irish writers

⁴⁵ Jackson, John, Archer, 1947, *The Irish in Britain*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, p116

⁴⁶ Curran, James, 2002, *Media and Power*, Routledge, London, p76

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p85

⁴⁸ Curran, James, *et al.*, 1981, *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*, Routledge, London, p19

⁴⁹ Curran, *Media and Power*, p76

⁵⁰ Hollis, Patricia, 1970, *The Pauper Press: A Study in Working-Class Radicalism of the 1830s*, Oxford University Press, Oxford

and activists. A notable Irish contribution to English journalism is well acknowledged. One of the Irishmen who left a remarkable footprint in the working-class movement in Britain was John Doherty from Donegal as his life was scrutinised in Kirby and Musson's *The Voice of the People* and numerous shorter texts. His active political life predated the chartists. He was a radical trade unionist and the founder of the first nationwide trade union the National Union of Cotton Spinners in 1829. He started the National Association for the Protection of Labour with its newspaper *The United Trades Co-operative Journal*. His association grew rapidly and when members reached 100,000 in 1831, he launched a new paper *The Voice of the People* and became its editor. This is a very insightful book as it outlines his work and how he dealt with Irish diaspora specific issues, such as Irish nationalism and discrimination against Irish workers more than 100 years before the *IF* emerged. Fenner Brockway also briefly wrote about the contribution of Irish activists in his *Britain's First Socialists*, explaining that they had been prominent levellers, agitators, and diggers⁵¹ and contributed to the British Left and the Left press from its inception.

While many Irish people contributed to the chartist and radical press on a broad scale, others in Britain identified their own specific needs and started their own newspapers. The analysis of a history of the Irish in England, particularly, their labour, political and press history received minimal attention although their working-class status and contribution are well recognised and working-class or Victorian monographs typically contain a few words of Irish or Irish workers in the index page. The press history in Britain has been explored, however, the history of Irish newspapers is under researched as Simon Potter acknowledges it is 'a field awaiting detailed and comprehensive scrutiny.'⁵² The Irish press in England is clearly an under-researched topic in the historiography of diaspora journalism. There is only one monograph on the Irish press in England. Anthony McNicholas's *Politics, Religion and the Press: Irish Journalism in Mid-Victorian England*, was the inaugural attempt at a detailed analysis of the Irish press in England. He completed his PhD thesis in 2000 (published in 2007) and it still remains the only existing resource for more than twenty years. His pioneering study explored three London newspapers, *The*

⁵¹ The levellers and diggers were groupings that emerged by 1640s amid the puritan revolution. Levellerism produced demonstrations, provoked munities and strove for the economic equality of a community of goods, while the diggers attempted to 'dig on' enclosed or private land to feed themselves and others. They were seen as the forerunners of anarchism, socialism and radicalism.

⁵² Potter, Simon, (ed.) 2004, *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire, c1857-1921*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, p22

Universal News, *The Irish Liberator*, and *The Irish News* and analysed the complexity of relationships with the secular politics of the Fenians and the Catholic Church. In spite of the fragmentary nature of primary material, by examining numerous newspaper articles, he investigates how the intertwined connections shaped the immigrants' lives. Because the 1860s saw the rise and apparent failure of the separatist Fenian movement in Ireland, it was during this time the first realistic attempt at establishing a genuinely popular press in England for Irish migrants was made. He analyses in detail regarding the Catholic Church in England which was a powerful institution that dominated Irish people's lives in Britain. Although they provided spiritual guidance, shelter, education, food, a sense of community, 'except a free arena for political debate'⁵³ and the Irish press needed to maintain an Irish identity of which the Catholic Church approved.⁵⁴ The Church effectively imposed a form of censorship on Irish journalism and dictated newspapers' destiny in consequence. According to McNicholas, other reasons that the Irish press in mid-Victorian England failed to develop were due to the transience, poverty, and low levels of literacy of the readers, in addition to the easy availability of newspapers from Ireland.⁵⁵

The Irish in Britain

The Irish in Britain as a general diaspora history subject has been widely examined. Since J. A. Jackson's pioneering study, *The Irish in Britain* which was published in 1963, numerous similar studies namely by Donald M. MacRaild, Enda Delaney and Roger Swift have been conducted on the subject with a focus on general diaspora aspects. In his book, Jackson briefly mentions Irish newspapers in London in the same paragraph with the political organisation. This explains that the function of the Irish press in London in the early and mid-twentieth century was more than just a general diaspora newspaper with a role of promoting transnational bonding and maintaining cultural identities but with a clear purpose that needs urgent political attention.

Although a plethora of general and oral history books on Irish immigrants in London, songs and stories of their hardships and struggles during the fifties exist, it is clear that the comprehensive narratives of the Irish labouring classes are not being scrutinised both in Ireland and abroad. The

⁵³ McNicholas, *Politics, Religion and The Press*, p336

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p347

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p349

dearth of attention to the class structure in Ireland and Britain is well recognised given their major economic activities within the British system. Joe Cleary remarks the history of Irish labour is frequently connected with ‘incremental bread and butter issues and the upshot of this is that left-wing politics here has generally been not only narrower in its field of operations than a movement of broad social transformation such as feminism, but also much more incrementally reformist and institutionally conformist than Irish republicanism.’⁵⁶ Therefore, Cleary summarises, because of little sustained analysis of any of the various movements or intellectual and cultural histories of the left in general, James Connolly who was a prolific writer seems to have to ‘carry the whole of the Irish left on his shoulders.’⁵⁷ This occurs due to a gap in knowledge.

Around the turn of the twentieth century was a relatively quiet period for the Irish press in Britain. During the Irish War of Independence, the IRA became active throughout British cities. For example, in 1920 when fifteen warehouses were burnt in Liverpool and a window-breaking campaign was organised in London in 1921. Amid the political turbulence, *The Irish Exile* was founded by the chair of the Irish Self Determination League of Great Britain, Art O’Brien in London in 1921 as ‘an organ of Irish movements in and around London’. It was a newspaper of the League that supported *Dáil Éireann* and held meetings, demonstrations and raised funds. Although it had a great start with its circulation once peaked at 10,000 copies, the newspaper quickly ceased after a few issues in 1922. No studies have been conducted on this paper. Although it is not focused on the newspaper, one of the most recent studies of Irish nationalism in London is by Mary MacDiarmada’s *Art O’Brien and Irish Nationalism in London, 1900-25*. In her book, she analyses Irish nationalism in London by examining the life of O’Brien, a member of the Gaelic League, Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and the Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain as a central axis. This book is joining the most popular research period of Irish history and shedding light on the Irish exile politics in England which is also an under-researched subject.

The 1950s was the height of Irish emigration to Britain. As it was mentioned earlier, a large number of general books exist. One of the most insightful books is *An Irish Navy: The Diary of an Exile*

⁵⁶ Cleary, Joe, ‘Marxism, Capitalist Crisis and Irish Literary Studies’ in *The Irish Review*, No.46 (Autumn 2013), p6

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p12

by Donall MacAmhlaigh. He kept a diary in Irish and his observation probably echoes the sentiment of average Irish wage labourers in London. Like the majority of rural Catholic immigrants, he was sceptical about the *ID* and the *CA* in the 1950s when he arrived but he eventually became an avid supporter of the paper and became a regular contributor.

Outside the public sphere

In Ireland during the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, radical newspapers were broader and more intense⁵⁸ than their British counterparts although most of these papers were short-lived due to numerous factors. The thriving radical newspaper business meant a large majority of people in Ireland had issues in life and their opinions needed immediate political attention as they attempted to use the radical press to function as an agent of change in addition to solidarity and educational purposes. Campaigning journalism is an established field in Ireland. According to the Irish Newspaper Archives, 114 newspapers are listed between 1886 and 1939 although most of these papers were ephemeral as running a newspaper is not easy without clear goals, policies, sufficient finance and a readership. Provincial newspapers are not included in this figure. Moreover, a plethora of general newspapers in Ireland during this period somewhat had a radical element. This explains that compared to Britain, the radical newspaper industry in Ireland was quite competitive, although Legg pointed out that the quality of some Irish newspapers was not a high standard.⁵⁹ During the same period, Irish immigrants in the US established numerous radical newspapers and were actively involved with the workers' and nationalistic movements. For example, Welsh immigrants in the US, showed little interest in the organisation of labour and setting up their own radical newspapers. The Welsh press in Wales showed little concern for the working class and socialism because trade unionism was slow to develop in Wales, therefore, when they moved to the US, 'there was little tradition of trade unionism to take with them.'⁶⁰ Dian Rhys Hopkin's study of Welsh newspapers in the US identified: 'there is little evidence of any serious interest in socialism or working-class politics in the Welsh periodicals.'⁶¹ He further explains that

⁵⁸ After going through radical newspapers in Ireland, it was interesting to find it out although the quality could be mediocre than the British counterparts and most of them were ephemeral, sometimes printed only one issue. Evidently, the papers in Ireland functioned as a tool to vent and protest from its inception.

⁵⁹ Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism*, p14

⁶⁰ Hopkin, Dian, Rhys, 'Welsh Immigrants to the United States and their Press, 1840-1930', in Harzig, Christiane, *et al*, (ed.), 1985, *The Press of Labor Migrants in Europe and North America, 1880s to 1930s*, Publications of the Labor Newspaper Preservation Project, Bremen, p359

⁶¹ Hopkin, *Welsh Immigrants to the United States and their Press 1840-1930*, p360

the Welsh periodicals in the US ‘mostly contained material of ubiquitous interest’ and ‘tended to be politically neutral.’⁶²

This is a stark contrast to the Irish press. This explains why Irish people started their tradition of establishing a radical newspaper as soon as they left Ireland. They were at the margins in Ireland, Britain or the US and, in the words of Jurgen Habermas, they had been outside the public sphere. According to Habermas, the public sphere is an arena of public debate so that general concern can be discussed, and opinions formed which is vital for effective democratic participation. However, according to his theory, the public sphere was constituted by excluding certain social groups, namely ethnic minorities and non-property owners and women. As McNicholas demonstrates, the Irish immigrants in Britain were excluded in the nineteenth century as they were ‘a despised and unheeded minority.’⁶³ Nearly a century later, things did not improve significantly in London in terms of the way they were treated by the host society and its system. Much of British industry remained ‘suspicious of Irish labour and this suspicion had been enhanced by the turbulent events in Ireland.’⁶⁴

Habermas’s argument has attracted the attention of many researchers and scholars. Although his theory has a valid point, one of the reasons why it receives much criticism is that his participatory public sphere theory ignores texts and contexts. Dallas Liddle elaborates that ‘it only works when its participants stop reading and start talking to each other.’⁶⁵ Curran also argues that the rise of the public sphere pays ‘too little attention to low politics, clientelist power relations and debased journalism.’⁶⁶ As Habermas generalises his theory in a specific social setting, Curran further contests that the theory discounts the empowering consequences of the introduction of mass democracy and the growth of prosperity. In fact, according to Curran, the working-class people refused to remain ‘below the level of their bourgeois and to be put down by the exclusionary norms’.⁶⁷ Although the radical press was excluded from the mainstream media by default, its role

⁶² Ibid., p354

⁶³ McNicholas, *Politics, Religion and The Press*, p333

⁶⁴ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p98

⁶⁵ Liddle, Dallas, 2009, *The Dynamics of Genre: Journalism and the Practice of Literature in Mid-Victorian Britain*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, p150

⁶⁶ Curran, *Media and Power*, p45

⁶⁷ Ibid., p45

as the mouthpiece of society was an essential element in the process of empowerment and democracy as a history of Chartism journalism indicates. Thus, understanding the press of marginalised group offers an understanding into their community. Cole McCreary's study on a marginalised paper highlights that 'studying a minority group can provide insights into the broader historical situation.'⁶⁸ Ultimately, examining a newspaper on the margins can highlight root causes of problems.

The Left-wing press

Scholars acknowledge that the Irish left-wing press in Ireland and Britain has been receiving little attention even though they identify their influential role of the press as 'the forging of national identities.'⁶⁹ Marshall McLuhan argued that newspapers allowed people to 'see' their vernacular tongue and to identify it with national unity and power, and this was popularised by Benedict Anderson who emphasised the role of newspapers to imagine themselves as part of a national community.⁷⁰ The studies of the Irish immigrant press that functioned as a left publication or a political movement during the war, post-war period and beyond have not been addressed so far.

Before James Connolly wrote numerous books, two notable German immigrants in England, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx analysed Ireland and Irish working-class people in Britain with a great deal of scrutiny and enthusiasm as a case study of exploitation by the imperial power. According to *Ireland and the Irish Question*, a compilation of essays, Ireland was the first country to develop a national liberation movement. While Engels described Ireland as 'the mainspring of all the workers' movements' and those who cross the ocean were the easy target of abuse as 'the hungry Irish, desperate for food and work, were cynically used by employers to undermine wages and blackleg on strikes during the mid-1800s,'⁷¹ Marx assertively observed: 'The English working class will never accomplish anything until it has got rid of Ireland...English reaction in England had its roots...in the subjugation of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland.'⁷² According to Marx, the cause of English labour was inextricably bound up with the liberation of Ireland, whose

⁶⁸ McCreary, *The People's Paper: The Communist Daily Worker and the Rise of Fascism in the 1930s*, (unpublished MA thesis, University of West Georgia, 2019), p24

⁶⁹ Potter, *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire*, p11

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p11

⁷¹ Sewell, *In the Cause of Labour: History of British Trade Unionism*, Wellred Publications, London, p28

⁷² Marx, and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, p394-5

cheap labour was a continual threat to the English unions; ‘her economic subjection...must be abolished before Ireland’s English masters, among whom the English working class (who treated the Irish much as the ‘poor whites’ of the Southern states of America treated the Negroes) must be included, could hope to emancipate themselves and create a free society.’⁷³ The press played an essential role to remedy the situation. Marx was aware that a press organ was essential for a movement when he was planning to get complete control of the *Bee-Hive* as an organ of the International in 1864.⁷⁴

One of the left press’s main functions is to operate along with a movement. As the left newspapers stand ‘within a particular journalistic tradition,’⁷⁵ Jane Ure-Smith states that revolutionary newspapers in Britain, namely *Black Dwarf*, *Republican* and *Northern Star*, emerged as ‘the mouthpiece of militant sections of the working class.’⁷⁶ Bruce Nelson describes the left press as ‘the movement’s public face.’⁷⁷ The role of the left press as an agitator and organiser is detailed in Lenin’s *What is to be done?* He attempted to overthrow the Russian absolute monarchy abroad by using his newspaper *Iskra*, or spark in Russian, for the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Lenin argued that working class people do not become political by fighting economic battles, therefore the paper ‘must be the mainline by which we may unswervingly develop, deepen, and expand the organization (i.e. the revolutionary organization that is ever ready to support every protest and every outbreak.)’⁷⁸ In *Iskra* (No.4), L. Nadezhdin explained that building strong political organizations in the localities is paramount and the challenge is that ‘we have been carrying on our work mainly among intellectually enlightened workers, while the masses have been engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle.’⁷⁹ In this process, Lenin laid out a strategy to focus on training leaders. ‘Even the worker intellectuals have been engaged almost exclusively in the economic struggle,’ therefore, ‘the masses will never learn to conduct the

⁷³ Berlin, Isaiah, 1939, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p148

⁷⁴ Coltham, Stephen, *English Working-Class Newspapers in 1867*, in *Victorian Studies*, Vol.,13, No. 2 (December 1969), p179

⁷⁵ Ure-Smith, Jane, ‘The Establishment of a Bolshevnik newspaper in Britain in the 1920s,’ in *International Socialism Journal*, 2:18, winter 1983, p1

⁷⁶ Ure-Smith, Jane, ‘The Communist press in Britain, 1920-24’, in *Media, Culture and Society*, SAGE, London, vol. 7, 1985, p169

⁷⁷ Bencivenni, Marcella, 2011, *Italian Immigrant Radical Culture: The Idealism of the Sovversivi in the United States, 1890-1940*, New York University Press, New York, p67

⁷⁸ Lenin, V.I., 1988, *What is to be done?*, Penguin Books, London, p221

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p219

political struggle until we help to train leaders for this struggle, both from among the worker intellectuals and from among the middle-class intellectuals.’⁸⁰

Similar to *Iskra*, the Irish left press’s task has been traditionally to organise the masses politically. The studies by Hugh Oram and Legg identified that Irish histories of the press ‘focused on the role played by newspapers in the nationalist movement.’⁸¹ McNicholas also finds that the Irish press in Victorian England functioned as a political organiser in the cause of separatism. In order to organise, it was crucial for the Irish diaspora press to collaborate with working-class left organs and to support for other working-class movements or political parties. For example, the emphasis of the Irish diaspora press in the US and within the British settlers’ colonies had been on the class and the ethnic-religious interests with campaigning and propaganda elements. David Brundage’s study further proves this point as the Irish press in the US worked along with other organisations such as the Land League. He found that the League, a trans-Atlantic organisation, put forward a brand of anti-monopoly politics that dovetailed neatly with American labour radicalism, leading directly to the heavy Irish American participation in the Knights of Labor.⁸² In his newspaper, *The Labor Enquirer*, Joseph Buchanan reported on the social life of Denver’s Irish-American community, while simultaneously giving expression to radical versions of Land League ideas. In so doing, he was able to make the labour press and the labour movement ‘a kind of pole around which a series of ethnic activities revolved’.⁸³ The press uniting the masses or different people has been a recurrent theme of the Irish diaspora which is crucial in order to operate as a powerful campaign tool.

For the last twenty years, the trend on journalism/media have been digital- and internet-focused and their contents significantly varies such as issues on radical and socialist, counter-cultural, LGBT, amongst others. Although there were several shorter texts, Atton and Hamilton wrote the first academic book-length work of alternative journalism. According to them, the definition of alternative journalism: is ‘produced outside mainstream media institutions and networks;’ ‘can

⁸⁰ Ibid., p220-221

⁸¹ Quoted in Potter, *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire*, p12

⁸² Brundage, David, ‘Irish Workers and Western Populism: A Catholic Newspaper in the 1890s’, in Harzig, Christiane, et al, (ed.), 1985, *The Press of Labor Migrants in Europe and North America, 1880s to 1930s*, Publications of the Labor Newspaper Preservation Project, Bremen, p370

⁸³ Ibid., p371

include the media of protest groups, dissidents, fringe political organisations, even fans and hobbyists;⁸⁴ tends to be produced by amateurs⁸⁵ and volunteers⁸⁶; is concerned with representing the interests and needs of ‘under-represented groups in society’;⁸⁷ is ‘a kind of activity instead of a specific, definitive kind of news story, publication or mode of organization,’ and depends ‘entirely on what it is responding to’;⁸⁸ ‘may be home to explorations of individual enthusiasm and sub-cultural identity just as much as to radical visions of society and the polity’;⁸⁹ is ‘best seen as a kind of activity instead of as a specific, definitive kind of news story, publication or mode of organization’;⁹⁰ and challenges to dominant practices.⁹¹ Although recent books typically do not mention diaspora newspapers, the *IF/ID* perfectly fit into the definition. Atton and Hamilton have acknowledged that Chartism journalism was alternative although the term ‘alternative’ was not commonly used in those days.⁹² The terms alternative, radical and left could be used interchangeably.

Communist connection

The CPGB is a well-researched field and copious studies on the British Left in relation to the CP have been conducted as Communists were leading the British Left during the early twentieth century. James Jupp explains that during this period, ‘the Communist Party benefited in strength and influence’⁹³ from various united Left campaigns and ‘many on the Left positively sought out Communists and espoused Communist ideas without being enticed, misled or coerced.’⁹⁴ The *IF/ID* was part of this trend as they closely worked with the CPGB. However, the dearth of monographs of the Left press means that the communist and communist-influenced press is not thoroughly scrutinised. Despite the fact that the CPGB have been thoroughly examined by numerous historians, no in-dept research on its newspaper *The DW* has been conducted, although in shorter texts, the paper was examined by Jane Ure-Smith, Lewis Young and Cole McCreary.

⁸⁴ Atton, Chris, and Hamilton, James, F., 2008, *Alternative Journalism*, Sage Publications, London, p1

⁸⁵ Ibid., p1

⁸⁶ Ibid., p50

⁸⁷ Ibid., p2

⁸⁸ Ibid., p9

⁸⁹ Ibid., p2

⁹⁰ Ibid., p9

⁹¹ Ibid., p21

⁹² Ibid., p16

⁹³ Jupp, James, 1982, *The Radical Left in Britain 1931-1941*, Frank Cass, London, p93

⁹⁴ Ibid., p96

Considering all Irish newspapers in England had been ephemeral in the past, one of the remarkable achievements of the *ID* is its longevity. This could be attributed the way in which the CC/CA collaborated with affiliates, namely communists and various left movements. Although the *ID* ceased to exist, the CA is still a key organisation that represents Irish Republican ideals in Britain. They have played an unprecedented role in the British Labour and Irish republican movement, however, there is no dedicated study on the CC/CA either. Nonetheless, as a growing sub-genre of Cold War Studies subject, there are a few shorter texts that examined the role of the CA as a political catalyst through its newspaper when examining the CP. In *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism, 1945-1962*, Patrick Smylie analyses the relationship between the CPGB and Irish communists in Ireland and Britain as well as the dynamic of Irish emigrant politics in the post-war era. According to him, the Irish communist movement was characterised by overlapping and occasionally fractious relationships amongst the CPGB, the Irish communist parties and the CA.⁹⁵ He uses *ID* articles as references. Kevin Morgan, Gidon Cohen and Andrew Flinn in their *Communists and British Society 1920-1991* devoted only five pages on Irish CPGB members who were Irish members and of Irish descent, or also known as Sinn Féiners.⁹⁶ The book omits the CC/CA's contribution to the CPGB although these two organs had a reciprocal relationship. The authors consulted no *IF/ID* articles nor mentioned of the newspaper in their book. However, it acknowledges that a substantial number of Sinn Féiners were amongst its members as 'support for the aims and methods of the Irish struggle translated into communist attachments.'⁹⁷ In any case, the CA, as an Irish republican political organisation in Britain close to the CPGB, was seen by British Communists as a potential means of winning recruits amongst Britain's growing post-war Irish community. Mike Milotte's study *Communism in Modern Ireland: The Pursuit of the Workers' Republic since 1916*, also briefly examines the role of the CA without consulting its paper. Because of its connection with the CPs, the Catholic Church was vehemently against the CA. Gerard Madden's study, *The Connolly Association, the Catholic Church, and anti-communism in Britain and Ireland during the early Cold War* examines clerical opposition to the CA in early cold war Britain and Ireland drawing chiefly on diocesan archives, Catholic periodicals

⁹⁵ Smylie, Patrick, 'The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism 1945-1962' in *Labor History*, vol.58, No.5 (2017), p640

⁹⁶ This will be further discussed in Chapter three.

⁹⁷ Morgan, Kevin, *et al*, 2007, *Communists and British Society 1920-1991*, Rivers Oram Press, London, p197

and *ID* articles were used as references.

Other connections

So called ‘the Troubles’ is another subject that is written and examined extensively in multiple fields. Although it is a relatively small province, a substantial number of books on Northern Ireland have been written since 1969. This makes the province ‘arguably the most researched piece of territory per capita in the world.’⁹⁸ In recent years, the CA’s contribution in an effort to democratise Northern Ireland has started receiving attention. The CA’s footsteps are ubiquitously found throughout the civil rights movement of the 1960s. *Northern Ireland’s 68* by Simon Prince offers an innovative interpretation of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland as he set it within the context of the global revolt of 1968. He uses Northern Ireland as a case study, albeit, the most tragic story. Prince uses *ID* articles as references throughout the book. Prince’s book/thesis was reviewed and supported by Paul Bew who is considered as one of the authorities of Northern Irish history. One of Bew’s books *The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72* was written with Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson in 1979 which offers a valuable and fresh perspective compared to Catholic or/and nationalist scholars’ research which dominates the majority in the field of Irish/Northern Irish Studies and Politics. In this book, which provides a Marxist account of the formation of the ‘Northern Ireland statelet,’ the authors managed to mention no NICRA or the CA or its newspaper and used the word ‘civil rights movement’ only a few times which was the dominant and decisive political theme in Northern Ireland from the late 1950s throughout the 1960s that ultimately led to the collapse of Stormont. Catholic or Irish scholars and nationalists typically disagree with their views and Greaves wrote a critical book review in the *ID* and called it the ‘mew, gibber and patter school of Irish historians.’⁹⁹ This book is the epitome of how highly educated local Protestant and Catholic people have completely different perspectives when it comes to the origin of Northern Ireland, its history, terminologies and political developments. This also explains why it is not straightforward for Protestant and Catholic Northern scholars to research together as they have fundamentally opposed historical views. Therefore, Bew’s studies namely *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789-2006* and his other book with Patterson *The British State and the Ulster Crisis: From Wilson to Thatcher* are all valuable to understand the other side of the

⁹⁸ Ó Beacháin, Donnacha, 2019, *From Partition to Brexit*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, xiii

⁹⁹ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p58

spectrum.

Another field notable to mention is an alliance of the left movement, in particular, the Labour Party as the CA focused on dealing with Labour politicians. Paul Dixon's unpublished thesis *The British Labour Party and Northern Ireland 1959-74* and *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace* have some sections that examined the CA in relation to the Labour Party. In the book, he does reference *ID* articles a few times but not heavily relies on them. He acknowledges that the role of the CA is significant but insufficiently researched.

During this process of political struggle, the CA and its paper functioned as one of the main politicising agents amongst Irish people in Britain. The most valuable book on the republican left is Roy Johnston's autobiographical and biographical book of himself and his father, *Century of Endeavour* which contains strategies of the CA which is 'the best source to date for the story of Irish Republicanism,' according to Anthony Coughlan, while Smylie called it 'the most useful work from an involved individual.'¹⁰⁰ A former member of the Communist Party in Ireland and Britain, the CA, Wolfe Tone Society, IRA and Sinn Féin with a PhD in physics, Johnston - one of the most influential politicisers in Ireland in the 1960s - contributed numerous articles to the *ID* as well as to the development of the CA, politicisation of IRA and Sinn Féin members in Ireland. Based on his diaries, first-hand experience and the account of his father Joe who was an academic and politician, this book provides a great insight into the republican movement.

Despite its relatively compact size, politics of Northern Ireland is 'possibly the most heavily researched area on earth.'¹⁰¹ However, there is an unscrutinised subject about 'the period that preceded the crisis and the revival of militant and armed republicanism'¹⁰² and Matt Treacy has challenged to fill in the knowledge gaps in his *The IRA 1956-69: Rethinking the Republic*. This study examines developments within the republican movement before catastrophic events took place in 1969 and discusses divisions within the republican movement which is a pioneering attempt. Most books on the Irish republican movement, the conflict in Northern Ireland and British

¹⁰⁰ Smylie, Patrick, *Irish communism 1945-70: Cold War, Partition and Convergence*, (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 2010), p5

¹⁰¹ Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, back cover.

¹⁰² Treacy, Matt, 2011, *The IRA 1956-69: Rethinking the Republic*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, p1

trade union and labour movements typically make no reference to the *IF/ID*. As an exception to this, articles of the *ID* are used to explain various political events in Treacy's book. Unfortunately, his book suffers from errors both major and minor which included dates and names. Moreover, his usage of the terms has caused criticism. For example, he uses the terms 'modernising' and 'traditionalist' to describe the two factions because he states they were the most accurate and neutral descriptions of the conflicting wings of the republican movement.¹⁰³ Some scholars enquire: 'when do the modern times of the modernisers begin and when do they end?'¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, this study offers fresh insights into the history of the IRA and Sinn Féin and their relationship with other left elements and provokes debate to further examine the subject.

Combining the Irish-dominated fields - journalism and trade unionism, and their political aspirations, nationalism - the *IF/ID* functioned as an unprecedented campaigning tool during this period of political turmoil. It was a mixture of diaspora press and left-wing press. Notwithstanding their historical significance, no scholars have devoted attention to examining how it operated. In Britain, Irish affairs are often not identified, acknowledged, and addressed properly. Their invisibility is one of the reasons for a dearth of published material on Irish affairs in Britain. A humble Irish bulletin newsletter that started in London became the longest established Irish campaigning paper ever existed and contributed to the British working-class movement. As the effect of this Irish newspaper in England in the context of labour and nationalism history does not receive the attention it should, this thesis will attempt to shed light on the subject.

Sources

The lack of previous scholarly research could mean the paucity of production records however, various documents are available at the archives and libraries. The arguments of this thesis are constructed upon a wide range of published and unpublished primary sources. State papers that are generated by intelligence services in the UK are cited throughout the thesis, as well as non-state archives have been gleaned. The *IF/ID* is accessible online and printed version of newspapers are available at the British Newspaper Library. Unpublished historical documents have been thoroughly assessed. Desmond Greaves who was involved with the paper and its organisation

¹⁰³ Ibid., p6

¹⁰⁴ Coughlan, Anthony, 'The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?' Review, *Indymedia Ireland*, 2011, p1

almost from its inception became largely responsible for developing it and edited the newspaper from 1948 to 1988 kept detailed records, including journals and all the existing physical notebooks and journals are at the Greaves Archive in Dublin.¹⁰⁵ A 1950s navy¹⁰⁶ writer Donall MacAmhlaigh's diaries and notebooks are in the National Library in Dublin. Roy Johnston, another prolific writer, has his personal website which contained a large number of his writing entries and other writing materials. Greaves' correspondence with other communist members exists at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre in Manchester. The Movement for Colonial Freedom and Fenner Brockway related documents can be found at the Churchill Archives Centre. Various meetings, events and other corresponding documents by CC/CA members can be found at the National Archives at Kew, the CPGB Archive and the TUC London Metropolitan University Archives. Census statistics also provide information and vital material about the newspaper, newsagents, and readers. CA statements, campaign leaflets, manifestos, speeches and immigrants' accounts and advertisements can highlight to understand how the newspaper was produced to reach a wider audience. Moreover, in order to gain inside knowledge, this thesis draws upon oral testimony from the people who were involved with the organisation or who used to read the paper. I attempted to consult the files of HO 325/91 – Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park: collection of applications from various Irish political groups, at the National Archives but they are not publicly disclosed. I contacted the Home Office which holds them, and they wrote back to me to inform that 'The information held within file HO 325/91 is exempt from disclosure under section 23(1) (information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters) or 24 (1) (national security) of the FOI (Freedom of Information) Act.

Some considerations and challenging factors of this newspaper were posed. For instance, how to tackle and narrow down the scale of material, namely a substantial number of newspaper articles have been an issue. Given that the time-consuming nature of discourse analysis, how to undertake the detailed analysis of a large number of articles? From vast quantities of sources, the selected articles based on the case studies have been evaluated and assessed whether they could represent chosen topics. Although newspapers are available online as well as hardcopies, some parts are not

¹⁰⁵ Diaries of Greaves were transcribed by his literature executor Anthony Coughlan and eventually being put on the website.

¹⁰⁶ The word means an unskilled manual labourer, coming from the navigators who built the first navigation canals in the 18th century during the Industrial Revolution.

readable and missing. Another challenging aspect that could affect the project was how to assess its effectiveness. How to know their message was conveyed? How to define their success or to arrive at valid conclusions? The scarcity of certain resources and interpretations have been addressed by examining other newspapers of the period, such as the *Daily Worker*, *An Phoblacht*, *The Irish News* and Catholic newspapers as well as looking at major campaigns and movements themselves.

Methodology

This research project is to locate the *IF/ID* in the wider context of the period within the British sovereign framework and how it attempted to achieve its mission. In order to understand how important certain factors and articles were and how and why these were chosen, newspaper articles have been examined through frame analysis. Framing a problem, or an issue means that highlighting a certain affected group that has a specific issue or characteristic to readers or audience. Scholars argue that the term framing has no single definition, indicating that it can be defined in numerous ways depending on the context. For example, Marie Hardin describes it as ‘the process in which a point of view on a given issue is used to interpret and present reality’,¹⁰⁷ while Denis McQuail outlines that it is ‘a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact.’¹⁰⁸ This newspaper naturally framed certain topics and incidents with its own understanding.

Framing analysis is a relatively new academic discipline, but it is becoming the norm and frequently used to analyse certain ethnic groups and discrimination practices in particular in the field of media studies such as the September 11 attacks and the Black Lives Matter movement. To analyse social injustice, Matthew Nisbet demonstrates that news frames activate ‘the core values of either individualism or humanitarianism as the criteria by which audiences evaluate anti-poverty initiatives.’¹⁰⁹ In this process, journalists ‘tend to use information that is consistent with their

¹⁰⁷ Hardin, Marie and Whiteside, Erin, ‘Framing through a feminist lens’, in D’Angelo, Paul and Kuypers, Jim, 2010, *Doing Framing Analysis*, Routledge, London, p313

¹⁰⁸ McQuail, Denis, 2005, *McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory*, Sage, London, p379

¹⁰⁹ Nisbet, Matthew, ‘Knowledge into Action’, in D’Angelo, Paul and Kuypers, Jim, 2010, *Doing Framing Analysis*, Routledge, London, p61

frames and pay less attention to other information.’¹¹⁰ In the case of the *IF/ID*, its writers continuously applied certain frames in order to convey their message. In the paper, the Irish in Britain, Ireland or elsewhere were depicted as victims, while the British as oppressors which set the tone of language. Sophie Lecheler highlights that the repetitive frame ‘exposes and strengthens the framing effect because repetition causes an increase in attitude certainty.’¹¹¹ As a campaigning paper, the *IF/ID* constantly used comments from the same individuals and organisations and its frame was consistent as its focus was on agitating and democratising Britain, not merely offering information to an audience.

This study looked at how the paper used repetitive news framing. Frontpage top stories, civil rights and discrimination articles were gathered and analysed to frame topics. As these topics are the main theme of the paper, the writers wrote with a specific angle that is aligned with the organisation’s mission. Paul D’Angelo states that framing research focuses on ‘how journalists communicate their preferred meanings of events and issues.’¹¹² The *IF/ID* framed Irish workers and immigrants as oppressed and second-class citizens, while the British imperialism, the Stormont regime and unionists as perpetrators and fascists. In the same way, the British media typically described the Irish as troublemakers, criminals, job takers and tuberculosis carriers. The situation in Ireland and Northern Ireland was relatively out of the public sphere, and the Irish in Britain remained excluded from the mainstream press and political debates during most of the research period. However, it is important to note that after the IRA - although the loyalist paramilitaries also became active, we had no information about them from the British media - became a national emergency in the late 1960s and threat, the British media started reporting about them but, ‘as if they were the only cause of the conflict and the British the only victims,’ as observed by Liz Curtis.¹¹³ Frames can be subjective which depend on writers’ point of view, knowledge and experience. Baldwin van Gorp explains that the frames are ‘all rooted in common cultural themes, such as the archetypes of villain, victim and tragic hero, and each individual has a pre-given destiny, therefore, depending on writers who frame the issue, the meaning of it changes

¹¹⁰ Lecheler, Sophie, and De Vreese, Claes, 2019, *New Framing Effects*, Routledge, London, p11

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p83

¹¹² D’Angelo, Paul and Kuypers, Jim, 2010, *Doing Framing Analysis*, Routledge, London, p1

¹¹³ McQuail, Denis, 2005, *McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory*, p379

fundamentally.¹¹⁴ The *IF/ID* fought back against the existence of media bias. As a result of the BBC Northern Ireland and other mainstream reporters' usage of a specific frame on the IRA and the Irish in general, the Irish in Britain were further depicted in a negative way which reinforced Irish myths. In this process, the *IF/ID* attempted to write, by focusing on the facts, reframed their misstatements or stories and rewrite them with their own interpretation. Lecheler explains that 'an issue-specific social injustice news frame would lead individuals to consider that something should really be done to rectify this injustice, with the consequence of a feeling of anger emerging to defend those that are wronged by the system.'¹¹⁵

The framing was essential to create the labour and civil rights movement. By publishing numerous discrimination cases and injustice-related articles, the paper attempted to mobilise the workers along with the labour movement as the majority of Irish people in England belonged to the working class. Although, this framing method was used throughout the research period, in the 1940s and 1950s in particular, the paper's focus was on encouraging readers to join CA campaigns and trade unions, and in the 1960s, its main focus shifted to activism as the principal frame. In the 1960s, at the height of activism and the civil rights movement, the frequency of articles in *the IF/ID* mentioning general prejudice, anti-Irish, race/religious discrimination, slander, insult, attack increased significantly, as well as Northern Ireland-related stories and so were the initiative-focused articles such as discrimination and race relations bills, law and legal. The way the paper framed during this decade is most palpable as they aggressively pushed their agenda.

Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters and written thematically and narratively to examine the role of the newspaper within the working-class movement. How did they attempt to unite Ireland and working people in England through mobilising the working class?

The first chapter delineates the genesis of the organisation and its newspaper. This section provides an overview of its origin, the role of the newspaper and its business practice. What were their

¹¹⁴ Van Gorp, Baldwin, 'Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis', in D'Angelo, Paul and Kuypers, Jim, 2010, *Doing Framing Analysis*, Routledge, London, p86

¹¹⁵ Lecheler, Sophie, 'Down the Rabbit Hole: Integrating Emotions into News Framing Effects Research', in D'Angelo, Paul, 2018, *Doing Framing Analysis II*, Routledge, London, p78

objectives? The paper's parent organisation is also examined as it is essential to understand the newspaper function.

Chapter Two examines their communist connection whether the paper was a communist front. Although the organisation reiterated that it was not a CP organ, there were several CP members in the organisation that were writing the articles. Was it a newspaper of the working-class movement or party paper? What challenges have they encountered? This section considers the similarities of *the IF/ID* and the flagship newspaper of the CPGB, the *DW* as these papers share some common features.

Chapter Three analyses how the newspaper attempted to unite workers. How did the paper interpret the working class and labour movement? How did the paper frame and proactively write and influence labour movements by focusing on their grievances? This section provides the method newspapers used to mobilise workers by drawing special attention to construction workers and nurses.

Chapter Four looks at how the paper attempted to unite two Irelands by cooperating with their allies such as Labour Party MPs, MCF, NCCL, John Hosteller, SF/IRA, and APL. The newspaper's aim was to make the Irish question a political issue. This was considered as a step forward to unite two Irelands. How did they attempt to make the Irish question a political issue? This section also explores the way paper interpreted the Labour Party initiative Friends of Ireland. Essentially, this chapter highlights how the newspaper articles attempted to improve the conditions they were in by working simultaneously with politicians, lawmakers, and policymakers, ultimately attempted to democratise Britain.

The last chapter is divided into two sections with cultural thematic subjects. Two themes - cultural/Gaelic nationalism and sports journalism were chosen to see how these distinctive and diaspora subjects were written in the paper. What role did the newspaper play in cultural and sports nationalism? Similar to typical Irish newspapers, the *IF/ID* had Gaelic and cultural pages with Irish/republican songs, poems and occasional articles in Irish although they did not appear consistently in the pages. The GAA was a political tool for the nationalist movement and boxing

coverage was also imperative in their psychology as fighters were considered as potent symbols of nationalism and a fighting spirit. This section also looks at the role of cultural and sports journalism within the cultural and nationalist movement.

Finally, brief front page analysis is added in the appendix section in order to identify new insights. By looking at front page articles, it confirms the general trend of the three decades and ups and downs of the labour movement.

The history that follows offers a rounded and comprehensive analysis of the key issues and themes that influenced the political development and ethos of an Irish diaspora newspaper during 1939-1973. It traces the newspaper and its organisation's political progress or lack thereof, in the British contexts. As their political and labour activities in the mid-twentieth century deserve historical scrutiny, this project will be filling in an important gap in knowledge and the annals of British working-class history in England. Since Brexit has started to revive the border debate, the idea of Irish unification is gaining momentum. This is a timely study to look at the most affected population in Britain. As no study of the *IF/ID* exists, this thesis offers the first comprehensive analysis of the paper and provides an alternative avenue from which to understand modern Ireland. It is hoped that this thesis will shed some light not only on Irish exile politics but British labour history.

Chapter One: Why a new paper?

‘It is impossible to have a movement here without its own press organ,’¹¹⁶ Marx wrote to Engels in 1864. Newspapers were crucial to spread knowledge and information. Many researchers have acknowledged that the press is a vital tool to examine a movement or a left organisation. Bruce Nelson describes that newspapers functions as ‘the movement’s public face.’¹¹⁷ A movement needs to be accompanied by a newspaper in order to spread the message as many people as possible.

ID articles repeatedly wrote that the Irish in England played an essential role in contributing to the history of British working-class movement. According to a Connolly Publication pamphlet, it claims that ‘at all times Irish exiles have been active to some degree, with the labour movement, advancing labour interests and simultaneously the cause of Irish freedom.’¹¹⁸ Exile politics and the diaspora press in Britain have been bringing Irish people together and the groundwork to fight against the British Empire had been laid out. *The IF/ID* was launched to function as an instrumental campaign tool in this process as it proactively printed articles about democracy, grievances, civil rights, Irish history, trade unionism, republicanism, and cultural nationalism in the hope that it would influence all workers and people in Britain. To understand how a voice of the working-class movement was created through an immigrant newspaper, this first section explores its origin, newspaper business, roles, and some of the characteristics of the paper. The second section chronologically attempts to explain how and why the paper was transformed over the years and to chart the progress of the paper.

The origin

The 1920 Government of Ireland Act created two Irelands. Twenty-six counties of the southern part eventually obtained semi-political independence,¹¹⁹ but ‘ownership and control of the basic means of production, distribution, and wealth remained in the same hands, thus its economy stayed

¹¹⁶ Marx and Engels, *Collected Works 1864-68*, p50

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Bencivenni, *A Literary Class War*, p67

¹¹⁸ Greaves, C, Desmond, 1978, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, Connolly Publications, London, p2

¹¹⁹ The Irish Free State was not fully independent, in the sense that the English monarch remained the country's head of state, to whom the members of parliament had to swear an oath of fidelity. Moreover, he would be represented by a Governor General in Dublin and, as with any dominion, Westminster retained the authority to legislate for Ireland.

inextricably bound with Britain.’¹²⁰ The impact of the division only added more hardship to working-class people as unemployment and poverty on both sides of the border was a recurring theme and emigration continued. Under these social and political conditions that stemmed from partition, a republican movement started to revive as it always came in waves during the period of turmoil. It was during this period the Republican Congress emerged. This republican Marxist-Leninist political organisation was established by the left wing in the IRA leadership Peadar O’Donnell, Frank Ryan and George Gilmore in Athlone in 1934. Its intention was to be the ‘rallying centre for all anti-Imperialist sections of the Irish Nation for a united Republican drive against British power in Ireland.’¹²¹ As the 1930s was the period of the revival of communism, communists were ubiquitous in the republican left movement. Mike Milotte claims that under communist leadership, the goal of the national struggle would be the ‘Workers’ and Farmers’ Republic,’¹²² because they had a strong sentiment that the Communist Party was ‘the only organisation capable of resisting fascism.’¹²³ Therefore, the primary purpose of the Congress was to realise the Labour-Republican unity which represented ‘a radical but ineffectual attempt to wean the IRA from its tunnel vision’¹²⁴ and work with the support of the Labour Party, the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) and County Councils. Gilmore was open to innovative ideas and collaborations. What he primarily intended to do with the Congress was to organise¹²⁵ and to learn new methods of struggle.¹²⁶ Diarmaid Ferriter has pointed out that this was considered as ‘the first organised attempt to mobilise such forces as a group distinct from the conservative middle-class leadership’.¹²⁷ This was an unprecedented move, however, shortly the CPI’s influence on the Republican Congress became dominant and consequently, their relationships were frequently fraught. Milotte states that the CPI ‘subordinated the communist movement to the broader labour movement and moderated its policies in an attempt to attract liberal middle-class support.’¹²⁸ This indicates that their aspiration was mobilising the working class, but they continued to rely on the

¹²⁰ Streib, Gordon, ‘Social Stratification in the Republic of Ireland: The Horizontal and Vertical Mosaic’ in *Ethnology*, vol. 12, No. 3 (July 1973), p342

¹²¹ Gilmore, George, 1974, *The Irish Republican Congress*, The Cork Workers Club, Cork, p7

¹²² Milotte, Mike, 1984, *Communism in Modern Ireland: The Pursuit of the Workers’ Republic since 1916*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, p141

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p150

¹²⁴ Fitzpatrick, David, 1996, *The Two Irelands*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p196

¹²⁵ Gilmore, *The Irish Republican Congress*, p9

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p22

¹²⁷ Ferriter, Diarmaid, 2004, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, Profile Books, London, p415

¹²⁸ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p158

middle class. The CPI had its own publication the *Worker* but decided to abandon it and joined with the Republican Congress and Northern Ireland Socialist Party in producing a new newspaper called the *Irish Democrat* ‘under the imprint of the amorphous Progressive Publications Society.’¹²⁹ Milotte argues that the title of the newspaper contradicted its politics ‘because in terms of style and content, it was designed for a middle-class audience rather than for workers.’¹³⁰ This is probably the reason why the publication printed only a few issues, from March to December 1937, as it had neither solid readership nor editorial strategies. The Republican Congress had its weekly newspaper *Republican Congress* to ‘spread the doctrine of the United front against Imperialism’¹³¹ and other small-scale publications but none of these lasted long enough to make an impact. Although the Republican Congress attempted to mobilise working-class people to create a movement, ideological differences, internal divisions and unfocused strategies failed to make them a powerful tool. For example, Milotte demonstrates that Sinn Féin and the IRA made a strategic error as they were ‘providing the petty-bourgeois component and the communists, or the proletarian leadership were converting the republican movement to communism rather than cultivating an appreciation of the need for an alliance with the communists.’¹³² The failure of the Republican Congress’s *Irish Democrat* indicates that the CPI’s efforts to attract working class support had been unsuccessful, as they were unable to win the allies,¹³³ as well as alienated many socialists.¹³⁴

A London branch of the Republican Congress was promptly launched but changed its name and turned into the Connolly Club when the parent organisation was disbanded. Named after Irish socialist republican James Connolly, it was formed in the offices of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, at the Engineers Hall, Doughty Street, London in 1938. The newly launched organisation was comprised of former members of London branches of the Republican Congress, the Irish section of League Against Imperialism, and the Irish Self-Determination League. The organisation fitted ‘loosely into the general left-wing and anti-fascist movement of those days’,¹³⁵ and it

¹²⁹ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p173

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p180

¹³¹ Gilmore, *The Irish Republican Congress*, P21

¹³² Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p266

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p180

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p174

¹³⁵ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p13

promptly started publishing a quarterly bulletin *Irish Front*. With regard to its bulletin title, ‘everything on the left was a ‘front’ at that time.’¹³⁶ Aimed to ‘give Irish exiles significant news of the situation at home’, it was started by Charles Donnelly and Leslie Daiken, who originally arrived in London as ‘impecunious students.’¹³⁷ The CC continued to encourage the Irish in Britain with their mission of winning support for the ending of partition and working closely with the British trade unions and Labour movement for the interests of Irish immigrants in Britain.¹³⁸ Roddy Connolly, son of James, took the responsibility to act as the organisation’s first president who was also the first president of the CPI in 1921 and an Irish Labour Party politician. Many of the early leaders and members were communist party members and republicans. The first secretary was Michael McInerney who was also a member of the CPGB. The CC Committee included: Sean Mulgrew, James Sally, Mrs P. Quinn, P. Corbett, Tom Dunn, D. Henry, W. Mitton, T.J. McArdle, Michael McInerney, C. O’Farrell, John McAvoy and Ewart Milne. In February 1939, membership increased rapidly as returned Irishmen from the Spanish Civil War joined the Club. Many of them were unable to find a job in Ireland and they unwillingly moved to London to make a living. Shortly, the branches were set up across the country, including major cities of Irish settlements, in particular in London, Birmingham, Coventry, Liverpool and Manchester. Sharing the same goals and mission, the Irish Self-Determination League was absorbed into the CC. In a strict sense, the CC was not a brand-new group. It was created upon an already solid base of Irish republicanism with the Irish diaspora, the amalgamation of those values and trade union activities in England that functioned along with a working-class labour movement. The CC was clear that it had no official contact with the IRA and Sinn Féin, and its focus was on working-class people. Although the CC contained CP members as founding members, it declared that it was an independent organ as it reiterated in the paper. Their policy was to unite all classes of Irish workers in the struggle for the removal of partition.¹³⁹

Starting a new paper

It was high time for a new paper to emerge as it had been nearly two decades since the Irish in Britain had their own publication, The Irish Self Determination League of Great Britain’s

¹³⁶ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p13

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p12

¹³⁸ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p125

¹³⁹ NA, KV2 3361-2, Desmond Greaves folder p86, Met Police 7 Nov 1954

newspaper *The Irish Exile*. Founded in 1921, subheading in the title ‘an organ of Irish movements in and around London’, and its circulation once peaked at 10,000 copies, but ceased to print after only a few issues in 1922.¹⁴⁰ London-born Gaelic Leaguer Art O’Brien co-founded the Irish Self-Determination League in March 1919 which held meetings and demonstrations and raised funds and supported *Dáil Éireann* and Sinn Féin in Britain during the War of Independence. Although the League had 300 branches by the summer of 1921, its 40,000 members contributed less than a pound a head to Irish causes.¹⁴¹ Although the League had no direct link to the IRA, its meetings were banned or conducted under close police supervision and its offices were frequently raided and its papers and publications seized.¹⁴² Some of the factors why the organisation failed to become an influential vehicle were that it could not win support in key cities with Irish communities such as Liverpool and Glasgow and O’Brien’s political position was rather ambiguous as he ‘refused to declare himself republican.’¹⁴³ It appears that it was a strategic miscalculation of O’Brien. Mary MacDiarmada describes him as an efficient organiser, but he emphasised the importance of individual leadership rather than the influence of a movement.¹⁴⁴

National and provincial newspapers from Ireland were generally available in England and read by the diaspora population, however, according to the CC, its propaganda newsletter *Irish Front* was frequently sold out, although no evidence appears to have survived regarding its financial and circulation figures. Nevertheless, its popularity suggests that the publication was more than an Irish news bulletin as Irish workers were keen to acquire Irish diaspora-specific news in England. In January 1939, monthly *Irish Freedom* started in order to provide the information ‘that will result in the long-overdue establishment of the Irish People’s Republic’.¹⁴⁵

In effect, there had been several papers called *Irish Freedom*. In 1905, ephemeral *Irish Freedom* existed in Dublin which was published ‘half in Gaelic and half in English,’ and the aim of the publication was that Irish people ‘wanted things like land, food, wage-increases, co-operatives, an

¹⁴⁰ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p124

¹⁴¹ Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands*, p81

¹⁴² Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p124

¹⁴³ Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands*, p81

¹⁴⁴ MacDiarmada, Mary, 2020, *Art O’Brien and Irish Nationalism in London 1900-1925*, Four Courts Press, Dublin

¹⁴⁵ ‘Irish Fighter Greets Irish Freedom’, *Irish Freedom*, January 1939, p1

army of their own, a republic.’¹⁴⁶ Around 1910, when a republican wing of Sinn Féin developed, they entered the world of partisan journalism with the *Nation* and followed by *Irish Freedom* which supported the workers’ cause in the strikes from 1910 to 1914, including the Dublin lock-out of 1913.¹⁴⁷ Tom Clarke was the founder and Bulmer Hobson edited it. However, this IRB paper was suppressed by the government in December 1914. In 1917, another paper called *Irish Freedom* existed. In 1922, *Irish Freedom* was launched in Limerick but ‘murdered.’¹⁴⁸

Sharing the same vision and mission, the time was ripe ‘for a proper newspaper amongst Irish immigrants in Britain.’¹⁴⁹ The CC used the same title to remind themselves and others that they were still fighting for freedom. As a successor to working class struggles in England, adapting to social change and building up in parallel with working-class movements, the launch of this paper could be considered as another attempt to highlight the status quo of Irish workers and people and to call out the importance of Irish unification by the diaspora community. In the first issue of *IF* in January 1939, they explained why a new paper was necessary:

The land of Ireland belonged to the people of Ireland and not to a land-king or million-lord...they wanted things like land, food, wage-increases, co-operatives, an army of their own, a republic...Here it is, we have nothing new to say, nor do we find a need for any title other than the old one, ‘Irish Freedom.’ Freedom, for us, means complete liberty from the domination of land-king or bullion-lord, of whatever nationality. Ireland, for us, means the Irish people, not some collection of traditions or scenery. The Irish people, for us, means all the people, in farm or factory, in the North and the South. ... We want the British Imperialists to go away from Ireland and leave the North-Irish people alone to attain their own freedom with the rest of the Irish... We want the British Imperialist thrown out of power, that a Republic of the people may flourish. These things can be done, and easily, and soon. When they are done there will be no need for ‘Irish Freedom,’ the newspaper. We are the latest of a long line of papers with the same title. The demand for Irish freedom will never be crushed, will never be eliminated except by satisfaction. In helping to attain that satisfaction – let us be the last of our line.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ ‘Why a new paper,’ *Irish Freedom*, January 1939, p3

¹⁴⁷ Mitchell, *Labour in Irish Politics 1890-1930*, p57

¹⁴⁸ ‘Why a new paper,’ *Irish Freedom*, January 1939, p3

¹⁴⁹ ‘Why a New Paper’, *Irish Freedom*, January 1939, p3

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p3

With a sense of determination, they pledged that this newly launched newspaper would be the last one with such a title. Similar to predecessors, this immigrant newspaper interpreted the Irish experience and the struggle as a result of British imperialism. This was a recurring theme in the pages throughout the research period and the paper remained faithful to the aspirations of this inaugural editorial.

Connolly's name was applied to this organisation in 1938, but in terms of aspirations, it was closely following in James Larkin's footsteps. In effect, Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor was an exemplar of their activism. This Cork man was one of the most notable historical figures in the British working-class movement who almost took Britain to the edge of a revolution. A founder of the Chartist movement newspaper the *Northern Star* in Leeds, Yorkshire 1837, his impact was substantial. Without his newspaper, a speaker at a local Chartist meeting claimed: 'their own sounds might echo through the wilderness.'¹⁵¹ By the 1840s, the terms chartist, socialist, trade unionist and working man had become synonymous.¹⁵² O'Connor's aspiration was passed down to the *IF/ID* as it was modelled after his newspaper. Greaves noted that the CC/CA regarded him 'as one of its forerunners.'¹⁵³

Carrying the name of Connolly, a military commander, and advocating non-violence at the same time was viewed hypocritical. However, the organisation's focus was more on his Marxist socialist aspect. A former CA member claimed that 'Johnston had told him that emphasising Connolly's role as a nationalist martyr was a subterfuge designed to introduce Marxism into the republican movement.'¹⁵⁴ Greaves defended:

Connolly is still the subject of controversy because the issues he raised are still alive. Revisionism and reformism still dominate the labour movement of the west, though many think the sands are now running out. In Ireland they take just those forms Connolly castigated. At the same time, nothing would be more foolish than to take his writings as a Bible for quotation and exegesis. To canonise is

¹⁵¹ Curran, *Media and Power*, p86

¹⁵² Beer, Max, (ed.), 1921, *A History of British Socialism*, G. Bell & Sons, London, p104

¹⁵³ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p3

¹⁵⁴ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p79

to kill. He must be understood, estimated, and advanced from. But it is to be hoped that the Irish labour movement will always honour its greatest leader, thinker, and hero. And perhaps England too, which has somewhat neglected him, may draw on his example in the times that lie ahead.¹⁵⁵

On 16th January, the IRA's bombing campaign in Britain started, almost at the same time the paper was launched. It was a relatively quiet period in history of Ireland but politically active Irish people in Britain were tenaciously pursuing their goal. *IF* quickly made a point that it was against the bombings. However, this article instantly backfired, and the paper printed an article entitled 'Who are our allies in England?', clarifying it was not against the IRA.

A Republican paper has accused us of condemning violence, of pandering to the British proletariat, to whom they apply the phrase: scratch an English friend of Ireland and you find an Imperialist. First, we would reply that we do not condemn violence, and we would not be followers of James Connolly if we did, but we do say that the present bombings have not and are not advancing the cause of Irish Freedom and Unity.¹⁵⁶

The republican newspaper they referred to here is clearly *An Phoblacht*, the only other Irish publication that was critical of *IF* during this period. *The IF/ID* as a 'politiciser' was against the bombings but supported the republican movement throughout. The paper carefully attempted to respect the IRA's mission. Considering its long history of struggle, the paper's attitude was sympathetic and understanding, as Greaves's words summarised: 'It is wholly counterproductive and foolish, and some of the things done are almost wicked. But behind every one of those bloody bombs is eight hundred years of history. That should be remembered too.'¹⁵⁷ The main politiciser Greaves's view was consistent throughout the research period as he saw the IRA and violence was the by-product of imperialism. He also contributed articles for the CPGB's paper *Daily Worker* (*DW*) and pointed out: 'You may disagree with their methods, but the IRA have just aims...The IRA are not 'bandits, thugs or murders' because 'if there were no partition there would be no IRA,' therefore, 'the aim of the IRA, a united, independent Ireland, is completely progressive and should receive the support of every British worker.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, p347

¹⁵⁶ 'Who Are Our Allies in England?', *Irish Freedom*, April 1939, p5

¹⁵⁷ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p31

¹⁵⁸ 'The IRA have just aims', *Daily Worker*, 3 January 1957

When *IF* was launched, one of the first things newsmakers did was those ‘with Gaelicisable names Gaelicised their names’¹⁵⁹ in order to have the newspaper look more Irish. McInerney initially wrote most of the articles, with the help of Terry Flanagan of the *DW*, and Desmond Ryan. Ryan was Patrick Pearse’s secretary and historian who regularly wrote feature articles and offered advice which added a more professional touch to the newspaper. Malachy Gray, who edited early issues of the paper, described that he gave ‘a fillip to our amateur journalism.’¹⁶⁰

The eye-catching front page of the first edition clearly explained its philosophy and mission. The banner headline called for readers to ‘Fight for Irish Unity’. On the same page, there is an article without byline, but apparently written by McInerney, urged all working people in Britain to join their appropriate trade union, or if unemployed, it advised to get involved with the National Unemployed Workers Movement. The newspaper always provided readers with detailed and practical instructions such as how to get in touch, contact names, phone numbers and maps. Inside, the paper included articles on Liam Mellows, the portrayal of the Irish in contemporary films, housing conditions in Dublin, the recently formed Anti-Partition League (APL) and the contribution of the Irish to the British labour movement. Apart from disseminating propaganda, the newspaper reported on the things that happened within the Irish community in Britain, Ireland and oppressed foreign countries that could relate to Irish people. With a support system function, the newspaper followed and agreed the specific objectives of Irish people and worker’s voice and functioned to adapt to their needs. The newspaper expressed general sympathy for the Irish cause and working-class aspiration with a radical voice. The paper made an issue of Northern Ireland being a police state and operated with a responsibility to democracy within the British system and its principal role was to function as a campaigning vehicle, covering issues that other papers completely omitted. The paper had two main purposes: to unite two Irelands and workers in Britain, although their methods of achieving these were not strategically laid out in the early years. But since inception, the paper was fully committed to its mission which was to be a voice of Irish working people and the working-class movement. ‘*IF* is your only voice in exile. No other paper

¹⁵⁹ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p16

¹⁶⁰ Gray, Malachy, *Memories of Michael McInerney*,

<http://www.limerickcity.ie/media/memories%20of%20michael%20mcinerney.pdf>, p20

in Britain gives the news, views and activities of the Irish exile. No other paper uses its columns to advise and assist patriotic Irishmen and women in their manifold difficulties in Britain, and no paper is more deserving of your continued support.’¹⁶¹ However, no other left papers in England such as the *DW* or Labour’s *Daily Herald* reported on the launching of this newspaper. *IF* declared that it was independent and not a front publication of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) although most of its newsmakers were Communist Party members and all left-wing organs had similar ideologies and missions in the mid-twentieth century. This topic will be further explored in the subsequent section.

Editors

During the first two years, the newspaper had numerous ad hoc editors and it was edited collectively. In most cases, articles produced in the early years were all put together by the editorial board. The first editor was Michael McInerney (January 1939 – May 1939), a CP member; Malachy Gray (June 1939 – October 1939), a CP member; Jim Prendergast (November 1939 – April 1940), a CP member; P.J. Musgrove (June 1940-December 1941); Pat Dooley (January 1942-May 1945), a CP member; Flann Campbell (June 1945-December 1947) was a CP member who quit after the Hungary crisis in 1956, Sid Maitland, a CP member, was also responsible for numerous editions around this time; and Desmond Greaves (January 1948-until his death in August 1988). It was in January 1945 when the newspaper changed its name to the *ID* in order to comply with ‘repeated requests from numerous readers’¹⁶² explained the last issue of *IF*. Coughlan also explained that as there was a general feeling in those days that fascism has been defeated after Britain won the war, ‘democracy was everywhere, democracy was more important than freedom.’¹⁶³ Some people, for instance, the aforementioned McInerney, later became full-time journalist for *the Irish Times* in Ireland, effectively used their times with this diaspora newspaper as a period of apprenticeship training. Most of those who were involved with the newspaper and its organisation shortly returned to Ireland due to various reasons such as conscription. Turnover at the newspaper was high for well-educated capable individuals, which explains that London was a steppingstone for them rather than a harsh exile.

¹⁶¹ ‘We Want £100 by June 1st,’ *Irish Freedom*, February 1942, p1

¹⁶² ‘Masthead,’ *Irish Freedom*, December 1944, p1

¹⁶³ Tony Coughlan, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ga0XmGlpPxY>

Charles Desmond Greaves (1913-1988)

‘The best way to go is suddenly, without knowing it, in the middle of some work one wants to do,’¹⁶⁴ Greaves once wrote as if he concluded his own life story. In August 1988, he had a sudden heart attack on the train to Liverpool from Glasgow where he spoke at a CA branch meeting. His life was dedicated to the CC/CA and its newspaper since 1940, most importantly, in the capacity of editor of the *ID* from January 1948 to August 1988. Spending all his adult life for the Irish cause, he was the one who largely developed and managed the paper and its organisation and was the principal shareholder.

Born in Birkenhead, Liverpool, Greaves came from a family of middle-class, Protestant, Irish and Welsh background. According to his obituary, he joined the CPGB in 1934 while studying at Liverpool University and remained a member of the CPGB all his life. He sold the paper *Republican Congress* in the Irish districts of Liverpool during the time when ‘the rise of fascism in the 1930s made many young intellectuals moved to the left and he became involved in the student Socialist Society.’¹⁶⁵ A former industrial chemist with several scientific patents to his name, biographer, prolific writer, socialist and Marxist historian, he left a highly paid job in order to devote himself full-time for the Irish cause. Around 1940, the CC invited him to join its committee when he wrote a letter in the *DW* ‘defending Irish neutrality in the war against a criticism of it by Sean O’Casey.’¹⁶⁶ According to *IF*, in 1942, he was described as National Chairman of the CC which was amalgamated into the CA in October 1943. Shortly, he became General Secretary of the organisation, and from 1948, editor of the *ID*. He was also the organisation’s head of Emigrants’ Advisory Bureau during the war and immediate post war years dealing with countless queries about lodgings, jobs and call-up matters for Irish people in England.

Greaves was a hands-on newsmaker. He wrote most of the articles, supervised its lay-out, went regularly to the printers in Nottingham Road, Ripley, Derbyshire, read the proofs and hawked around the pubs of the Irish districts or outside churches and Irish dance halls. As he often spent

¹⁶⁴ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p111

¹⁶⁵ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

¹⁶⁶ Coughlan, *The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p18

too much time hawking around, there were moments that he wished to be managing a popular newspaper: 'For years, I wanted to produce the *Daily Mirror* of the radical papers, with everything pointed, snappy and short. The trouble is it costs so much.'¹⁶⁷ Coughlan recalled that Greaves wanted to make the *ID* popular by giving a bit of colour in the front page.¹⁶⁸ Greaves was unmarried all his life. His wage as a full-time editor position in the 1950s was 'close to penury' which meant that 'the responsibilities of a wife and family were not realistic.'¹⁶⁹ Although it did seem unrealistic, it was a conscious decision to remain single: 'One thing that happens if you marry is that you lose control of your own time.'¹⁷⁰ According to Coughlan, this was 'the mature second choice which all revolutionaries had to make if they were to sustain throughout their lives the commitment first entered on in the idealism of youth.'¹⁷¹ Scotland Yard was constantly watching him and one of the London Metropolitan police notes in January 1952 intriguingly reported: 'Greaves lives still alone, does not have a job but worked as a chemist, he invented a carbon process.'¹⁷²

All leaders have opponents and critics. Greaves also had a few of them and was a controversial figure to some as they have viewed Greaves's leadership style as 'dictatorial'.¹⁷³ There were a few Irish people who could not accept the way he led an Irish organisation. A police report found that Hamilton Niall Stewart Gould (Goold)-Verschoyle (one of the leading personalities in the North London branch of the CA) 'is alleging that Greaves is insincere and is making a 'nice living' from the sales of the *ID*', Greaves has been told of this by friends in the North London branch and 'is planning to have him expelled from the Association.'¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, Greaves was ubiquitously mentioned in police records and generally depicted as 'anti-British' and he was 'in contact with many extremists in this country, but his general outlook appears to be that of an intellectual.'¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁷ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p19

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Anthony Coughlan, December 2020

¹⁶⁹ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² NA, KV2 3358-1, C Desmond Greaves folder

¹⁷³ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p650

¹⁷⁴ NA, KV2/3362, Desmond Greaves folder, 8 October 1956

¹⁷⁵ NA, KV 2/3358 Desmond Greaves folder

Greaves's lifelong political work, accelerated after he became full-time editor of the *Irish Democrat* in 1948 although he was involved with the paper and its organisation from the early years, was directed at winning the British Labour Movement to an anti-Partition policy. As many who were involved with the Left movement confessed, dealing with the Communist Party of Great Britain, the British Labour Party, the British Trade Unions and all the left elements all at the same time were 'a daunting task.'¹⁷⁶

Some believed that Greaves lost his job because of his communism activities. Greaves left Powell Duffryn Research Laboratories because the company was 'trying to clear their staff of Communists as a condition of getting a Government contract for the supply of graphite.'¹⁷⁷ Another document by Ministry of Defence, Lieutenant-Colonel E.M. Furnival Jones reported that he wrote a letter to Greaves's employee Powell Duffryn 'A good deal of highly confidential work (atomic energy) is being carried out in the laboratories and that they are uneasy about Greaves's political opinions. I fear this may be a question of commercial security.'¹⁷⁸ An intelligence officer summarised the evidence in the file bearing on possible espionage activity on the part of Greaves, which 'does not amount to anything very concrete,'¹⁷⁹ and he added 'Greaves appears to have been dismissed on about 20 November in 1950...he had been in touch with the Soviet Embassy, and from the context of his remarks it appears possible that he has been passing them information about the results of PD's research.'¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Greaves was able to focus on his paper and responsible for shaping the newspaper and its organisation and turning it into a campaigning tool as he was behind the strategic plan of all newspaper and organisation's activities which were highly complex and interconnected with other affiliates and individuals.

He was well-read with serious hobbies and skills such as music and foreign languages. Greaves produced a great number of news stories, book reviews, commentary pieces and feature articles for his newspaper, as well as other left newspapers and magazines, numerous brochures and pamphlets and biography books on James Connolly, Liam Mellows and Sean O'Casey. Cleary called him as 'one of the most prominent names that have contributed to the development of a modern Irish left-wing literary culture.'¹⁸¹ Upon reading all his diaries and other writings, Greaves

¹⁷⁶ Coughlan, *The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic? Review*

¹⁷⁷ NA, KV 2/3359, Desmond Greaves folder, 10/11/50

¹⁷⁸ NA, KV2 3359-1, Desmond Greaves folder, p174, 3 July 1950

¹⁷⁹ NA, KV 2/3359 C Desmond Greaves folder

¹⁸⁰ NA, KV 2/3359 C Desmond Greaves folder

¹⁸¹ Cleary, *Marxism, Capitalist Crisis and Irish Literary Studies*, p7

comes across as a fun, intelligent, and reliable individual who can hold any conversation. From various documents and testimonials, many people sought advice from him. Sheehy describes him as ‘a father figure to younger men’ in the working-class movement even though Coughlan rejected it.¹⁸² Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison said that they have a great respect for him.¹⁸³ Coughlan called him ‘the guiding political brain of the CA,’ while Johnston noted: ‘despite his latter-day coldness, I retained a high regard for him till the end.’¹⁸⁴ In any case, his lifelong dedication to the Irish cause is much admired by all involved in the struggle. In order to pay tribute, Desmond Greaves Summer School is held every summer in Dublin.

Contributors

In the mid-nineteenth century, Irish newspapers in England were published typically without by-lines.¹⁸⁵ As it was also the time when journalism was considered a dangerous profession, McNicholas points out that anonymity gave ‘a measure of protection to journalists’ and ‘allowed them to work for papers which might have contradictory views without being seen to be inconsistent.’¹⁸⁶ By the time *IF* was launched, the newspaper industry had changed significantly in terms of business practice and readers’ perception. Articles of *the IF/ID* were frequently attributed, while a few wrote under pseudonyms, in particular when actual readers contributed to writing articles, expose articles by insiders, or this could be for a practical reason because some issues were produced and written mostly by the same person. For example, McInerney largely wrote early issues and the majority of pages of some issues were written by Greaves. Another possible reason is that it could be due to a cut and paste element. *The IF/ID* had some high-profile contributors including Roddy Connolly, T.A. Jackson, Dorothy Macardle, D.N. Pritt, Krishna Menon, J.D. Bernal, Frank O’Connor, Nora Connolly-O’Brien, Sean O’Casey, Fenner Brockway, Father Michael O’Flanagan, Willie Gallagher, Rajani Palme Dutt, James Larkin Junior, Maire Comerford, Thomas Carnduff, Liam O’Flaherty, Sean MacBride, Charlotte Despard, George Gilmore, Peadar O’Donnell, Betty Sinclair, amongst others. They all used their name on the pages

¹⁸² Sheehy, Kenneth, *In the Shadow of Gunmen: The Wolfe Tone Society, 1963-1969*, (unpublished essay, University College Cork, 2014), p14

¹⁸³ Interview with Danny Morrison, March 2022 and Gerry Adams email correspondence with the author, May 11, 2022

¹⁸⁴ Johnston, Roy, 2004, *Century of Endeavour: A Biographical and Autobiographical View of the 20th Century in Ireland*, Academica Press, Dublin, p362

¹⁸⁵ McNicholas, *Politics, Religion and the Press*, p20

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p170

of the newspaper.

The IF/ID never used the term journalist to those who were writing articles and stories as they essentially viewed themselves as activists rather than journalists. Articles were written by non-professional journalists. The paper used a byline ‘*IF* reporter’ occasionally. Indeed, most of them were not paid workers as they had a main job or real profession elsewhere. Regular contributors from other cities were called correspondents, for example, Paul O’Higgins, Anthony Coughlan were Dublin correspondents, Jack Bennett and Michael McInerney were Belfast correspondents, Jim Savage was Cork correspondent and Patrick Clancy was Birmingham correspondent. Cathal MacLiam was a literary editor. They were all volunteers and without exception, multi-tasking with other similarly minded activities. Coughlan and Johnston were active in the Wolf Tone Society and other left activities after returning to Ireland. James Doyle, a boxing correspondent was also a chairman of the Onslow Square Hostel Welfare Committee. Contributing writer John Archer Jackson was a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Sheffield who also wrote the pioneering book *The Irish in Britain*. Simultaneously, the paper constantly encouraged readers to be part of the production process: ‘Let us know what your buyers like and don’t like about the paper...let us have your stories on the job. *IF* exists to popularise and give the utmost publicity to Irish news. You must each personally regard yourself as the ‘*IF*’ correspondent wherever you happen to be.’¹⁸⁷

Financing

Before the first issue of *IF* was printed, a £25 loan was received from Eamon Martin, a friend of Liam Mellows, who was based in London at that time. Supporters and members namely playwright Sean O’Casey, British Marxist historian T.A. Jackson, Liam O’Flaherty, Ben Farrington, Republican Congress co-founder Peadar O’Donnell, John de Courcy Ireland, Jim Phelan, amongst other individuals regularly offered financial assistance. In many cases, newspapers are funded through various funding sources. Labour papers are typically supported by subscriptions, charity, and occasional union dues¹⁸⁸ and when a newspaper is involved with certain movements, it received financial support from its parent organisations. The London Trades Council and the

¹⁸⁷ ‘Pat Dooley, Editor,’ *Irish Freedom*, July 1942, p6

¹⁸⁸ Novik, Ben, 2001, *Conceiving Revolution: Irish Nationalist Propaganda during the First World War*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, p32

CPGB were a supporter of the CA, but it received no funds from them. Nevertheless, the CPGB once donated money to *IF* when Pat Dooley was editor in 1943.

Dooley went to Pollitt¹⁸⁹ to look for some financial aid, as things were bad....'Comen [*sic*] on, Harry. You understand how it is.' 'Organisations must be self-supporting,' said Pollitt...'If you can give us some help, we can be self-supporting in future.' And he swore there would be appeals for money in the paper every month henceforth. 'I won't be taken in by that guff,' said your man, but he ended up by signing a cheque for £25, which was a sizeable sum in those days.¹⁹⁰

For all radical and campaigning newspapers, finance was a constant source of concern and one of the most obscure aspects of *the IF/ID* is financing. The absence of precise figures makes it impossible to determine its financial status. There are no credible figures regarding the production costs including operational, expense, donation, book sales revenue and other income figures, as well as circulation figures. The only way to find figures is from conversations that can be found at the archives and Greaves's diaries. While the established institution CPGB kept all editorial documents of the *DW*, no editorial meeting records, meeting minutes, editorial policies of the *IF/ID* exist as it was run by a few individuals. Depending on the source, the circulation figures vary greatly. For example, during the early years, 'Greaves has stated that the best sales of the *ID* are made in the Midlands of England and Manchester – particularly in the latter city where the sales have been raised from 250 to 1,000 per month owing to the active co-operation of the Party District Secretary. He states that the position in Liverpool is as bad as in Glasgow.'¹⁹¹ Intelligence reports observed numerous times across England and Scotland that paper sellers attempted to sell copies but 'with little success.'¹⁹² While average monthly circulation figures could be around 6,000 during the war years, the 15,000 monthly sales were recorded in 1945. Another source indicates that the paper had maintained a circulation of 11,000 copies for a few months during war years.¹⁹³ Coughlan states that at maximum, no more than 10,000 copies were ever sold in the post-World War Two period.¹⁹⁴ One of the elements of high sales figures during the time Irish newspapers

¹⁸⁹ Harry Pollitt, General Secretary and later Chairman of the CPGB 1929-1960

¹⁹⁰ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p18

¹⁹¹ NA, KV 2/3361 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

¹⁹² NA, KV 2/3361 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

¹⁹³ NA, KV 2/3358 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

¹⁹⁴ Correspondence between the author and Anthony Coughlan, January, 2021

could not be shipped to England demonstrates that the majority of Irish immigrants were relying on the imported Irish newspapers as they sought Irish specific stories such as ‘news from home’ and coverage that British and locally printed newspapers did not cover. Nevertheless, the sales of the newspaper plummeted in January 1948, and it was on the point of closing when Greaves formally agreed to take on the editorship. It sold 4,600 in March 1951, some 9,000 in 1952.¹⁹⁵ In July 1953, ‘The July for the *ID* is 9,900 and they expected to print 15,000 in August,’ according to an intelligence source listening to the conversation between Idris Cox¹⁹⁶ and Greaves.¹⁹⁷ *The ID* managed to survive but the circulation started going down again to a critical level in the late 1950s, incidentally it was around the time the IRA started bombing. However, it is impossible to determine what exactly caused the increase or decrease of the paper without official sales figures. The sales of the paper eventually bounced back, although it was generally fluctuated and constantly in financial problems. According to Coughlan who sold it throughout London - Camden town, Kilburn, Paddington, Hammersmith, Fulham, Elephant and Castle in 1960, he could sell 250 copies on a good night.¹⁹⁸ Although, formal sales and income figures do not exist, in 1964, the paper reported that it made £175 gross profit on the paper.¹⁹⁹

Supporters and the people who were involved with the paper sold it on the streets, outside church buildings, at pubs, trade union meetings, Gaelic culture, sporting and other social events and various meeting places. The newspaper was produced based on their feedback as sellers exchanged friendly conversations with the readers. Johnston recalled, ‘this task was a fruitful source of insights into the way the emigrant Irish were thinking.’²⁰⁰ Coughlan said workers were always enjoying Irish songs in the paper.²⁰¹ The copies were also placed at restaurants, libraries, and hostels where many Irish people were frequenting. The newspaper was mailed to subscribers although the total number of subscribers does not exist. During the early years, every issue had a list of the places where the newspapers could be bought and constantly reminded readers of the places to buy throughout British cities, including bookshops such as Workers’ Bookshop in

¹⁹⁵ Callaghan, John, 2003, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict: The History of the Communist Party of Great Britain 1951-68*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, p131

¹⁹⁶ A notable CPGB member and one time editor of the *DW*.

¹⁹⁷ NA, KV2/3361 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Anthony Coughlan, December 2020

¹⁹⁹ January 10, Desmond Greaves Diary, vol 16, Jan-Oct, 1965

²⁰⁰ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p144

²⁰¹ Correspondence between the author and Anthony Coughlan, January 2021

Farringdon, International Bookshop in Belfast, New Books in Dublin and the People's Bookshop in Brisbane, Australia - an outlet for publications of the Communist Party of Australia. This probably indicates that Irish workers could purchase the newspaper wherever they were located as they frequently moved cities or countries with the job. It also suggests that many people who were reading the paper did not buy it by themselves but borrowing it from someone else or reading it at communal places such as restaurants, hostels, cafes, barbers, and libraries. The newspaper constantly urged readers to buy and sell it to friends and workmates. 'Get the other fellow to buy this paper, as well as read it.'²⁰² 'Don't always be 'on the borrow'. Buy your own 'IRISH FREEDOM'. Obtainable from W.H. Smith, Wymans, and all Newsagents upon order.'²⁰³

As the paper did not make enough sales, almost all the work needed to be compensated by voluntary contributions. The paper's role as an organiser made all newsmakers to perform multitasks. Apart from editorial work, they simultaneously organised lectures, campaigns and walks which was a demanding workload physically, logistically, and financially. Only a few people who were involved with the production process were paid. Greaves who was paid when he took a full-time editor position although some months went unpaid, and others also received a little compensation. Jim Prendergast was hired as an organiser for the Release Frank Ryan Committee, as Ryan - a co-founder of the Republican Congress was jailed in a Francoist prison during the Spanish Civil War - at a few shillings a week. Coughlan worked as a paid national civil rights campaign organiser for one year. The amount of reward is not disclosed as it depended on the donation the organisation received. When Coughlan was appointed, an article appeared in August 1960: 'His salary has now been assured for one year. But what the Association can do with his services depends on how much our members, friends and supporters will donate so that he can get cracking.' Those who were involved with the organisation all wrote articles. The newspaper heavily relied on donations. Donations came from various places, in particular the cities where numerous Irish people are settled such as Birmingham and Coventry which were called 'the most advanced Irish cities' in the country where the events were held with 'no heckling', unlike other cities.²⁰⁴ Another source of funding came from supporters abroad. The paper was upbeat when its

²⁰² Ad, *Irish Freedom*, July 1942, p8

²⁰³ Ad, *Irish Freedom*, July 1943, p1

²⁰⁴ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p26

foreign branches in New York, the US started in December 1951 and its Brisbane, Australian branch was launched in May 1957. However, according to Coughlan, they were sympathetic friendly local people and no formal relationships with the CA were made.²⁰⁵

Contributions from supporters were vital throughout the whole newspaper production process and their activities. A plea for the donation of Fighting Fund and assistance appeared every month. The paper frequently provided some specific instructions with a bold tone for the way to help:

Buy an extra copy of the *'Irish Democrat'* and post it home; Take out a year's subscription to the *'ID'*; Sellers wanted in Lancashire, Yorkshire and South Wales, particularly in coal mines and cotton mills. Volunteer now; Send news of your job to the Editor. Never mind how it's written. We will write it up for you; Trade Unionists, are there Irish in your branch? Show them our paper whose policy is to support trade unionism.²⁰⁶

'READER! Are you doing all you can to boost the *IRISH DEMOCRAT*? Buy it! Sell it! Read it! Introduce it! Talk about it! And collect for our Fighting Fund.'²⁰⁷

Another vital financial source was social events and sales of literature. The newspaper considered those sales 'the most important part of our work' for both funding and educational purposes. The organisation had its own publishing business division the Connolly Publications to sell their books, pamphlets, other literature materials and calendars. Its authors are largely their own editorial team members, Greaves, Dooley, amongst others. Their numerous publications were practical, and all written for general audiences. Their social events also added to the operating costs. Since its first issue, the paper repeatedly urged members and readers to support social functions. One of the social events that were advertised read: 'Irish and modern dances, songs, O'Shea's Ceilidhe band on every Sunday night at Unity Theatre, Britannia Street, King's Cross with the 1-shilling admission.'²⁰⁸ For CA branches throughout the country, the newspaper pages continuously offered ideas on regular meetings and suggested how to raise funds by providing an educational and enjoyable means. *The Dawn*, 'the first Irish talkie and the first film to put the real Ireland on the

²⁰⁵ Interview with Anthony Coughlan, December 2020

²⁰⁶ 'How to Help the Democrat,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1948, p4

²⁰⁷ 'Readers', *Irish Democrat*, May 1953, p6

²⁰⁸ Social ad, *Irish Freedom*, February 1939, p6

screen,²⁰⁹ was the most-watched film by members and functioned as a bonding agent. Irish workers across the country watched it as it was regularly advertised in the paper throughout three decades. The film is a celebration of the IRA, highlighting the brutality of the Black and Tans and featuring the taint of informing, described as the one sin an Irishman can never forgive. Jeffrey Richards discredited it by saying, ‘a truly dreadful propaganda feature, technically crude, badly acted and appallingly heavy-handed.’²¹⁰ In October 1965, it was still showing at Central London Connolly Association branch, at Co-op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Road, Holloway and a ticket was 3 shilling.

During the early years, the newspaper sold advertising space to retail businesses, although it is unclear whether they were able to make a profit from it due to lack of evidence. For example, in the December 1939 issue appealed: ‘Advertisements will gladly be accepted for insertion. Rates are 2/6 per col. inch and pro-rata. Our circulation is rapidly increasing, and advertisers can be assured of a good return for their outlay.’²¹¹ Although probably not all advertisements were paid, it contained a few commercial advertisements which included occasional hotel discounts for readers, restaurants and cafes with ‘an Irish atmosphere’; Catholic funeral services; barber shops; bookshops in England, Belfast and Dublin; nationalist-, socialist-, trade-union-related books for purchase by the Connolly Publications and other socialist or progressive publishers; calendars for purchase in December; new books that are available at CP and other bookshops. Other non-commercial notices included job advertisements and information of meetings, social events, and conferences such as individual CA branches’ regular meetings, GL classes/gatherings and GAA and boxing-related sporting events, fundraising dance events, and detailed information of marches and demonstrations at Hyde Park speakers’ corner and Trafalgar Square.

Evolution

In order to chart the flow of newspaper’s progress, it is impossible to scrutinise it in a thematic structure. This section chronologically looks at how the paper was transformed over the years. After the success of early issues of *IF*, the aim of the editorial board was to make the paper even

²⁰⁹ Ad, *Irish Freedom*, March 1939, p2

²¹⁰ Richards, Jeffrey, ‘Ireland, the Empire and Film,’ in Jeffery, Keith, (ed.), 1996, *An Irish Empire? Aspects of Ireland and The British Empire*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, p33

²¹¹ ‘Advertisements,’ *Irish Freedom*, December 1939, p4

more popular and easy to read so that they could win the British labour movement against partition. The price of the first issue of *IF* in January 1939 was two pence and the monthly subscription was 1/- a month. The newspaper preferred to use the word 'enrolment', rather than subscription, indicating their function as an empowering educational tool. In October 1943, it increased to three pence. The newspaper was desperately in need of running costs. Along with the new price announcement, the front page appealed: 'Will you write for us, sell for us, collect for us, and see that *IF*' is on every News-stall and in every public library'. Numerous articles were written based on the discussion during the trade union meetings and events such as: 'Birmingham TC protested against the purging of a Belfast man,'²¹² 'Willesden TC protests at the Mallon ad Talbot case,'²¹³ 'Foundry workers say release internees; electricians say free MacKearnan; shop stewards on internments and engineers back CA demonstration.'²¹⁴ This shows that the paper was already making an impact as it was read at trade union meetings and the Irish question was discussed there on a regular basis.

The editorial team was aware that the paper must have 'breadth and tolerance,' and thus win those allies and workers which was essential to achieve their goal. Early issues of the newspaper were relatively simple. It was an eight-page monthly paper with three wide columns, without sophisticated layouts or artistic work, no drawings, illustrations nor photos were used, and graphic logos, banners and font sizes changed every month which explains that they were experimenting with different styles, designs, and layouts. It was during the time when Pat Dooley, the sole journalist by profession, became editor, the paper improved significantly as he introduced sophisticated layouts and illustrations, transforming the pages. In March 1941, the paper became four columns. The first photo appeared in July 1942, the first cartoon by 'Sean' the cartoonist in October 1942. When the newspaper changed its name to the *ID* in January 1945, it maintained the same format, an eight-page monthly newspaper²¹⁵ and appeared to be more professional and elaborated in various aspects compared to previous issues although they kept changing its fonts and styles occasionally. Eventually front cover splashes started appearing, although it was not consistent. The upbeat front-page headlines and a light-hearted tabloid-style appearance during the

²¹² *Irish Democrat*, May 1949

²¹³ *Irish Democrat*, September 1958

²¹⁴ 'Foundry workers say release internees,' *Irish Democrat*, July 1960, p1

²¹⁵ In May 1994, it only published every two months until it ceased publication in 2007.

war years indicate that the newspaper was generally well received as it reported that it was selling well without offering figures. Overall, the newspaper's outlook was more like a working-class tabloid paper in the 1940s and 1950s when it had the highest circulation. During the late 1940s, there was a circulation manager Bill Burke. Newly arrived Irish workers most likely read the paper as a replacement to their regular newspaper, not as a supplement, as regional newspapers imported from Ireland were stopped during the war. In the late 1940s and 1950s, the newspaper looked vibrant and light-hearted as it contained political satire cartoons, sports news, puzzles, social event notices and job advertisements. Considering their high emigration and mobility rates, job advertisements were not confined in Britain but ranged from nurses in Australia to construction workers in France. From the late 1940s onwards, all kinds of vacancies in Ireland were advertised in the paper as the Irish government openly and urgently asked Irish workers in England to return as there was a shortage of workers to build their own country.

Gradually, more revolutionary slogans started appearing on the masthead or banner, such as Marx's famous quote 'Workers of the world, unite!' turned into 'Ireland and workingmen in England, unite!', and Connolly's 'The great only appear great because we are on knees – Let us arise!' Quotes by James Larkin and Liam Mellows also took shape on a regular basis²¹⁶, drawings and cartoons became a steady feature and eventually became more elaborate. The graphic symbols started appearing on the masthead, although not consistently, in the front page such as the harp, the faces of James Connolly and Wolfe Tone, and the starry plough. Almost all issues contained an emergency funding appeal, frequently in the form of a larger banner above the masthead 'Two thousand shillings urgently needed. Send now.'²¹⁷ Straplines were effectively used in order to grab attention and reiterate their mission, for example, 'We cannot conceive of a free Ireland with a subject working class: We cannot conceive of a subject Ireland with a free working class.'²¹⁸ Sometimes, the paper had top and bottom blurbs in the front page: For a United Independent Ireland! (top) Through Unity Among Irish People! (bottom).²¹⁹ The writing tone of articles and headlines were candid, determined, assertive and authoritative, and the paper repeatedly encouraged readers to take action.

²¹⁶ For example, 'Liam Mellows,' *The Irish Democrat*, December 1956, p1

²¹⁷ *The Irish Democrat*, March and April 1949

²¹⁸ Masthead, *Irish Freedom*, June 1940, p1

²¹⁹ *The Irish Democrat*, August 1950

Every issue had slightly different layouts but in general, front-page stories consisted of attention-grabbing headlines, random news articles, frequently home/Irish news and advertisements and notices of events also appeared. The pages typically consisted of home news, Irish/British labour and trade union-related news, nationalism news, civil rights news, fascism and imperialism-related domestic and foreign political news, column/opinion pieces, interviews, book reviews, short stories, and book extracts. Connolly's numerous books were always popular, for example, extracts from *Labour, Nationality and Religion* were printed in several issues. Sean O'Casey also contributed numerous educational articles. Republican songs, poems, sports such as GAA and boxing, Irish language pieces and letters to the editor appeared every time. The newspaper also covered all events, meetings and annual conferences organised by the CC/CA, TUC and trade union's meeting minutes and open letters, their own letters to Labour MPs, Stormont politicians and local councillors, and other policy makers. The newspaper evolved over the years, but it did not cover general interest stories, although occasionally printed short trivial stories with an Irish angle to fill the space. The newspaper was first and foremost a propaganda tool, focusing on working-class voice.

The newspaper used direct quotes of politicians in Ireland who were all aware of this diaspora newspaper in London as newspaper articles and various governmental documents specify. The paper was assertive and publicly offered politicians advice. In effect, many Irish politicians took this paper seriously and supported it. In 1945, Michael Keyes, T.D. of the Labour Party, a delegate of the World TU Conference attended the CA conference in London and said: 'The workers of Ireland are not going to rest until Partition is removed...I would again appeal to the Irish workers to avail themselves of the magnificent services of '*ID*' and the CA.'²²⁰ According to the paper, Taoiseach John Costello followed its advice when the Dublin government intended withdrawing a proportion of Irish sterling holdings to be used in the development of Ireland. This was the proposal made by Greaves during the 1948 conference²²¹ and written up in the paper. Fianna Fáil politician Frank Aiken also mentioned that 'one of the best antidotes to the activities of the so-called Connolly Clubs is the Irish organisations which have for their purpose the reunification of

²²⁰ 'We bring you greetings from the old country,' *Irish Democrat*, March 1945, p1

²²¹ 'Costello Takes Connolly Association's Advice,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1950, p6

Ireland and the promotion of Irish culture and pastimes, and my department does everything it can to encourage them.’²²² These comments from various parties suggest that the newspaper was not an obscure diaspora paper but a force to be reckoned with.

During the last phases of the war, the sales of the newspaper increased dramatically, and the CA reached its largest membership. Most organisations of the left were generally functioning productively during this period. According to Greaves, when he went to Glasgow for orders of the paper, the manager of Collets placed an order for 3,000 on the spot.²²³ The office was inundated with readers’ letters and many of them were printed in the paper. This suggests that it was functioning as an indispensable support system for Irish immigrants. The Exiles Advisory Bureau was also overwhelmed as it was handling urgent cases such as helping to find workers’ accommodation and dealing with landlords and ladies. Some of the improvements at the end of 1944 were highlighted:

During the last 12 months, the Connolly Association had 70% of increased membership and 20,000 pamphlets were sold. The sales of *Irish Freedom* were ‘our most important means of publicity,’ have contributed at a high level and the paper has played a unique role in educating and informing British and Irish alike. The ‘New Builder’s Leader’ has also kindly allowed us its valuable space. Individual members have published articles in other periodicals also. During the year, the Connolly Association has held 31 public meetings with a total attendance of 9,500. Collections totalled £186. At these meetings much literature was sold. Our speakers have addressed numerous Trade Union branches, where resolutions were passed deploring anti-Irish propaganda designed to split the workers, and calling for closer relations between British and Irish Trade Unions were passed. Publications have been held over through paper shortage, and only ‘The Irish in Britain’ which sold 20,000 copies, has so far appeared.²²⁴

From various articles, it is apparent that the organisation was growing rapidly with more tasks and responsibilities by merging with other like-minded groups. For example, the Anglo-Gaelic

²²² Frank Aiken, Dáil debates, vol 165, no. 6, Feb, 1958. Available from: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1958-02-27/31/?highlight%5B0%5D=connolly&highlight%5B1%5D=clubs>

²²³ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p19

²²⁴ ‘Connolly Association Report: 12 Months of Progress,’ *Irish Freedom*, October, 1944, p2

Friendship League in Northampton has amalgamated with the newly formed Northampton Branch of the CA.²²⁵

From its inception, the organisation's focus has been on its newspaper function, to inform and educate readers about their work. However, there were several critical moments whether the paper or the organisation should continue as they constantly faced financial difficulties and lack of capacity. One of the junctures was in October 1945 when executives of the organisation came to the conclusion that the CA should be closed in order to put all their efforts into the *ID*. According to the extract of a letter from Flann Campbell to Jimmy Shields on 22 October 1945:

...we consider winding up the CA and concentrate all our efforts in building up the *ID*. My reasons for supporting this policy are as follows: We are only duplicating the work of the Party and the trade unions, and our present resources are so small that we cannot afford to split them between two organizations. I think our line should be to announce sometime in the New Year (the original suggestion to come from the Provinces, perhaps followed by open discussion in the *Democrat*) that we consider that the best thing for the Irish workers in Britain to do is to get into the British working-class movement, as it is becoming more and more evident that the great majority of Irish workers will not return to Ireland in the near future.²²⁶

On 12 November 1945, Campbell had plans 'for the enlargement and building up of this paper...but funds appear to be extremely low and for the present at least most of the work of the paper will be done by Campbell himself.'²²⁷ No announcement appeared in the January issue but in the February 1946 issue, a notice emerged which read 'Patrick Clancey [*sic*] was elected as National Secretary of CA', as Greaves resigned 'owing to pressure of other work'.²²⁸ This explains that executives abandoned their original plan and decided to restructure it. Despite the announcement, Greaves did not leave the paper and the organisation. From his diary entries, he planned to go to Germany for two months, January and February 1946 for a research trip and all the arrangements for the trip to Germany were made.²²⁹ He applied for a passport but was not able

²²⁵ 'Irish Organisation Amalgamate', *Irish Freedom*, December 1944, p6

²²⁶ NA, KV2/3837 Flann Campbell folder

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ 'New Connolly Association Secretary,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1946, p5

²²⁹ Desmond Greaves Diary, vol. 7, December 1, 1945.

to get it in the end. A Metropolitan police report noted on 19 Sep 1946, he 'endeavoured to secure an appointment under the Control Commission for Germany but was unsuccessful.'²³⁰ The reason for the passport application rejection is unclear but probably because of his former high profile chemist position and communism activities.

In January 1948, Greaves became editor of the *ID* when the paper was 'on point of closing'²³¹ as its sales fell dramatically. Times were changing rapidly during the post war years, the paper needed to adjust its strategies. However, the organisation was 'slow to adapt to post-war circumstances and the advent of the Cold War. For a time, it adopted a far-left course, partly under the influence of the editor of its monthly paper, Pat Dooley, who was strongly anti-clerical.'²³² An internal conflict also had an impact on running the paper business. Greaves and Dooley fell out a couple of times as they had differences of opinion and personality. According to one observation:

both have been jockeying for power within the Association. Greaves is very resentful at Dooley's recent increased activity in the movement, bearing in mind that the latter gave up his position as editor of *ID* in preference to a post with the *Evening News*; and he firmly believes that Dooley will shortly be vacating Fleet Street and is manoeuvring to secure lucrative employment with the CP – this thought being prompted by the fact that Dooley has the support of the communist fraction in the Association. In order to prevent the split from becoming public knowledge, however, Greaves is obeying CP instructions by retaining his membership of the Association, and speaking for it as often as he can.²³³

In the 1950s, political satire cartoons, photos and home news became a regular front page feature. Page layouts and contents became more consistent. Page two is generally readers' page, which consisted of letters to the Editor and other short stories. Page three is international affairs, such as India, Malaysia, South Africa and other colonies and the British imperialism and fascism related articles. Pages four and five were a spread page, often used for a special feature, such as Easter rising, Wolfe Tone anniversary, trade unionism, amongst other educational subjects. When it is not used as a spread, page four was saved for opinion pieces and page five covered random

²³⁰ Desmond Greaves Diary, vol. 7, December 1, 1945.

²³¹ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

²³² Ibid.

²³³ NA, KV 2/3359 C Desmond Greaves folder

international affairs articles. Page six was frequently sports and page seven filled book reviews, short and culture stories. Page eight, the last page was occasionally functioned like the front page, with a letterhead similar to the front page, some attention-grabbing headlines such as election results coverage and sports, conference reports, own social events or campaign/demonstration information. Moreover, the 1950s was a decade when large scale population movements from Ireland to the UK occurred. Along with incessantly arriving Irish workers, the paper repeatedly decried that the cause of a high proportion of youngsters to emigrate was British imperialist misrule, stemming from partition. The paper repeatedly urged Irish immigrants to organise and join the labour movement:

First, let them bring into play the glorious fighting traditions of the Irish race to defend their immediate interests in their new country of residence. Second, let them so acquit themselves as to weaken and hasten the downfall of the system of Imperialism which enables great nations to grind down the small and deprive them of the rights of nationhood. Such aims demand organisation, both organisation as Irishmen and organisation as a part of the working-class movement in Britain. Only organisation can transform the separate individuals whom social forces move hither and thither in helplessness and confusion, into a disciplined force capable of asserting existing rights and winning new ones...the British Labour movement today is hamstrung through not understanding the importance of fighting for the rights of small nations. If it did understand this sufficiently, there would be such a movement in Britain against the wars in Malaya and Korea, that it would be impossible for the Government to continue them.²³⁴

As Irish workers were arriving incessantly, the paper continued to attempt to mobilise them by inviting them to events and socials. Increasing articles about social activities suggest the paper was cultivating a loyal readership and gaining momentum. For example, a football team was launched by the Anglo-Gaelic Friendship League in co-operation with the political and social activities of the CA in Northampton, while the CA Birmingham branch addressed proposals for joint work to the Irish Citizen's League. In 1952, the paper insisted: 'What needs to be done now is to transform the Irish in Britain from an impotent national minority wondering what action to take for the best, into a well-organised political force and a permanent thorn in the side of Tory reaction and

²³⁴ 'What We Stand For', *Irish Democrat*, July 1952, p3

imperialism, a powerfully ally to every movement for peace and progress in Britain and the world.’²³⁵

The onset of the Cold War made all organisations of the left had to adapt to change and the CA’s new constitution in 1955 reflected this reality in the paper. While early newspaper articles were written to emphasise on both socialist and democrat which could mean the objectives were too broad, the constitution set the direction and clearly stated that it was foremost a democrat rather than socialist as Greaves drew up the right policy. He strived to make it a broad independent progressive organisation.

The ultra-lefts in the North London branch wanted it to purvey socialism in green paint, to be a transmission belt for the Irish emigrants into British left-wing organisations. I fought for it to be an independent organisation of the Irish and their friends in Britain. It would champion the interests of Irish people there, while at the same time seek to influence British policy on Ireland. Preaching socialism was not its business.²³⁶

According to the constitution, it focused on two aims: to win support in Britain for a united independent Ireland and to stand for equal treatment for the Irish in Britain. Accordingly, the paper’s frame became clearer and more focused. Greaves believed there was only one way to end the partition of Ireland: ‘the only course is to divide the Protestants and win sufficient numbers of them over to realising their Irishness. That way they will come to embrace freely in time the nationalist position, for they are Irish after all.’²³⁷ The constitution made it clear that it was ‘not demanding socialism in Ireland’ but ‘assisting the Irish people in deciding their future for themselves.’ In effect, Prince has argued that socialism was a ‘harmful’ label for the organisation as ‘in the era of cold war, it would have fuelled the false accusation that the association was communist.’²³⁸

²³⁵ ‘It’s time to act,’ *Irish Democrat*, May 1952, p3

²³⁶ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Prince, Simon, 2007, *Northern Ireland’s 68: Civil Rights, Global Revolt and the Origins of the Troubles*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin, p93

Newspaper articles started focusing on the aspect of being broad based and outward looking to appeal to Irish workers and campaigning for Irish workers' rights in England and civil and human rights in the north became the dominant issue. As a political campaigning paper, adopting broad-based strategies as a 'common front' to broaden its appeal suggests its role as an organiser of the labour movement in Britain. The paper remained assertive: 'The Irish in Britain are so numerous that if organised for political action they can COMPEL the Labour movement to secure the repeal of the Ireland Act, withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, and talks to decide the mechanism of takeover by an all-Ireland Government.'²³⁹ The newspaper approached the Irish question from the standpoint of an internationalist based on Connolly's socialism philosophy, as it ultimately viewed: 'one could only claim to be an internationalist if one stood for the independence and right to self-determination of the different nations into which humanity is divided.'²⁴⁰ From that point of view, the paper reiterated imperialism and fascism are the same thing and urged Irish people to join the organisation in order to be part of the movement and to fight against fascism and imperialism.

There are two reasons why Irishmen should join the CA. The first is that it sees the struggle for Ireland's unity as part of the struggle of the nations of the world for peace and independence and their own way of life – whatever it is. It does not accept the Imperialist lie that the Malaysians and Koreans are fighting for anything but the right to conduct their own countries in their own way. The second is that it is the only organisation which tells the Irish working man in Britain to join with the British Labour movement and have nothing to do with the British capitalists who sent the Tans and dismembered Ireland.²⁴¹

The paper's goal was to democratise Britain within the context of Northern Ireland. Greaves attempted to influence 'the Irish working-class diaspora in Britain by taking a republican position on Irish domestic affairs and attempting to make Irish unification one of the priorities of the British labour movement.'²⁴² To accomplish this mission, the newspaper needed to be more attractive to Irish workers by focusing on dealing with Irish grievances with the trade unions. For comments,

²³⁹ 'Next Step,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1957, p3

²⁴⁰ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

²⁴¹ 'It Is Time to Act', *Irish Democrat*, May 1952, p3

²⁴² Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p75

the paper used the same trade unionists, politicians and their own people's interviews in the articles, even the quote by its own editor was used as the main source. One of the typical introductions starts like this: 'The imperialist conception was one that British territorial integrity was sacrosanct, while that of other nations was not, said Mr. Desmond Greaves, editor of the *ID*, when he addressed a well-attended meeting at the Rotherham Trades Council.'²⁴³ Using their own writers and close contacts for comments indicates that the articles could be highly subjective. However, it was probably impossible to find the right people outside their circle who could offer articulate comments. Moreover, as their articles were typically written based on discrimination practices, false facts, and story ideas came from the marginalised voice, their report balanced out without using opposing comments. The newspaper ultimately published stories that others did not or could not publish. For example, when secretary of the Belfast Council for Civil Liberties was 'unexpectedly arrested', it was the top front-page story of the paper, but it lamented: 'news of the incident has not yet been published in any British or Irish newspaper.'²⁴⁴ During this decade, the letters to the editor section was particularly vibrant with various people expressing their opinions and offering feedback. Insiders and allies, namely LP and CP members wrote not only articles but letters to the editor to express their opinions in a more liberal way. Letters to the editor were also used as comments for articles and a valuable source for story ideas. For example, an article on the APL about discussing unity proposals was written up based on a letter: 'Tadhg Feehan who stated in a letter to the CA that his executive will discuss the CA proposals for united action of the two organisations at its next meeting.'²⁴⁵

The 1960s was a decade of rapid change in Britain. Irish workers continued to arrive in England but there was a shift in workforce which suggests that readership had changed. The paper was particularly focused on democracy as it was a decade of civil rights movement. The paper looked confident as it rode on the global trend of the times. As a result, more discrimination-related articles started appearing along with activism-related articles. There were increasingly more articles on the situation in the North such as Catholic people's unemployment, housing issues and work-related grievances. Some visible aspects in the pages were that sports, cartoons, job advertisements and

²⁴³ 'Rotherham TC Hears Irish Case', *Irish Democrat*, July 1954, p1

²⁴⁴ 'Another Police Outrage in Belfast,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1960, p1

²⁴⁵ 'Our Unity Letter to APL,' *Irish Democrat*, March 1953, p4

various social and dance notices had gradually disappeared. Coughlan claimed that this was simply the issue of availability of sports correspondents and cartoonists, and the paper reflected whatever the editorial team was able to gather, and the paper's focal point continuously remained the working people. Although Greaves was not interested in sports, 'he would have been happy if there were cartoons and sports articles.'²⁴⁶ The newspaper's appearance change could also suggest that Irish workers had moved up the social ladder as manual job advertisements became insignificant. Moreover, former readers relied on other entertainment-focused or commercial newspapers for sports or Irish home news as well as the wide availability of television. The paper increasingly started using long letters from readers which could read almost like stories and occasionally filled almost a whole page. This could indicate that loyal and engaged readers were white-collar workers as those who sent substantially long letters seem articulate and well-educated, reflecting its editorial team. Consequently, the newspaper also started dedicating more public discussion or forum pages. There were poems, ballads and songs in every issue and a whole page dedication to those nationalist and republican items became stable in the paper. Gradually less breaking news articles or short news stories appeared.

In the 1960s, the newspaper appeared as if it was on the right track as reporting on activism initiatives was vigorous and the front page was filled with upbeat and assertive headlines. There was an undeniable optimism in the paper that Ireland could be united, however, unionists/Stormont was tenaciously stubborn and kept attacking the British government and the civil rights movement. Although it was still targeting at working class audiences, towards the end of the 1960s, without front-page cartoons and other light-hearted items and less trade union-related stories, the newspaper gradually evolved into a middle-class, intellectual, serious periodical, similar to *New Statesman*, as more analytical and longer pieces started appearing.

In effect, the CA was at a turning point in 1969 which was reflected in the paper. It was around the time when Greaves began to have second thoughts. He was hoping that General secretary Sean Redmond would 'take over the editorship of the *ID*' so that he could 'give up editing the paper after twenty-one years and write a few books. That is the most important kind of work after all,

²⁴⁶ Interview with Coughlan, December 2020

which no one else can do.’²⁴⁷ He contemplated in 1969:

These last few years I have sometimes thought of leaving the whole bloody lot and going to my relatives in America. These academics are paid thousands of pounds to get out arguments to brainwash young people. And no one knows or cares about the time and money I and others have put in. It makes me wild. Look at Palme Dutt, who is now very ill. After half a century of service, they will let him die in a ditch.²⁴⁸

However, Redmond decided that he was going to return to Ireland. In the end, Greaves did not leave the organisation but decided to reorganise it: ‘the CA on a much looser basis but making the paper the centre of the work.’²⁴⁹

The civil rights demand brought out various issues and the violence erupted. Around this period, the paper’s main coverage was to promote the campaign for a bill of rights and the danger of the European Economic Community as the paper called it a ‘vast multi-national imperialism.’ In 1961, the *ID* was the first paper in Britain to warn of the dangers in Britain’s entry into the common market. The paper produced informative content throughout the decade on the Ireland’s application to join the EEC and fervently urged to adopt a policy of resisting attempts to subvert national democracy by an unelected European super state.

In terms of contents, toward the end of the sixties, the *ID* created more space for book reviews and a one-page republican songs/poems continued to print as a stable feature which was second-hand, obtained by scissors-and-paste methods. Fewer photos and no cartoons appeared, and letters to the Editor gradually became shorter or no letters were printed in some issues. There were less or no monthly donation appeal or even editorials.

In the early 1970s, as Irish communities were more settled and integrated compared to the previous decade, they had more support systems. In February 1970, the *Irish Post* was launched by journalist Brendan MacLua and businessman Tony Beatty. The *ID* did not compete with this publication as

²⁴⁷ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p20

²⁴⁸ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p6

²⁴⁹ Desmond Greaves diary, vol 21 10 October 1969

it is a general diaspora newspaper, rather than a campaigning paper. Around the same time, Father McDonnell launched the Irish Centre in Camden which is located in the vicinity of the *ID* office. Young Irish workers in London lacked facilities in their free time, except pubs which could have serious consequences. His intention was to start a place ‘equipped with sports rooms and coffee bars’²⁵⁰ and give advice on accommodation and work. The Irish Centre took the responsibility that the Exiles Advice Bureau was previously engaged in, hence little coverage appeared in the paper.

In the early 1970s, however, the paper looked as if it has lost momentum. As a result of the revival of the IRA and split of the republican movement once again, the conflict in Northern Ireland made the Irish question a far more prominent polarising issue on so many levels in Britain and the paper shows this shift. Other new trend is that British media finally started covering the issues in the North as international media was attracted to the events. The active republican movement resulted in new publications. In 1970, *An Phoblacht* formally started as a newspaper, although the very original version started in Belfast in 1906, and *Clann na hÉireann*, the Official Sinn Féin organ with its own paper *Rosc Catha* which started in 1972. As the republican movement became vigorous, so did the republican press. Various *ID* articles reported on internal divisions within Sinn Féin and the republican movement.

The paper’s release prisoners’ campaign had been always rigorous since its inception but particularly comprehensive around this time as a large number of republicans were incarcerated without charge. The *ID* and other Connolly publication books were widely circulated in the prisons and read by young political prisoners including Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison. Morrison who later became editor of *Republican News* and Sinn Féin director of publicity encountered the *ID* for the first time when he was in the Long Kesh in the early 1970s. He explained his first impression of the paper:

Some of the features were over my head. We wouldn’t have been used to the discourse and the terminology. We haven’t grown up in the left-wing environment. Some of the articles and the terminology and the theory, at that stage, would have been outside my thinking, would have been challenging. And sometimes, I would consider it to be obscure. I can see clearly now what they were

²⁵⁰ ‘Fr. McDonnell to start Irish Youth Centre in Camden,’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1970, p1

getting at but back then, we were underdeveloped, we were fighting the war.²⁵¹

He thought that the paper was ‘an intellectual magazine.’ According to him, the difference between this paper and *Republican News* was: ‘we were polemic propaganda statement. We used images. We were aggressive upfront. The *ID* was sober, and even in its presentation, it was clearly the paper that you want to sit down and read in great details and in great depth.’²⁵² During this decade, British media in the North was still restrictive while poverty, exploitation and alcoholism were rife. In this space, the *ID* played an influential role to play amongst young republicans in the North. Morrison commented: ‘In my opinion, it tried to offer some comfort, some direction and some analysis, something to say.’²⁵³

Conclusion

This section has identified the development of the newspaper and an overview of key characteristics and topics. The organisation was launched in order to mobilise a mass of people to create a movement through its newspaper. Each CC/CA member acted as an agent of change, a broad alliance as they were all involved to promote its mission and many of them kept their activities relevant after moving back to Ireland through various organisations and movements. As the *IF/ID* showed, it functioned as an organiser, agitator, and pressure group rather than a general paper. Although it was a much-anticipated publication, and its sales grew during the war and immediate post-war years when it had the characteristics of a genuine workers’ newspaper, it continuously struggled financially and to attract a wider audience. The difference between *the IF/ID* and predecessors is that this paper sought broader political approach. In order to function as a broad-based campaigning paper and a voice of the working-class movement, and to complete its aim to unite the two Irelands and workers, it was essential to cooperate with other left organs. One of the most controversial aspects of this paper was its relationship with communists. The next chapter explores its connection with the CPGB.

²⁵¹ Interview with Danny Morrison, March 2022

²⁵² Interview with Danny Morrison, March 2022

²⁵³ Ibid.

Chapter Two: A CP front paper?

Although the *IF/ID* declared that it was an independent organ, it perpetually struggled to attract a wider audience because many people believed that the paper was communist. Was it a newspaper of the labour movement or party paper? What challenges have they encountered? This chapter examines the relationship between the *IF/ID*, its organisation and the CPGB.

Was the CA an offshoot?

Certain scholars and politicians have a tendency to assume the CC/CA a front or offshoot of the CPGB without providing evidence. For example, Treacy called the CA ‘a good example’ of the CP front organisation.²⁵⁴ As the CPGB’s anti-imperialism mission resonated with many, it was not unusual to find CP members in the left movement. In fact, quite a few communist members were the founding members of the CC and its paper as described in the previous chapter. Their connection is undeniable, although it is not straightforward to acknowledge the nature of their symbiotic relationship. Morgan, Cohen and Flinn point out that the CA was ‘under communist direction, but without any suggestion of rivalry with established communist party structures.’²⁵⁵ Coughlan states that it has had ‘a complex development since its foundation,’²⁵⁶ while Patrick Smylie points out that ‘it is difficult to write about Greaves, the CA and its relationship with the communist parties in Britain and Ireland in the post-war era without seeing developments as resulting from the weak conditions for communist advance, factionalism and disagreements over basic positions.’²⁵⁷ The organisation certainly had worked closely with leading communists, however, the fact that CA members and newspaper producers contained CP members does not make the organisation communist. A 1953 CPGB report asserted that ‘the majority of the CA’s membership was non-communist.’²⁵⁸ During the research period, the CC/CA had more trade union and LP members than CP members. Coughlan emphasised that the bulk of CA members in effect did not belong to any British political parties. The *IF/ID* heavily focused on industry and trade union news, but it was not a trade union newspaper. The paper was a mixture of an organ of the

²⁵⁴ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p58

²⁵⁵ Morgan, et al., *Communists and British Society*, p201

²⁵⁶ Coughlan, ‘*The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?*’ Review

²⁵⁷ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p644

²⁵⁸ Madden, Gerard, ‘The Connolly Association, the Catholic Church, and anti-communism in Britain and Ireland during the early Cold War’ in *Contemporary British History*, vol.32, No.4 (2018), p498

republican and labour movement as its goal was the unity and independence of the whole Ireland with an element of diaspora politics. Although some argue that the CA is controversial as its name contains the commander of the Irish Citizen Army James Connolly, but it was against the violent method the IRA used.²⁵⁹ The paper's identity and aspiration was more aligned with James Larkin.

The CPGB was divided into various departments – Organisation, International, Propaganda, Education, Women and Industrial. The CPGB had a European Co-ordinating Committee, an Irish and a Jewish Committee, while the sub-committees in 1951 covered Africa, the Far East, Malaya, India, and the Middle East.²⁶⁰ Greaves was one of 34 individuals in the International Affairs Committee.²⁶¹ As a member who is in charge of Irish affairs, Greaves was considered as a CPGB's 'Irish expert', because, in his own words, there was no person who was knowledgeable about Irish affairs: 'I came to be the authority on the Irish question because none of them knew anything about it. I had a rather unusual relation with them in fact because I was able to behave quite independently.'²⁶² For this reason, it was clear that the CPGB did have its Irish policy because Greaves produced and implemented it by himself. As a result, he was able to develop 'a practical political strategy for freeing Ireland from British imperialism.'²⁶³ In this process, Prince argues that Greaves encountered 'no opposition as he transformed a front organisation targeting Irish emigrants'²⁶⁴ when working within the CPGB. Greaves pursued his own agenda on 'how Irish emigrants in Britain should work to build a thirty-two-county socialist republic,' without breaking with the party and lay down the party line on Ireland.²⁶⁵ Greaves had his strategy for his organisation and the CPGB which may ultimately have added extra drawbacks to the already complex CP politics. Smylie points out: 'Greaves complicated the straightforward anti-imperialism that appealed to the Irish in Britain whilst elbowing in on issues in the CP and IWL domain.'²⁶⁶ Although there is some truth in this statement, Greaves did not complicate the issue.

²⁵⁹ Following the failure of the 1956-62 border campaign, the IRA was to question its purely militarist strategy and gradually adopt a more political agenda, clearly left-wing and even Marxist, which led to the split in 1969 between the 'Officials' and the 'Provisionals'.

²⁶⁰ Callaghan, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict: The CPGB 1951-68*, p130

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p14

²⁶² Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p15

²⁶³ Prince, *Northern Ireland's 68'*, p104

²⁶⁴ Prince, Simon, 'The Global Revolt of 1969 and Northern Ireland,' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 49, No. 3 (September 2006), p857-8

²⁶⁵ Prince, *Northern Ireland's 68'*, p90

²⁶⁶ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p647

There is no doubt that no one could have done the perfect job. The Irish question itself is already hugely intricate as it contains multiple layers that accumulated over centuries with no simple solutions.

The British and Irish authorities were aware of the close connections between the CPGB and the CC/CA. The archives have Greaves folders due to his connection with his CPGB membership, not because he was a prominent writer or chemist. In 1953, a report noted: Greaves is ‘the principal link between these Irish Communists and the British Communist Party.’²⁶⁷ Evidence suggests that Scotland Yard and British intelligence agents were suspicious of Greaves and constantly spying on him. However, the British authorities’ findings were frequently based on speculation and categorically trivial by nature as they found no credible evidence. Greaves showed no interest in Soviet at all but only cared for Irish affairs. Although the *IF/ID* had a moderate circulation, leading politicians in Ireland were amongst its readers and many of them were supportive, whether it was linked to the CP or not. De Valera also knew it very well and he ‘refused to condemn the CA categorically as communist.’²⁶⁸ By 1963, the general sentiment of Irish politicians was that the organisation was not influential enough as summarised by Frank Aiken, then Minister for External Affairs. Aiken claimed that he was aware that the CC were financed from Russian money²⁶⁹ but it is ‘a very small group’ and ‘the number of non-members exceeds the number of members of the Connolly Clubs by millions to one.’²⁷⁰ It is highly likely that the CC/CA and its paper were self-sufficient as they were constantly impecunious. At various archives, no evidence was found to suggest that it received money from Russia or the CPGB.

Upon consulting various archival materials gathered by the British intelligent service regarding Communist activities, scores of original letters written by and addressed to CP members exist. The contents are mostly how to improve the conditions of Irish workers, schedules of demonstrations and events, asking for urgent help regarding lodging and other support. According to the archivists

²⁶⁷ NA, KV 2/3360 Desmond Greaves folder

²⁶⁸ Madden, *The Connolly Association, the Catholic Church, and anti-communism in Britain and Ireland during the early Cold War*, p499

²⁶⁹ Frank Aiken, Dáil debates, vol 201, no. 8, cols. 4 April, 1963. Available from: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1963-04-04/9/?highlight%5B0%5D=connolly&highlight%5B1%5D=clubs>

²⁷⁰ Dáil Éireann debate, vol. 201 No, 8, April 4, 1963. <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1963-04-04/9/?highlight%5B0%5D=connolly&highlight%5B1%5D=clubs>

at the National Archives, these letters have never arrived at the addressed destination. Those individuals saved their lunch money and bought papers, envelopes, and stamps. Some people made duplicate, but many letters never reached their destination. There were numerous letters that start ‘you haven’t replied to my letter.’ This indicates that the British authorities clearly cooperated with postal workers.

Individuals and groups of the Left movement allied themselves with other left organs. One of the most powerful friends of the CA was Fenner Brockway, an Independent Labour MP, socialist and the first chairman of the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF), the CA’s affiliate which was a notable opposition against the government in those days. He contributed articles to the *ID* but his contact with the CPGB members was minimal because he ‘abhors the CP.’²⁷¹ The feeling was quite mutual. James Klugmann once said ‘they must make all the use of him (Brockway) that they could, just as he was ready to use the Communists for his own ends.’²⁷² Cox equally believed Brockway was ‘useful’ for the CP and advised his comrade to ‘use him carefully.’²⁷³ Despite the fact that CP officials were sceptical about him, assuming that he was ‘a British agent,’ they generally valued his effort as he was ‘somebody who raised Colonial questions.’²⁷⁴

Greaves’ involvement with the CPGB was not always well received. It caused some CA members exasperated. On several occasions, Metropolitan Police agents reported several CA members do not regard favourably Greaves’ close connection with the CP.²⁷⁵ During the early years, the paper was printed on the premises of the CPGB’s *DW* at one point. On top of the blatant Catholic Church disapproval,²⁷⁶ this fact was a devastating blow for the paper as it hampered to reach a wider readership. Malachy Gray recalled that ‘this was a serious political mistake as the organisation could not overcome the remarks of being a communist and alienated newly arrived Irish immigrants.’²⁷⁷ Treacy also argues that the main obstacle to the organisation ‘gaining the kind of influence hoped for by Greaves remained the belief that the organisation was Communist.’²⁷⁸

²⁷¹ NA, KV2/1920 Fenner Brockway folder

²⁷² NA, KV 2/1921 Fenner Brockway folder, 14.5.54

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ NA, KV2 3359-2 (p121) Metropolitan Police report 5 June 1944

²⁷⁶ The Church as an institution was against the CP. This will be looked at in the later section.

²⁷⁷ Gray, *Memories of Michael McInerney*

²⁷⁸ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p79

Greaves admitted: ‘we must face the fact openly that we cannot yet influence the Irish. There may be other reasons for this, but I think it is due to the fascist propaganda that we are all members of the Communist Party.’²⁷⁹

Despite the fact that many of those individuals who produced the paper were CP members, they publicly denied that they were CP members because it was clearly their communist connection that hampered its sales. For example, clerical control was substantial and the fact that the Catholic Church openly declared not to buy the *IF/ID* due to the communist connection alienated newly arrived Irish people who were still very loyal to the Church. As a result, the organisation ‘continued to struggle to overcome the taunts of being a communist front organisation despite the best efforts to attract Irish workers.’²⁸⁰ During Hyde Park Sunday meetings, Greaves denied the accusation that he was a communist but added ‘if Ireland could be united by communists then he would support Communism;’²⁸¹ ‘The CA was not a communist organisation, and that anyone could join regardless of their political views, providing that they were willing to work to end partition in Ireland;’²⁸² in another occasion, he declared that ‘the CA was not a communist organisation and that he himself was not a communist. He would ally himself with the devil himself to set Ireland free from the yoke of British oppression.’²⁸³ The *ID* reiterated that ‘it does not advocate communism, respects every Irishman’s right to his opinions.’²⁸⁴ Those who were close to the Party lamented that many Irish people did not understand the CPGB’s support for the Irish cause even though it had a positive influence over Irish immigrants in Britain because of their anti-imperialism and discrimination policy that was in favour of Irish immigrants. The CPGB was indispensable for their broad strategy as the CC/CA desperately lacked human resources and needed some help such as moral support, strategy and organisational planning to achieve its goal. Michael Gray has noted that ‘the CPGB was the only political party to give any practical support for the CA.’²⁸⁵

Reciprocal relationship

²⁷⁹ NA, KV 2/3359, Desmond Greaves folder, 15/04/1944

²⁸⁰ Gray, *Memories of Michael McInerney*

²⁸¹ NA, KV 2/3363 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

²⁸² NA, KV 2/3361 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ ‘CA replies to secret smear circular’, *Irish Democrat*, December 1961, p2

²⁸⁵ Gray, *Memories of Michael McInerney*

Although the CPGB was keen to solve the Irish political affair by aligning with the CC/CA up until the immediate post-war years, as an institution, they underestimated some crucial and recurrent factors of the conflict, the complexity of the Irish question and overlooked some deep-rooted vital issues surrounding it. The CPGB assumed that Northern Ireland would also become free similar to other British colonies such as India and Pakistan during the time of decolonisation, but it eventually learned the unique complex nature of the relationship Britain had with Northern Ireland which functioned similar to neo-colonialism. Mike Milotte points out that ‘the communists believed that the campaign for democracy would unite the working class, lead eventually to a progressive government, encourage Irish unification by peaceful means, and somehow or other culminate in socialism.’²⁸⁶ In reality, things were more complicated. This was the CP’s miscalculation as it did not consider a long history of retaliation and conflict.

Owing to the Party’s initial interest in Irish affairs, Greaves visited Dublin in 1947. Roy Johnston met Greaves for the first time and recalled when he contacted Trinity College students as he was promoting ‘the idea of some sort of Marxist political group needed to be started.’²⁸⁷ However, Johnston pointed out that the key flaw in this procedure was ‘the lack of understanding on the part of the mainstream British Marxists of the complexities of the Irish national question’ and Greaves quickly identified it as ‘the principal obstacle to constructive interaction between the British Communists and the nascent left in Ireland.’²⁸⁸ Greaves acknowledged in his diary, the simplistic ‘class struggle’ formulations of the CP in Britain were quite remote from the Irish reality.²⁸⁹ A broad Left was a difficult concept to implement as ‘Left’ can be defined differently depending on the context. ‘The trouble with the English Left is that they think Left and Right in Ireland are the same as Left and Right in England, whereas in Ireland Left and Right revolve around the national question.’²⁹⁰ This is the aspect that the CPGB underestimated. For example, during the formative stages of the civil rights movement, the CPGB ‘had reckoned neither on the ferocity of the loyalist backlash nor on the response to it in the Catholic ghettos in the form of a revived IRA.’²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p281

²⁸⁷ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p115

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p115

²⁸⁹ Quoted in Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p123

²⁹⁰ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p89

²⁹¹ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p281

The CPGB and the CC/CA had a mutual relationship as they pursued the same objectives. They influenced each other and worked closely in the fight against fascism, imperialism, and discrimination until the Cold War started in 1950 as part of the Left movement. Greaves was proactively developing the Irish policies and strategies for his organisation within the Party. Johnston asserts that the Greaves policy was being promoted largely in spite of the CPGB and the IWL.²⁹² Although the 1955 CA constitution clearly states its independent role, to a certain extent, the archival sources give the impression that the CA functioned as if it was an unofficial Irish committee of the CPGB as CA members who were also CP members implemented policies simultaneously and suggested the CPGB on numerous occasions so that they could create streamlined broad strategies. What Greaves attempted to do was 'to converting the CPGB and other British Labour organisations to an anti-Partition policy, not as transmitting to other a party-line he did not agree with.'²⁹³ His role within the CPGB was crucial, although it is hard to validate the effectiveness. He once wrote 'I have spent decades trying to influence the Communist and Labour movements in Britain on the national question and I can confidently say that I have as much influence now as I had at the beginning, which is zero.'²⁹⁴

Smylie claims that the CA's leadership was 'dominated by communists and Greaves was indebted both to CPGB thinkers, notably Dutt, and the hierarchy.'²⁹⁵ Greaves indeed received moral support from the Party, however, he was often disappointed as he did not get what he wanted - organisational assistance. Greaves wrote 'when I went full-time with the CA in 1951, I said that I would only do it if I got support from the CP. Dutt gave me support but he did not really count. They respected him for his intellect, but he did not have organisational weight.'²⁹⁶ Dutt was Greaves's closest CPGB comrade as they had similar personalities: highly intelligent, critical, and analytical thinkers. Naturally, some were not comfortable with Greaves's leadership and even the CA's existence. Greaves recalled that there was an opposition within the CP when he decided to go full time for the CA/ID. 'Kerrigan, I now see, was totally opposed. They did not really want me to succeed. They wanted the CA to fold up and let the Irish come directly into the Communist

²⁹² Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p177

²⁹³ Coughlan, 'The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?' Review

²⁹⁴ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p68

²⁹⁵ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p652

²⁹⁶ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p19

Party – those few of them who might be induced to do that. Being Scotchmen or of Orange background, as so many of them were, they had no sympathy whatsoever with Irish nationalism.²⁹⁷ For Party leaders, the Irish committee was just one of countless projects, while Greaves and others put all their efforts on the Irish cause. It is clear that the Party leaders and the CPGB as an institution did not bring the same level of commitment and expertise to the Irish committee's aim. Sean O'Casey gave Greaves a warning when he said he was going full-time on political work in 1951: 'They will sell you. I am sorry I did not listen at that time. For sell me indeed is just what British communists did; for they did not give our work the support they could have given.'²⁹⁸ Moreover, in terms of strategy and tactics, there were some internal disagreements within the Irish Committee. One of the members, Kay Beauchamp, who was also assistant secretary of committee of trade unionists for race relations, was often vocal. She complained several times because Greaves and Pat Clancy were dominant figures during CPGB Irish committee meetings and other members were marginalised. An intelligence agent noted: 'She would not be able to do 'it' as everything seemed to fall on two people Desmond and Pat Clancy when considering how the Irish Committee organises their work.'²⁹⁹

Upon consulting various archival sources and Greaves's journals regarding Greaves's involvement with the CPGB, Greaves had regular contact with high profile Party members such as Palme Dutt and Idris Cox, but evidently, the nature of his relationship with the CPGB appears to be an equal partnership. It did not seem hierarchical, as aforementioned, the CPGB did not order Greaves and he did not subjugate to the CP. Greaves and some of the leading CC/CA members, who were also CP members, were highly capable, offering CP leaders advise on how the Irish committee should function. According to Coughlan, 'they remained quite independent-minded people' and 'they were not types that would take orders from anybody or pursue a course of policy they did not fully believe in.'³⁰⁰ Party members regularly gave a talk and were present at CA lectures and campaigns, officially represented the CPGB at their conference, promoting their mission, along with LP politicians and trade unionists and regularly contributing articles to the *IF/ID*. The paper had coverage on the CPGB, IWL and CPNI during the period when no other papers were reporting

²⁹⁷ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ NA, KV2/3361, Desmond Greaves folder, 18/10/1955

³⁰⁰ Coughlan, 'The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?' *Review*

about them. The CPGB also viewed the CC/CA and its newspaper as a potential recruiting ground for their members, while the CC/CA also recruited their own members through the CPGB. They all collaborated in order to achieve their goals. Some intelligence reports concluded that the organisation is communist controlled,³⁰¹ rather than a communist.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to separate from one another as left individuals typically shared the identical mission, overlapping their activities within the working-class movement. The CPGB supported the Irish cause from its inception. For example, the CPGB's campaign on the Irish affair was 'the most militant seen since the beginning of the economic war in 1932 and some party and CA members moved to Ireland to strengthen the anti-war agitation.'³⁰² Among them were Michael McInerney, originally from Limerick, an original committee member of the CC and the first editor of the *IF*, who later became a full-time industrial organiser of the CP in Belfast and Frank Herbert, an optician from Birmingham who assumed a leading position in the Dublin branch.³⁰³ During the war, they demanded an end to partition and organised a Hands-Off Ireland campaign 'to counter Churchill's demands for the use of the Irish naval bases,'³⁰⁴ which was covered in detail on the *IF/ID*. In any case, the CPGB was more preoccupied to unite divided Irish Parties in Ireland rather than the unification of Ireland and its support for the *ID* and *CA* started decreasing after the war. With or without the CPGB's involvement, Greaves was committed to his work.

Although the CPGB and the *CA* were generally aligned with basic values, evidence suggests that they were not operating within the same context. Flann Campbell, a CPGB member who was also part of the *IF/ID*, complained in 1944 wrote to Harry Pollitt: 'My experience organising in East Anglia, London and Liverpool suggests that the Party's approach to the Irish question is not altogether correct.'³⁰⁵ Two decades later, in 1964, Greaves asked Dutt a question:

If the British Communist Party got power today – which is not going to happen of course but suppose:
I bet they would leave Partition as it is for the sake of a quiet life and plead that they did not want to

³⁰¹ NA, KV 2/3361 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

³⁰² Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p185

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p185

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p185

³⁰⁵ NA, KV2/3837 Flann Campbell folder, 18.4.44

throw the Labour Movement in Ireland into turmoil. I said to Palme Dutt about their recent annual congress resolution on 'Ending the enforced Partition of Ireland,' was it to end the Partition or the enforcement the Party stood for? 'The enforcement, of course,' he replied.³⁰⁶

This proves the fundamental discrepancy between the two organs. As Greaves was not aligned with the general CP line, he disagreed with them on many occasions. Despite the fact that some party members were proactive, the fact is that the CPGB as an institution showed little interest in the Irish cause. For example, Lenin wrote in 1915 '...in 1869 Marx demanded the separation of Ireland, not in order to split but to achieve subsequent free alliance between Ireland and Britain, not in order to secure 'justice for Ireland,' but in the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the British proletariat...'³⁰⁷ The Communists supported 'every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.'³⁰⁸ This is what communists aspired rather than specifically winning the struggle of the oppressed Catholic/Irish. Gradually, towards the end of the 1960s when the CA was proactively engaging with British politicians, 'Greaves's view that 'undoing partition was the primary political task' became widely accepted in British and Irish Communist circles, even then the mainstream Communist movement never took the issue as seriously in its active campaigning as Greaves would have liked.'³⁰⁹

Greaves expected the CPGB to adopt an anti-partition policy and depending on the advice he received, he adjusted the CA's strategy accordingly. It is apparent that the CA and Irish CP members were not completely focused on the full CPGB agenda but operated within their own framework. From his diaries, Greaves was frequently frustrated by the CPGB as his main interest lied in an Irish unification, not the broad Soviet political agenda. 'I came to the communist movement because of its anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, not because of love or admiration for Russia.'³¹⁰ Unlike many CPGB members - for example, Betty Sinclair who visited Moscow - he never set foot beyond the British Isles. He once attempted to make a passport application to go to Germany, but it was denied. He mentioned numerous times in his journal that he was not interested in visiting Russia or their communist agenda.

³⁰⁶ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p11

³⁰⁷ Mausergh, Nicholas, 1965, *The Irish Question 1840-1921*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, p108-110

³⁰⁸ Marx, Karl, and Engels, Frederick, 1967, *The Communist Manifesto*, Penguin Books, London, p29

³⁰⁹ Coughlan, 'The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?' Review

³¹⁰ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p12

Greaves certainly sought to take advantage of the CP in order to get what the CA wanted to achieve. Treacy's study chronicles the developments of his strategy by making Irish immigrants in England return to Ireland to alter the Irish politics within:

In 1945, Greaves's anxiety to preserve the Connolly Association under Communist control from 'ultra leftists' appears to have led him to propose that it be dissolved and replaced by a support group based around the *Irish Democrat* but his proposal was defeated and the following year Greaves's attitude had changed to the extent that he was beginning to think of sending Connolly Association members back to Ireland to influence politics there.³¹¹

However, this was not Greaves's intention as he lamented all who have left London: 'all the best people in the Irish solidarity movement here – yourself (Coughlan), Joe Deighan, Bobby Heatley, John McClelland – have buggered back to Ireland, abandoning the arena of decisive struggle, in Britain. And they will take the consequences, leaving the whole thing over to the next generation.'³¹² Turnover at the CC/CA/IF/ID was high as well-educated and employable activists tended not to stay in London too long. During the certain period, conscription of Irish immigrants in the UK also played a part for them to leave.

The CPGB did not share Greaves's enthusiasm but what the CC/CA had in common with the CPGB was the 'stages view' which is a theory that Ireland needs to go through certain stages in order to reach its goal. The *ID* explained it by using James Connolly's two stages of Irish freedom: 'The first was national democracy in which private enterprise would be permitted provided it did not endanger the interests of the nation as a whole. Coming after it he envisaged a second stage of freedom in which private interests would be merged and subordinated in the best development of the whole.'³¹³ Milotte explains that the CA had 'communist party politics by which the two bodies shared the stages' view of how political and social change would be achieved in Ireland and socialism was off the agenda for a long time to come.'³¹⁴

³¹¹ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p74

³¹² Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p20

³¹³ 'What James Connolly means to us today,' *Irish Democrat*, April 1961, p7

³¹⁴ Correspondence between Milotte and the author, December 2020

Was it a party paper?

If the *IF/ID* was a Party paper, it would have functioned similar to other diaspora party papers. Under the international sub-committee, the West Indies committee published *Caribbean News*, the Malayan sub-committee was in charge of *Malayan Monitor*, and the Jewish committee had the *Jewish Clarion*. *The West Indian Gazette* and *Afro-Asian Caribbean News* had a similar style with a broad range of geographic coverage, while *Malayan Monitor* was more like a handmade CPGB propaganda newsletter. The *IF/ID* was not formally represented under the international sub-committee. To prove a point, CPGB historians take no notice of the *IF/ID*. For example, *Communists and British Society 1920-1991*, one of the most valuable secondary sources of the CPGB mentions no word of the *IF/ID* although it has a section about the Irish in Britain. Nevertheless, John Callaghan claims that under the guidance of the Irish sub-committee, the CA was 'responsible for selling the *Irish Democrat*'.³¹⁵ If this was the case, it implies that the role of the CPGB was to increase the *ID*'s circulation, rather than producing it. According to Smylie's CPGB research, 'the broad movement disposes of 7,500 copies of its journal each month. Of these Central Books [a CP-focused bookshop] distributes only 330 in Britain, though 117 others go to Australia. In London, the District literature [committee] sells only 38 as against 36 in Manchester, 30 in Birmingham and 20 in Oxford. Yet throughout London there must be factory and other branches which are in contact with thousands of Irish people. The distribution of the journal of the broad movement is an immediate means of 'direct access.'³¹⁶ In Brisbane, Australia, it was sold at the People's Bookshop, an outlet for publications of the Communist Party of Australia, as it was advertised in the *ID*. In both Southern and Northern Ireland, the paper was also sold at CP and socialist bookshops. Various British intelligence reports acknowledged that the paper was sold in cooperation with the CP. Chief constable in Nottingham observed in September 1951 that Greaves was making particular efforts at the present time to increase the sales of the paper.

This is virtually the Irish section of the CP. He is disturbed by the fall in the sales of the *ID* in Nottingham from 48 to 36 copies during September. He proposes to visit the city to arrange a program: a meeting with the party members selling the *Democrat* in Nottingham on Friday night; an effort on

³¹⁵ Callaghan, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict: The CPGB 1951-68*, p131

³¹⁶ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p651

Saturday night to increase the sales, mostly in public houses; a meeting with party members who have contests in the building trade, particularly on an unspecified large site in the neighbourhood of the city; a talk to the party members interested in the Irish question, and possibly an open air meeting; visits to mining centres and agricultural centres where Irish men are employed.³¹⁷

Furthermore, a British intelligence agent reported in the 1950s, ‘the Nottingham branch of the CA is now defunct, and the *ID* is now distributed from CP Headquarters in this city.’³¹⁸ The CP helped selling the *ID* but in a lukewarm manner. According to a Glasgow police report on 16 August in 1954, Greaves was not satisfied with the CPGB’s support.

A year ago, the Scottish District Secretariat of the CP decided to place someone in charge of Irish affairs in Glasgow who would push sales of the *ID*. Glasgow Secretariat appointed a man who had no Irish connections and who has done nothing. Greaves is trying to have a more politically mature member with Irish connections put in charge, but he feels he is being put off with excuses. He wants a meeting called of all Glasgow Irish Party members but does not think he will be successful in this. At the beginning of July, the *ID* sent a man to Glasgow to push sales, but he has evidently had poor cooperation from the Party.³¹⁹

With the CPGB’s support in sales, the paper perpetually experienced a financial crisis suggesting that it was financially independent and not funded by the CPGB. An intelligence report discovered in the early 1940s: ‘The statement dealing with *IF* showed that the paper was practically self-supporting, with an annual revenue of £153.’³²⁰ When the newspaper reached the critical financial situation in 1943, however, then editor Pat Dooley reached out to Harry Pollitt, the CPGB general secretary.

Dooley went to Pollitt³²¹ to look for some financial aid, as things were bad....’Come on, Harry. You understand how it is.’ ‘Organisations must be self-supporting,’ said Pollitt...’If you can give us some help, we can be self-supporting in future.’ And he swore there would be appeals for money in the

³¹⁷ NA, KV 2/3360 C Desmond Greaves folder

³¹⁸ NA, KV 2/3362 C Desmond Greaves folder

³¹⁹ NA, KV 2/3361 C Desmond Greaves folder

³²⁰ NA, KV 2/3358 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

³²¹ Harry Pollitt, General Secretary and later Chairman of the CPGB 1929-1960

paper every month henceforth. 'I won't be taken in by that guff,' said your man, but he ended up by signing a cheque for £25, which was a sizeable sum in those days.³²²

Needless to say, receiving a substantial amount of one-time donation from the Party leader would not have happened unless their relationship was not close enough.

In terms of content, unlike other CPGB-affiliated papers, the *ID* was given a freer hand and the CPGB held no control over the paper content reveals that Greaves was able to take charge of the paper independently. The role of Greaves as editor of the paper was more imperative than being a member of the CPGB and elevating the CPGB's institutional mission. Greaves intended and hoped that the CPGB would help to achieve the goal of the paper and organisation. One of the intelligence reports noted when Cox and Greaves were going over some article, 'Cox was pointing out various alterations they had made to this.'³²³ In the words of Smylie, the CPGB offered them 'political, organisational and ideological support, expertise and encouragement, occasional to the point of dictating a line.'³²⁴ Greaves received some advice, but he equally offered them his opinions as an expert, and he certainly did not take orders from them. The nature of their interaction was not hierarchical.

Although the CPGB's involvement with the Irish diaspora paper was rather casual, there was a turning point of its operation in 1950 and Greaves sought advice. He was already in charge of the paper and its organisation before officially becoming full time. With limited capacity, he continually struggled to save the paper from a financial and technical point of view, contemplating to give it all up at one point, or becoming a full time himself and sought advice from Peter Kerrigan, industrial organiser of the CPGB in October 1950. According to an intelligence report:

Kerrigan asked if there was anybody else besides the Visitor (Greaves) who could be put on to the job. The visitor said the difficulty was the actual technical side of the paper. He suggested Flann Campbell might be approached...on the whole they were terribly short of technical staff. Kerrigan said the problem seemed to be not only the circulation but also the question of editorship. It seems

³²² Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p18

³²³ NA, KV 2/3361 Charles Desmond Greaves folder

³²⁴ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p640

that the visitor did this himself on a part-time basis. Kerrigan suggested that there surely must be somebody in your organisation who had the organising ability to put on the job as an assistant. The visitor did not seem able to think of anyone. He said that there was no doubt that the paper lacked direct contact with the people on the spot, and it would build up the circulation enormously if they could establish such contacts, start getting the stuff in and find someone who could edit it. He added that they had been without a proper editor for the past four years and had consequently made much less progress during that time than had been originally hoped for.³²⁵

This conversation demonstrates Greaves was looking for a full-time position at the *ID* or the CPGB equally believed a full-time person was needed for the paper. Another conversation between party officials Reuben Falber and Betty Reid was recorded in December 1950, 'if the suggestion of having a full-time man on the *ID* were to be turned down, then Greaves might be considered for the *Monitor*.'³²⁶ It is not clear which newspaper it was as such title did not exist at the time of this conversation. It could be something they were planning to develop in the future. The issue whether the newspaper needed a full-time editor position or not divided opinions within the Party. 'Peter had refused to agree that it was not necessary to have a full-time man for the *ID*. Reuben observed caustically: I must say from the way he explained it to me, the whole proposition seemed to be to provide a job for Greaves so that he can write a book on Ireland – I can't see Greaves as an organiser of sales for the paper.'³²⁷ An intelligence report noted that Kerrigan agreed to this when:

The *Democrat* had £100 bank balance and 5000 circulation. Both these aims had been achieved, but Greaves was not on full time at the moment. He was at present living on capital and had been touring round the country at his own expense. Eileen Palmer continued that she had been thinking about Greaves going on full time and was not at all sure about it; he had been doing it spare time, and as one never knew what might crop up in the political situation, she felt he should continue to do so. She thought perhaps he wanted to go full time on order to give himself a status, which afterwards he would not find he had got. Bob Stewart said he did not know how the Irish worked as he had not paid much attention to it; he knew that some of them did not like Greaves as leader of the Irish movement.³²⁸

³²⁵ NA, KV 2/3359 C Desmond Greaves folder

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ NA, KV 2/3360 C Desmond Greaves folder

This note suggests that the CPGB played an influential role for the paper's sales. Each member of the CP had expressed their own opinions. However, Greaves ultimately decided to commit his life to the paper and its organisation at his own will. When George Matthews, *DW* Editor was asked by a visitor whether the *ID* was a Party paper, he said 'that it was really under the control of the Party but not officially a Party paper.'³²⁹ This probably the most accurate description. The paper benefited from their advice when they could, however, it kept operating without the presence of the CPGB and Greaves was the decision maker. To prove its independent status, the *ID* was still in existence, and it had no impact when the CPGB dissolved itself,³³⁰

***ID* and *DW* similarities**

The *IF/ID* had many similarities with the *DW* in terms of contents and outlook, rather than republican newspapers such as *An Phoblacht* or *Republican News*. Similar to the *IF/ID*, the CPGB's flagship paper evolved over the years and attempted to attract a wider readership. According to James Jupp, 'The *DW* was read almost exclusively by the Left. Its importance in maintaining the ideological supremacy of the Communists over the less well-equipped minorities cannot be overestimated and was fully realised by the Party leadership. Every Communist knew exactly what to think on any issue because he had a regular interpretation supplied by the *DW*.'³³¹

During the mid-twentieth century, the *IF/ID* and the *DW* both focused on the fight against imperialism and fascism, targeting working class people. They uttered revolutionary slogans based on Marx's 'Workers of the world, unite!'. The *DW* proclaimed 'Workers of all lands, unite!' while the *ID*'s slogan appeared on the front page 'Ireland and working men in England, unite!' In terms of content, their coverage is similar although they were not identical. More news stories in the *DW* as it was published daily, while the monthly *IF/ID* had more analytical stories. The *IF/ID* was focused on Irish affairs and its foreign coverage was also linked to oppressed countries by British and other imperialism, while the *DW* covered more broad subjects with substantial paid advertisements. A typical *DW* issue contained very few or almost no Irish coverage. Occasional Irish and Ireland-related articles were written by Greaves who acted as if he were an Irish affairs

³²⁹ NA, KV2/3076 George Matthews folder, 14.4.1950

³³⁰ Coughlan, 'The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?' *Review*

³³¹ Jupp, *The Radical Left in Britain 1931-1941*, p128

correspondent for the *DW*. However, its Irish coverage was almost non-existent but when there was, it was a general or non-political story, for example, Greaves wrote a short obituary of Maud Gonne headlined ‘She was not Afraid’ on May 1, 1953: ‘Like all true republicans she was never afraid to associate with the Communists.’ A CC/CA member Pat Devine also wrote for the *DW*. When *The Irish Case Against Partition* by Greaves was published, he wrote a short review article in the *DW*.³³² Sean O’Casey also wrote for the *ID* and the *DW*. O’Casey took the liberty of writing whatever he believed in on the pages of the *ID*. One of the articles in the *ID* was ‘Irish prisoners. O’Casey’s call for amnesty.’³³³ With regard to the *DW*, the CPGB used him strategically. According to a former Editor, O’Casey was ‘often brought in to spin fine-sounding phrases when the Party leaders have no solid facts to support a campaign.’³³⁴ The *DW* showed no interest in Irish workers’ work-related stories such as Irish workers’ injuries, accidents, deaths, or conscription. On the other hand, the *ID* occasionally covered communist-related articles as a part of the left movement or used articles written by Party members, such as Betty Sinclair, but not on a regular basis.³³⁵ Newspaper articles clearly demonstrate almost all party members were associated with other left organs, such as trade unions, and their communist views were shared with others’ generally aligned perspectives. The *IF/ID* very rarely advertised CPGB events or wrote about them, while the *DW* advertised CC/CA social events in the 1940s during the height of their activities such as social dancing, film viewing and anniversary-related events but covered no CC/CA’s political activities in their paper.

With the emergence of the Cold War, under the editorship of George Matthews between 1949 and 1966, the *DW* attempted to be a broad working class paper and stayed away from the Party. Matthews wrote ‘if the content of a newspaper is the test of its purpose, we would claim that the proportion of directly political comment in the *DW* is not dissimilar from the proportion of directly political comment in other serious national newspaper.’³³⁶ The *DW* made it clear that it is not ‘the organ of any political party, although it expresses Communist views.’³³⁷ Greaves also attempted

³³² NA, KV 2/3360 Desmond Greaves folder, 8 November 1956

³³³ ‘Irish prisoners. O’Casey’s call for amnesty,’ *Irish Democrat*, November 1947, p1

³³⁴ Hyde, Douglas, 1951, *I Believed: The Autobiography of a Former British Communist*, William Heinemann, London, p284

³³⁵ For example, ‘Irish Workers’ League says,’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1950, p5

³³⁶ NA, HO 244/512 Daily Worker folder

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

to decouple the *ID* and *CA* from the CPGB.³³⁸ Both the CPGB and Greaves wanted their papers to be independent. To attract a wider audience, the *DW* consciously attempted to ‘distance itself from its party organ roots,’³³⁹ and this was also exactly the preoccupation of the *ID*. Similar to the *DW*, the *ID* relied on donations and the term ‘fighting funds’ was used in both papers during the same period. Both papers used the reader as producer, correspondent, distributor, and stakeholder. They both functioned as an agitator and organiser. In the words of Lewis Young, the *DW* embodied ‘the principles of worker-reader participation’³⁴⁰ which is the model of a Bolshevik newspaper and the *ID* appeared that it had the same concept. Effectively, communist newspapers had the exact formula. A Hungarian-American paper *Új Előre*’s style up to the 1930s is almost identical with the *DW* and the *ID*: sensational and repetitive stories about the horrors of capitalism and fascism; the most sensational headlines; fervent ideologues; the editors and writers are not trained in journalism; condemned the racist treatment of black people; attack the class enemy; stories of repressed workers across the world; demonstrations and strikes-related articles; excerpts from short stories and novels; the high level of interest in literary and cultural topics; regular book reviews; every opportunity to attempt to mobilise; advertisements for fund raising events; and constant financial problems.³⁴¹

The *DW* and the *ID* both thrived and declined during the same period. For both organisations, the number of memberships paralleled their respective circulation figures. The heyday of the CPGB and the *DW* was in the 1930s and 1940s as ‘a well-adjusted response to local conditions’ such as ‘the ills of capitalism, a militant response to fascism.’³⁴² During the post-war years, the Party’s interest in Irish communist affairs started to decline, its membership was on the decline in parallel with the *DW* circulation. The Cold War caused significant damage to many organisations of the left, including the *ID*. The *ID*’s circulation was also up until around the first few post-war years. Coughlan pointed out that the *CA* was ‘slow to adapt to post-war circumstances and the advent of the Cold War’.³⁴³ This indicates, according to Smylie, despite public disavowal, ‘the *CA*’s largely

³³⁸ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour: A Biographical and Autobiographical View of the 20th Century in Ireland*, p170

³³⁹ McCreary, *The People’s Paper: The Communist Daily Worker and the Rise of Fascism in the 1930s*, p80

³⁴⁰ Young, Lewis, ‘Internal party bulletin or paper of the working class movement? The Communist Party of Great Britain and the role of the Daily Worker, 1930-1949’, in *Media History*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2016), p131

³⁴¹ Sakmyster, Thomas L., *A Communist Newspaper for Hungarian-Americans: The Strange World of the Új Előre*, *Hungarian Studies Review*, vol. XXXII, Nos. 1-2 (2005), pp41-70

³⁴² Morgan, et al, *Communists and British Society*, p26

³⁴³ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

communist composition and inclination' and 'the *ID*'s pro-Soviet orientation undoubtedly played a role.'³⁴⁴ However, the TUC also struggled to adapt during the post-war period and came under increasing criticism for failure to achieve modernisation as the post-war period developed.³⁴⁵ Therefore, it was not only a communist propensity, but it was the progressive element that was slow to adjust. Nevertheless, the Cold War was a turning point for their collaborative relationship. Subsequently, the split of the republican movement around the 1960s³⁴⁶ was also a decisive moment for the Irish organisation and the Party as they drifted further away. According to Johnston: 'The CPGB would undoubtedly have wanted discreetly to catalyse the process of formation of an all-Ireland 'official' Marxist party as part of the 'international movement' and Greaves with his CA and *ID* roles would have wanted to maximise support for Civil Rights in the North from the organised labour movement.'³⁴⁷ In the 1960s, the *ID* changed its tone to cater this aspect.

Although the two papers shared the same traits, the authorities clearly considered they were unrelated. During the war time, the ban was imposed on the *DW* from January 1941 to September 1942. 'Not because of the people's opposition to the conduct of the war but because of the fear which is growing influence...The paper was not just an alternative voice, but was a weapon in the struggle for power.'³⁴⁸ The *IF/ID* was never banned even though they printed similar articles such as its criticism against the British government. From the perspective of the Minister of Information, it is clear that the *IF/ID* was viewed as an insignificant and unthreatening immigrant paper. Furthermore, in the files of Fascist and Communist papers at various archives, there is typically no mention of the *IF/ID*.

Competition with the *IWV*

Due to the similarities the *ID* had with the *DW*, it competed with other Party papers. According to various intelligence reports, one of the most discussed topics the CPGB had in relation to the *ID*

³⁴⁴ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish Communism*, p652

³⁴⁵ Lovell, John, et al., 1968, *A Short History of the T.U.C.*, Macmillan, London, p155

³⁴⁶ There are many factors but one of the major ones was that the division between the traditionalists and politicised.

³⁴⁷ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour: A Biographical and Autobiographical View of the 20th Century in Ireland*, p228

³⁴⁸ Howe, Mark, (ed.) 2001, *Is That Damned Paper Still Coming Out? The Very Best of the Daily Worker, Morning Star 1930-2000*, People's Press Printing Society, Croydon, p13

was the sales of the *Irish Workers' Voice (IWV)*, the official newspaper of the CPI, in the UK. During a meeting of the Irish Committee of the CPGB on 16 July 1956, attended by Idris Cox, Greaves, Michael O'Riordan and Sean Nolan (*IWV* representatives) and Sean Murray from Belfast (CPNI), it was decided 'there would be no objection to the sale of the *IWV* in the UK but that there should be no competition between it and the *DW* or the *ID*.'³⁴⁹ Some members including Greaves and Clancy considered that this might prejudice the sales of the *ID*, but eventually it was agreed in theory that the *IWV* would be brought over and 'sold for a trial period.'³⁵⁰ In a separate meeting, this issue was discussed again, the CPGB 'does not object to Party members taking advantage of CA functions to sell the *IWV* in competition with the *ID*.' However, the CPGB was concerned that there was 'a danger that the CA will be dubbed a Communist organisation because the *IWV* is sold at its meeting.'³⁵¹ According to an intelligence report:

It seems that the British CP is anxious that the CA should be built up into a broadly based organisation, and that the *IWV* should report its views to Irish workers in the UK. It also considers that the *DW* should give the British CP's line on conditions in the UK as they effect the Irish workers, and that when Irish workers in the UK need information on affairs in Éire, they should read the *IWV*.³⁵²

From the newspaper sellers' perspective, this caused trouble as they frequently ended up competing with each other in public which often escalated into a fight. During the St. Patrick's Day social evening in 1956,

the CA had a literature table on the CA's publications, selling the *ID* – where two of the lads – who we have had here for discussion – Furlong (ph?) and another – a bit drunk – insisting on going round selling the *IWV* and the proprietor objected. Said this was not in the agreement...or 'the *ID*...' Michael O'Riordan arrived, and the lads went away with him. Desmond made contact with the two comrades from Dublin and said 'Well, I don't say it's a momentous issue but it's something that can do a lot of harm and it's something we need to clear up.'³⁵³

³⁴⁹ NA, KV2/3361 C Desmond Greaves folder

³⁵⁰ NA, KV 2/3361 C Desmond Greaves folder

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

It appears that Greaves found them difficult to deal with as he wrote in his journal: ‘The disappearance of some of the Irish Workers’ League boys has proved no loss because of their intense sectarianism. Probably Dublin is a place where the right and the inactive are the same.’³⁵⁴ On another occasion in 1966, supporters of the CA and the Irish Workers’ Group scuffled after a charity football match organised by the Camden Town Irish Centre: ‘the departing crowd was loudly advised by two sixteen-year-old members of the IWL not to buy the *ID*. This criticism was silenced by the fists and feet of two members of the CA.’

An intertwined fractious relationship was regularly observed. The unceasing factionalism existed and Johnston experienced first-hand that relations between Irish Party members, also known as Sinn Féiners and CA members could ‘sometimes be somewhat edgy with the two often competing with each other for potential recruits amongst the Irish community in Britain.’³⁵⁵ Getting attention from Irish immigrants who are politically minded became further intense when *Clann na hÉireann*, the republican emigrants group that started in the 1960s, became active with its own publication. There was a discrepancy amongst the organisations that were meant to be allies. ‘The CPGB thought in terms of the British working class and was hostile to what it regarded as nationalist diversions; *Clann na hÉireann* thought in terms of money and support for the movement in Ireland; the Connolly Association tried to mobilise Irish workers in support of Irish interests via a process of lobbying Parliament and influencing opinion-leaders in the Labour Party and trade unions.’³⁵⁶ Apart from selling its paper, IWL migrants in London were collecting money for the IWL in Dublin.³⁵⁷ The same ultimate goal with different tactics made them compete each other. As a result, some CPGB members felt that the party should interact directly with the Irish community through its own structures: ‘Irish communists in Britain should work under the auspices of the IWL rather than the CPGB, and certainly not the Connolly Association.’³⁵⁸ The CPGB was caught in a political ploy because before streamlining their operational strategy, they needed to unite the IWL, the CPNI, and the Irish members of the CPGB in the UK. Within this context, newly arrived people from Ireland and settled Irish immigrants constantly had disagreements although each organisation

³⁵⁴ Desmond Greaves journal, September 2, 1956

³⁵⁵ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p167

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p167

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p177

³⁵⁸ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p647

had a purpose to operate. One of the sources suggested that ‘the Party considers that certain Irish members bear a grudge against the CA because they consider that everybody should belong to the CP, and that there should be no specialised work at all.’³⁵⁹

Why Irish people become communists

The objectives of the CPGB were universal, progressive, transferable with the desires of all democrats and aligned with basic human rights that all people strive for, and the CA had the identical aspiration. While a substantial number of immigrants were pro-Church, others were anti-Church and joined the CA or the CP, or both upon arrival. The way they joined the CP or/and the CA is similar. ‘Most, beyond doubt, had come to communism because of the good that was in them. They had come with idealism, with anger at bad social conditions; fundamentally they had, in most cases, come because no one had ever shown them anything better.’³⁶⁰ There were many Irish and people with Irish surnames amongst party members, who were called Sinn Féiners, as support for the aims and methods of the Irish struggle ‘translated into communist attachments.’³⁶¹ Gerard Madden also states ‘the phenomenon of Irish migrants in Britain being radicalised and joining the CPGB was genuine.’³⁶² The CPGB was aware of that the influence of Sinn Féiners was substantial. The Party believed that it needed to ‘show support for the united Ireland, otherwise lose support.’³⁶³

Douglas Arnold Hyde - not related to the first President of Ireland - from Bristol was a former news editor at the *DW* who later converted to Catholicism in 1948 and became an anti-communist propagandist and wrote columns for *Catholic Herald*. Hyde argues ‘since Communism is itself a spiritual problem I have always believed the problem of the Irishman who has been brought up in the Faith but who nonetheless finishes up in the Communist Party must be a spiritual problem too.’³⁶⁴ Furthermore, he argued that many of the people who came over to Britain were already politically-minded by the time they leave Ireland they are definitely ‘agin the Government’ and

³⁵⁹ NA, KV2/3361 C Desmond Greaves folder

³⁶⁰ Hyde, *I Believed*, p274

³⁶¹ Morgan, et al, *Communists and British Society*, p197

³⁶² Madden, *The Connolly Association, the Catholic Church, and anti-communism in Britain and Ireland during the early Cold War*, p498

³⁶³ NA, DO 35/2060 Friends of Ireland folder

³⁶⁴ Hyde, Douglas, ‘Why Irishmen Become Communists,’ in *The Furrow*, vol. 10, No. 6 (June 1959), p367

‘they are already critical of orthodox politics and politicians, they have maybe had a period of unemployment, they may be blaming the Church and State.’³⁶⁵ Hyde claims that it is straightforward for Irish people to join the CPGB because it is ‘outside the British tradition.’³⁶⁶

It cannot be made to share the guilt of British Imperialism to which it is, in any case, opposed. It has not and has never had, any link with British imperialist policies in Ireland or elsewhere. This means that the politically-minded Irishman who wishes to engage in British political activity without betraying his nationalist feelings can do so more easily through the Communist Party than through the established parties. He must put a lot of Irish history out of his mind and swallow a lot of his nationalist pride before he joins the Conservatives or, for that matter, the Liberal Party. There is much that he must forgive and try to forget if he is to go into the Labour Party. There is nothing in the British Communist Party’s history or policies which comes into conflict with his nationalism. The way into the Communist-guided Connolly Association at their political level is even easier. Its activities are mainly concerned with Irish problems and those of Irishmen in Britain. Its paper, the *Irish Democrat*, deliberately and understandably limits its range of interests in the main to Irish questions.³⁶⁷

Hyde identified that one of the main reasons why a large number of Irish workers in England joined the CPGB is that ‘it is primarily concerned with Ireland and the Irish and not with the doctrines of Communism no readjustment in his thinking is required in order that he shall be able to support it wholeheartedly.’³⁶⁸ Morgan, Cohen and Flinn also argue the methods of the Irish struggle ‘translated into communist attachments.’³⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the tactics and objectives of communists and republicans were fundamentally different. When the IRA approached the Bolsheviks for money and guns, ‘one of the communists asked, ‘How many priests have you hanged?’ When the IRA rep, shocked, replied, ‘None!’ he was told to come back when they were serious about the revolution!’³⁷⁰

Pro Soviet?

³⁶⁵ Ibid., p368

³⁶⁶ NA, KV 2/4276 Douglas Hyde folder

³⁶⁷ Hyde, *Why Irishmen Become Communists*, p369

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p370

³⁶⁹ Morgan, et al., *Communists and British Society*, p197

³⁷⁰ Morrison, Danny, 2016, *Then the Walls Came Down: A Prison Journal*, Dalzell Press, Bangor
Morrison, p112

It is clear from the coverage that the *IF/ID* initially gave pro-Soviet and a partial view of other eastern countries. Some readers lamented that the paper should be more objective as this fact alienated readers. A letter of complaint was printed because the paper never wrote any criticism of the Russian government. Regarding the article ‘Break the boycott’ in the November 1947 issue, a reader protested:

whilst agreeing with much you write and at the same time appreciating that your paper gives much interesting news and articles, might I be allowed to mention the fact that you never write any criticism of the Russian, Polish and Yugoslav governments...It is this fact that prejudices many would-be readers of your paper. Perhaps you think these are not worth mentioning and that you contend that the Press of the Western World comments enough on these happenings. Nevertheless, I think you should be objective and publish more about these facts. After all your paper has a ‘Democratic’ heading.³⁷¹

The paper defended its position as it had a role to play as a voice for the voiceless.

This newspaper believes in the necessity to propagate Socialism – as Connolly and Larkin did when they were alive. Russia, Poland and Yugoslavia and all striving to maintain the forms of Socialist economy they have established in the way they deem to be most suitable for their own countries. We will not join the malicious band that denigrate the policies and leaders of these countries. Their opponents are those who have opposed every social and political advance of the common people throughout the world and who are now traducing the democratic representatives of the people who contest the by-elections in Ireland. In short, this is not the place to seek the calumniator of the workers, whether they be Swiss, Russian or Irish.³⁷²

Although Greaves was often critical of CPGB leaders, he held a belief that as an institution, it had a vital role to play, and his thinking was reflected in the paper. He believed: ‘The communist movement in Britain is the origin of every progressive idea in this country for the past few decades. It has plenty of faults, but if it were not there you would soon see how reactionary everything would get.’³⁷³ Therefore, ‘I cannot attack the Provisionals in the *ID*, or the Russians for that matter, without helping the British Government, which I regard as worse than either of them and so I do

³⁷¹ ‘Our Readers Write About,’ *Irish Democrat*, November 1947, p2

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p2

³⁷³ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p11

not carry such attacks – which is not to say that I agree with what they do.’³⁷⁴ Nevertheless, it was clear that the general population did not share his view. Newspaper sellers received harsh treatment when selling the paper in public places. Johnston encountered ‘personal hostility, a consequence of the apparent promotion of support for the USSR and the post-war Eastern European scene.’³⁷⁵ Similar to *ID* sellers, *DW* sellers received mental and physical harassment from the public. ‘Sellers of the *DW*, women as well as men, were spat upon and assaulted on the streets; canvassing, they had doors slammed in their faces, even chamber-pots emptied on their heads from upstairs windows.’³⁷⁶

Hungarian crisis

Balanced reporting was challenged as the autonomous newspaper attempted to spread the message about socialism and maintained that the freedom of speech is the right of all people. The *ID* always defended small nations from the clutches of powerful countries. On many occasions, Greaves disagreed with the CPGB policy and was strongly against the Soviet’s invasion of smaller nations although his view did not immediately reflect in the paper. For example, the event that the Soviets invaded Hungary on 4 November 1956 caused a stir. Treacy claims ‘Greaves was forthright in his defence of the Soviet Union on occasions like the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia and ensured that the CA adhered to an orthodox Communist line.’³⁷⁷ In effect, Greaves was opposed to Stalinism, and his instant reaction to the Hungary event was: ‘They had done terrible things and were complete muddlers and stupid (sic) and worse.’³⁷⁸ Greave had an editorial meeting on 14 November and they secured an agreement on the way to treat the issue. The *ID* decided to support the new government in Hungary. In his diary, he wrote:

I had already seen Pat Devine and convinced him of the necessity for it and though Eamon Lyons thought we were perhaps a little kind to Russia, he acquiesced readily enough. If no serious stroke of bad luck intervenes in a situation which is coming more and more to resemble a maelstrom every day,

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p59

³⁷⁵ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p119

³⁷⁶ Hyde, *I Believed*, p72

³⁷⁷ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p74

³⁷⁸ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p12

we will preserve our own little Irish movement, as Paddy Clancy put it, from the convulsions which are shaking some of the others.³⁷⁹

The article by Pat Devine who had his own column on world affairs appeared in the December 1956 issue:

‘The United Nations, with the agreement of the major powers should decide that within a clearly stated period – and not too long – every nation should withdraw its troops from all other countries. This would mean not only Russian troops leaving Hungary and Poland, but American, British, and French troops leaving the various countries in which they are situated, including, needless to say, the British troops from Ireland and the American troops from Britain.’³⁸⁰

Simultaneously, a short news article on the front page appeared in the same issue: ‘Hungarian emigres marched through Birmingham and the GL was part of it. The GL initially banned political activities but now free to take active part in political struggles for the ending of partition.’³⁸¹ This is a bold statement as the newspaper appealed to the reader to take action in the wake of the invasion. Along with this article, there was another short news article. A socialist bookshop New Books in Dublin was attacked during Hungarian emigres demonstration organised by National University students. The article defended: ‘citizens have a right to their opinions and CA members have contributed towards the restoration of the shop.’³⁸² This also implies that the CA’s belief in democratic socialist Ireland and anti-violence stance was not necessarily aligned with the CP policy. The paper punctuated their statement by publishing an article by the CP in Belfast. ‘The CP does not advocate a policy of armed force for the solution of the national problem in this country, nor for the attainment of its own objectives of a socialist Ireland...The Dublin Government is now officially in a position of ‘dispute’ with the British Government but does nothing about the dispute.’³⁸³

Reaching pro-Church people

³⁷⁹ Greaves, Desmond, journals volume 12, 14 November

³⁸⁰ ‘Peace and Prosperity’, *Irish Democrat*, December 1956, p3

³⁸¹ ‘Gaelic League ends ban on politics?’, *Irish Democrat*, December 1956, p1

³⁸² ‘Hoodlums Smash Bookshop’, *Irish Democrat*, December 1956, p1

³⁸³ ‘Belfast Communists on the Raids’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1957, p5

Although the paper attempted to reach a wider audience, there were several obstacles to overcome. As it was mentioned earlier, the biggest challenge was the Church. Many newly arrived Irish people refused to read the *ID* just because the Church labelled it as communist without understanding what it entailed. Kerrigan noted in October 1950 that ‘there was a tremendous drive by the Catholics against the *ID* on the grounds that it was a Communist organ.’³⁸⁴ Bishop Michael Browne of Galway accused the *ID* as having ‘its main object to infect Irish workers with the Communist Party-Line.’³⁸⁵ In 1948, Bishop Browne drew attention to a statement by the British Trade Union Congress condemning CPGB influence within the trade union movement which listed both the CA and *ID* as ‘subsidiary organisations’ of the CPGB by saying ‘it is a fact that well-known communists are connected with this Association as founders and members of the Executive; it is also established that members of these clubs soon cease to go to the sacraments and to Mass.’³⁸⁶ The Church’s blatant attack was the source of confusion amongst immigrants. One of the observations was made by Donall MacAmhlaigh. Similar to the majority of typical working men, he was initially sceptical about the relationship between communism and the *ID* and dubious about where his suspicion came from.

This is a socialist paper put out by the Connolly Clubs. Many of the Irish here are against the people responsible for this paper as they are inclined to be very much to the left, but I think they’re an honest enough bunch who are seriously concerned about the bad state that Ireland is in. It’s sad that they are Communists, but I doubt that. Only a short while ago, I was talking to a priest who told me that the English Communists had failed to get any good out of them at all.³⁸⁷

Although a few minority priests were supporting the *IF/ID*, many Irish residents in Britain did not even question about this because they took the Church’s disapproval at face value. *The ID* published a letter to the Editor from an Irish teacher, writing that they needed to be properly informed: ‘The fact that the overwhelming number of Irish in London have no knowledge that these classes are held is one reason for the miserable attendance and the possibility of discontinuation...*The ID* was unknown to most of my fellow students and treated with suspicion

³⁸⁴ NA, KV 2/3359 C Desmond Greaves folder

³⁸⁵ Madden, *The Connolly Association, the Catholic Church, and anti-communism in Britain and Ireland during the early Cold War*, p497

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p496

³⁸⁷ MacAmhlaigh, *An Irish Navy: The Diary of an Exile*, p123

and distrust by those who knew of it. I am happy to report that 30 per cent of the class plus the teacher are now regular monthly readers.³⁸⁸

In effect, the paper was not concerned whether Irish people joined the CP or not as long as it could achieve their goal. Its main task was to sell the newspaper to spread the message. Greaves as editor and the CPGB tried to find common ground with anti-Catholic people and collaborated strategies. Greaves came up with a solution by embracing the Church. Madden claims that Greaves suggested remedies to ‘the challenge of Catholic anti-communism’ by proposing the CPGB to publish Connolly’s *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, arguing that the CPGB would win much sympathy amongst Catholics by simultaneously defending the right of Catholics to practice their religion while denying the clergy’s right to interfere in politics,³⁸⁹ as Connolly rejected clerical condemnations of socialism in this book. Greaves recommended that the CPGB publish a brief statement rebutting Catholic arguments against communism:

We might even distribute it at church doors after mass. The thing to remember is that those who attend mass are often in mental conflict with it. Many of them hate the restriction, the mental slavery and mumbo-jumbo and will take no notice of a priest who says, ‘don’t buy it’. But the approach of our sellers must be VERY modest and friendly.³⁹⁰

The Church’s preoccupation was that immigrants stop going to church if they became communists. Madden points out that the Irish in Britain were being ‘at risk of falling into a life of immorality, and, amidst the broader atmosphere of the Cold War, communism, in the image of the CA was seen as being in a prime position to exploit the perceived vulnerability of the Church.’³⁹¹ Although, the Church was viewed as one of the oppositions to the paper as it was publicly attacking it, the *ID* did not blame the Church but embraced it with a few progressive clergymen on board. To start with, Father Michael O’Flanagan was an honorary member of the CC. Various priests contributed articles with different topics to the *IF/ID*. For example, Rev. Father Clarence Duffy wrote about

³⁸⁸ ‘A plea for Gaelic,’ *Irish Democrat*, September 1963

³⁸⁹ Madden, *The Connolly Association, the Catholic Church, and anti-communism in Britain and Ireland during the early Cold War*, p501

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p501

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p506

why discrimination is unchristian.³⁹² Pat Devine, a CPGB, CC/CA member, *IF/ID* and *DW* writer and anti-cleric, also ‘urged the CPGB to ensure that Catholic anti-communist clerics from the Pope down be exposed and denounced in our press and by our speakers’ and ‘he emphasised that instances of cooperation between the Church and communist governments in Eastern Europe’s new democracies be highlighted.’³⁹³ This suggestion is reflected in the *IF/ID* as it reported the Church support for communist governments on numerous occasions: ‘Writing of Communism, a French Catholic paper in London says collaboration between Catholics and Communists is possible after the war’³⁹⁴ and ‘Communists and Christian Democrats fraternise in Italy.’³⁹⁵ Articles on the Church collaboration with communists against fascism and imperialism repeatedly appeared in the paper.

The paper attempted to acknowledge the Catholic dimension of Irish identity but did not put emphasis on the religion. In effect, Greaves had a sympathetic attitude to religious faith: ‘religious belief of some kind is necessary to society and may have an evolutionary role in getting people to cooperate.’³⁹⁶ Yet, the paper was again struck with other types of divisions. Although, many newly arrived Irish people were Catholic, among them contained equally substantial fervent anti-Catholic leftists who were concerned about the way the newspaper depicted the Church. One of the loudest voices was Muriel MacSwiney (1892-1982), widow of Cork Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney who was ‘very perturbed at our not attacking the Catholic Church in the *ID*,’ Greaves wrote in his diary. ‘The last straw was our obituary of Cardinal Griffin and the fact that we found a good word to say for him. She was put out when I would not sponsor her visit to Manchester to ‘tell the Irish the truth’.’³⁹⁷ In numerous occasions, her name shows up in the archival documents in relation to Greaves. Idris Cox called Muriel MacSwiney Greave’s ‘girlfriend’³⁹⁸ but Coughlan confirmed that they were not an item, but good friends and she occasionally cleaned his untidy flat. While in

³⁹² ‘Discrimination is unchristian,’ *Irish Democrat*, August 1956, p4

³⁹³ Madden, *The Connolly Association, the Catholic Church, and anti-communism in Britain and Ireland during the early Cold War*, p501

³⁹⁴ ‘Collaboration is possible,’ *Irish Freedom*, April 1944, p8

³⁹⁵ ‘Communists and Christian Democrats fraternise in Italy,’ *Irish Freedom*, July 1944, p8

³⁹⁶ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p93

³⁹⁷ Greaves, Desmond, journals volume 12. October 15, 1957

³⁹⁸ NA, KV2/3363, Desmond Greaves folder, 20 November 1956

London, she was associated with the CA, but in the end, she fell out with Greaves and left London in 1956.³⁹⁹

Another challenging aspect is that the diaspora community was perpetually fractionated. Although there were times that the *IF/ID* was well received, it continuously struggled to attract a wider readership throughout the research period as social division amongst Irish workers was a recurrent theme. J. A. Jackson argued that the fundamental division of the Irish community occurred ‘as a result of social class is a reflection of a similar division in Ireland which becomes more marked by the greater scale of the British communities.’⁴⁰⁰ When they arrived in England, they had brought their class structure and politics with them: ‘The Irish carried their memories of Whiteboyism not alone to the cities of Ireland, but to England and Scotland while they took a prominent part in organising trade unions wherever they settled in Britain.’⁴⁰¹ Jackson claims that the most marked divisions in the immigrant community and its activities are ‘determined by social class, and to a lesser degree by sectarian interest.’⁴⁰² As most Irish nationalists typically had a working-class Catholic background, middle-class and professional immigrants were reluctant to associate themselves with extreme nationalist movements and with the left-wing policies of such organisations as the CA.⁴⁰³

In addition to this, the paper’s failure to reach a broader audience was that many people, especially newcomers, had not fully understood the nature of the Irish struggle and what the paper advocated, the basic concepts of democracy. MacAmhlaigh further observed:

This boyo was going around the pubs in Camden Town trying to sell the Democrat to the lads. He stretched it out to one man who snarled ‘Clear off with your oul’ paper, the Church don’t approve of it.’ *The News of the World* was sticking out of the man’s pocket at the time. The man with the *Democrat* merely said: ‘Just how mixed-up can Irishmen get?’⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁹ <https://www.dib.ie/biography/macswiney-muriel-frances-a5296>

⁴⁰⁰ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p132

⁴⁰¹ In Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p117, op. Cit., O’Brien, G, *The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine*, p399

⁴⁰² Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p128

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p128

⁴⁰⁴ MacAmhlaigh, *An Irish Navy: The Diary of an Exile*, p123

In the mid-twentieth century, people were living in a rapidly changing society and various ideologies and philosophies existed that were frequently muddled or misunderstood. While some readers had their own interpretation, other individuals were clearly confused with the organisation's principles. According to numerous letters published in the paper, the organisation was described in a number of ways such as socialist republican, nationalist, left republican, communist, while some people questioned whether republicanism and socialism could be practised at the same time. To remedy the situation, they reiterated to the general public that it was non-sectarian, and their ideology is 'a crossroad between the English and the Irish progressive movements.'⁴⁰⁵ One of their pamphlets *What is the Connolly Association?* typically explains:

Sometimes somebody writes in to ask, 'is the Connolly Association Socialist?' They can get confused when they don't get a simple answer. You do not have to sign a declaration that you support socialism in order to be a member – though you have to support an independent Irish republic of 32 counties. The whole outlook policy and work of the Association is informed by Socialist ideas. But it is not dogmatic. Many good Irish Republicans agree with some socialist ideas and disagree with others. These days socialism is fashionable. There are many people whose ideas are as different from Connolly's as chalk from cheese who proclaim themselves socialists. The Association is not interested in people's consciences. It is interested in what they do. No republican who agrees with what the Connolly Association is doing and wants to forward it is going to be refused admission because he isn't a socialist and his family votes Fianna Fáil! And any real socialist will welcome him. And those who will not the Connolly Association does not want.⁴⁰⁶

Without being too pedantic, the paper declared that it welcomed all people who were aligned with their basic belief of self-determination by explaining that they were 'not bothered about who their grandfather was or the shape of their nose.' The paper was ultimately for and by the working class who were supporters of united Ireland. The paper appealed: 'the CA advises both pro-Communist and anti-Communist to forget that little quarrel till we get Ireland FREE. Let's postpone it. Let's drop it now and start again in a free country.'⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p30

⁴⁰⁶ *What is Connolly Association* pamphlet

⁴⁰⁷ 'CA replies secret smear circular,' *The Irish Democrat*, December 1961, p2

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that there was a time lag for newly arrived immigrants to get familiar with the *ID*'s beliefs in order to digest them. For example, Donall MacAmhlaigh was a navy of the 1950s and the author of *An Irish Navy: The Diary of an Exile*, originally written in Irish as *Dialann Deorai* and published in 1964. As one of the typical construction workers in post-war England, he kept a diary and penned his daily life in London and other English cities such as the hardships of work camps, lonesome nights, dancehalls, and pubs which were all part of the typical life of Irish immigrants. During the early stage of his working life in England, he consciously and repeatedly questioned: 'We can never be as wealthy as England but we're so far behind other countries such as Denmark that one can only conclude that something has gone wrong somewhere.'⁴⁰⁸ At the beginning, he was undecided about the CA and the *ID* and was rather aloof about the *ID* when he was writing his diary in the 1950s. However, as he settled in England, he gradually started appreciating the work of the newspaper and its organisation and became an avid member of the CA Northampton branch, eventually had his own column, Gaelic articles and other stories in the *ID* in the 1970s until his death. He later became a passionate Irish teacher at the Irish class which ran for 2 years in the unemployed centre. His obituary appeared on the front page in the March 1989 issue which was one of the most detailed and longest in the paper's history. This explains that his life is the epitome of tens of thousands of Irish workers in Britain. It was natural for those mainly Catholic Irish immigrants from small villages of Ireland who arrived in a large urban city, being exposed to various ideologies, discrimination, new environment and getting accustomed to their work, needed some adjustments and time, in addition to their conflicting attitudes in regard to the Church as well as peer pressure. Furthermore, the majority of workers were struggling to secure basic living conditions, namely accommodation and decent work. A reader wrote a letter to the Editor, regarding unity and exiles as Irish workers' top priority was a reasonable standard of living.

At the moment it is very unbalanced, too many little prejudices prevail. In my job, I find our people have a devil-may-care attitude towards the question of unity. I found they want Ireland to be a better place to live in. But they don't want to contribute anything towards it. This to me is where the question of unity falls down. This is also where a vigorous approach is necessary. We must be one body, with

⁴⁰⁸ MacAmhlaigh, *An Irish Navy: The Diary of an Exile*, p37

one mind to achieve our aim. With a comparison of selected ideas of course. Our organisations are not adequate enough to help distressed exiles. This is where unity begins, by providing certain amenities for our people, to prevent crowded lodging houses, by selecting a person to look after the welfare of those people. And also, to prevent them from being exploited. The question of unity cannot be properly answered, with the biggest portion of our exiles in disagreement.⁴⁰⁹

As immigrants needed some time to adjust their lives, physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually, the adaptation period was necessary to join the movement. Evidently, there appears to be ‘a pattern of first-generation migrants being less likely than their children to become integrated into the CPGB.’⁴¹⁰ Greaves also recalled in later years that he and Joe Deighan have often wondered why all their hard work amongst the Irish in Britain in the 1950s achieved so little: ‘I think now that the process of emigration and settling in another country is so traumatic for so many people that it takes a generation for them to settle down, and it is only in the next generation perhaps that they can hope to influence events significantly in the host country.’⁴¹¹

Conclusion

As this chapter shows, an existing theory was tested. The *IF/ID* was not a party bulletin as it was not designed to spread the CPGB’s propaganda although its revolutionary line was aligned with the *IF/ID*, demanding the pursuit of progressive political development. They shared the stages’ view, as they both focused on the broad alliance by shifting strategies. They both aspired to follow the model of a ‘Bolshevik newspaper,’⁴¹² deeply rooted in the class struggle to establish revolutionary journalism. Their symbiotic relationships are undeniable, however, all left-wing organs attempted to unite by collaborating with others particularly before the war. In this regard, ‘left wing figures around the Labour Party and the trade unions contributed regularly’⁴¹³ to the communist press. And this can apply to the *IF/ID*. Without carrying the specific communist propaganda, both papers looked like general workers’ newspapers. The CP’s main concern was not its contents but its sales figures as it strived to spread the message. The *CA/ID*’s close relationship with the CPGB had some vital consequences as they failed to attract readers.

⁴⁰⁹ Letters, *Irish Democrat*, January 1966, p2

⁴¹⁰ Morgan, et al., *Communists and British Society*, p202

⁴¹¹ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p95

⁴¹² Ure Smith, *The Communist press in Britain*, p185

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p182

Nevertheless, the papers consciously attempted to differentiate from each other, in particular, the *ID* tenaciously affirmed that it was an independent paper. In any case, Greaves's intention was simply to get maximum support from the CPGB for his broad organisation strategy and his top priority was to make his newspaper speak both for and with a voice of the working classes. The next chapter examines how the newspaper attempted to unite workers.

Chapter Three: How to unite workers

The CC/CA identified two main powers in Britain, trade unions and the British government. The organisation and its paper prioritised to work with trade unions in order to mobilise workers and to write about trade union-related articles in England, and simultaneously, they extensively lobbied British politicians to alter the system and to democratise the law in Northern Ireland. This chapter explores the development and objectives of the newspaper in relation to Irish workers within the context of the wide-ranging socio-economic changes of the research period. It begins with the evolution of the newspaper and how it engaged with Irish workers to create a movement. The next section seeks to provide how the newspaper framed certain articles and issues in order to highlight the status quo of Irish workers and voiced solidarity. Finally, the cases of construction workers and nurses, the two notable and major groups of Irish immigrants in England are assessed. How did the newspaper try to unite workers? How did the paper frame workers and influence the labour movement?

Incessant workers

Since partition, more than one million Irish, principally young capable individuals left for England to join the workforce. The loss of the working-age populations further led to economic and cultural stagnation and made it difficult for the whole Ireland to develop. Irish migration to Britain between 1921 and 1971 was one of the most notable flows of migrants in twentieth century Europe, and the highest was the 1950s.⁴¹⁴ Between 1951 and 1961, 412,000 Irish people left, and Ireland in 1956 and 1957 was the only country in Europe where the total volume of goods and services consumed declined.⁴¹⁵ Employment in industry dropped by 38,000, or 14 per cent of the industrial labour force, from 1951 to 1959, and the agricultural workforce was depleted by 200,000 from 1941 to 1961.⁴¹⁶ Through interwar and postwar years, Irish workers continuously crossed the Irish Sea to be part of British economic activities as a matter of necessity and urgency, initiated by the British government. ‘Due to the extreme shortage of unskilled labour in this country, the recruitment of Labour from Éire was conducted particularly of labourers,’ but ‘not to recruit indiscriminately encouraged.’⁴¹⁷ Some may held a good profession or even status in Ireland but most of them

⁴¹⁴ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p1

⁴¹⁵ Ferriter, Diarmaid, 2004, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, p465-6

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p466

⁴¹⁷ NA, AVIA 15/1853

became wage-earners and joined the working class in Britain, therefore ‘their power to defend themselves or to aid their homeland, rose or fell with the fortunes of the working class’.⁴¹⁸ MacAmhlaigh who came to England to work as a navvy also observed: ‘...in Dublin, there are Irish of all kinds – rich, poor, intelligent and ignorant – but in England, for the most part, there is only one kind of Irishman and that is the worker.’⁴¹⁹ These push-pull factors transformed Irish people’s lives. Irish migrants in Britain proved to be a valuable labour force of largely unskilled labour which filled the shortage during the immediate post-war period.⁴²⁰

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain had 85 percent of the total working population and had become ‘unquestionably a working-class nation’⁴²¹ and the majority of Irish immigrants belonged to this group during the research period although Irish immigrants were not entirely homogenous. The Irish question is considered as a class struggle because working people were the ones who had severe economic consequences. It was logical to regard that incessantly arriving Irish workers could function effectively as a mass movement for unification of Ireland. The CA believed, in Johnston’s words: ‘keep the Irish in London from being lost from Irish to British politics and to try to mobilise them into an interest in Ireland.’⁴²² The newspaper intended to mobilise the whole population of Irish workers in an enormous collective effort to fight against imperialism. The paper’s main target was primarily Irish immigrants in England as well as British workers in order to influence their thoughts and opinions. As it is clear from the paper’s mantra ‘Ireland and working men in England, unite!’, uniting workers was their top priority.

The press as an organiser

The early twentieth century was a relatively quiet period for the Irish press in England. Geoffrey Bell’s study on the Irish Revolution and the British Labour Movement during the time of Easter 1916 highlights that most of the British labour movement was hesitant: a hesitancy to ‘devote time, energy and intellectual endeavour to explore what was happening in Ireland in those years; a hesitancy to give the Irish majority what they wanted; a hesitancy to relate what was happening in

⁴¹⁸ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p2

⁴¹⁹ MacAmhlaigh, *An Irish Navvy*, p176

⁴²⁰ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p212

⁴²¹ Kirk, Neville, 1998, *Change, Continuity and Class: Labour in British Society 1850-1920*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, p143

⁴²² Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p5

Ireland to their own values; and, most of all, a hesitancy to decisively change the course of British/Irish history.⁴²³ The tradition of being hesitant lingered on for a while. In March 1921, the Irish Self Determination League (ISDL) London District Committee began to publish a monthly newspaper called the *Irish Exile/An Deordaidbe Gaodhlach* which could function as an organiser but fearing police attention, there was no named editor, and the articles were mostly not attributed. Mary MacDiarmada claims this paper became a useful propaganda tool for the ISDL, but the British authorities did not attempt to suppress it. Although, it is difficult to ascertain verifiable circulation figures, its own report in April 1922 put the monthly figure at 10,000.⁴²⁴ One of the founders of this organisation Art O'Brien was London-born and reared and educated privately. His 'journey from wealthy electrical engineer to leader of Irish militant nationalism in London was, by any measure, quite extraordinary. That he became the leading Irish revolutionary in London despite his background suggests a significant level of commitment and organizational ability.'⁴²⁵

It took nearly two decades for Irish immigrants to have a paper of their own again for organisational purposes. For Irish workers in England, the *IF* was a long-awaited publication with a mission to improve workers' lives. Right after the paper was launched, a 'staunch fighter' for trade union rights in England, Mick Kane commented: 'at last the Irish workers in this country have a voice, which cutting through all the shams and rottenness of the Capitalist press, will be added to the voice of the British workers raised in the demand for social justice for the people at home and abroad.'⁴²⁶ Progressive Irish workers looked to this paper to interpret events surrounding imperialism and misgovernment over Ireland which impacted Irish peoples' lives and sought protection and advice. The paper used their bitter experience to mobilise them and support for United Ireland and attempted to improve their working and living conditions in the process.

Arguably, the paper as an organiser, a community and a voice of the working-class movement had seven main functions: to promote the organisation's mission and activities principally campaigning for all-Ireland self-determination and civil rights for Catholic Irish and working people; to perform

⁴²³ Bell, Geoffrey, 2016, *Hesitant Comrades: The Irish Revolution and the British Labour Movement*, Pluto Press, London, p216

⁴²⁴ MacDiarmada, *Art O'Brien and Irish Nationalism in London 1900-1925*, p116

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p195

⁴²⁶ 'Greetings to Irish Freedom,' *Irish Freedom*, April 1939, p5

a range of functions such as educational activities of the organisation; to provide a platform for affiliated organs such as the Movement for Colonial Freedom and the National Council for Civil Liberties, and allies such as the Labour Party, Communist Party and trade unions; to function as a promotional board for similarly-minded businesses and notices such as restaurants, hostels, bookshops, barbers, Catholic funeral services and job advertisements; to organise and mobilise the working-class masses for various movements such as labour, trade union and civil rights; to offer news from home; to provide legal, emotional and general support. Amongst many lectures and events, the CA identified that there was a need to train leaders and attempted to offer speakers' classes in order to produce aspiring industrial leaders. A notice appeared in the *ID*: 'the strain of doubling up the London meetings while still supplying the provincial centres with speakers is telling on the larynxes of the London oratory.'⁴²⁷ In this regard, what the paper strived to do was to go beyond their community level as its focus was organising masses of people in order to democratise Britain. Their mission was identical to Lenin's newspaper *Iskra*.⁴²⁸ It put more emphasise on what should happen rather than what happened. Lenin highlighted that the newspaper was not the outcome of the political movement, but its instigator which corresponded to the *ID*'s aspiration to lead working people. In order to be heard and protect workers, the newspaper called for all readers to join their respective trade unions as a matter of urgency. Because 'only the active participation of all our Irish workers in the British Trade Union Movement can guarantee their survival.'⁴²⁹

The best weapon against the Tory policies and attacks is a strong militant trade union organisation. Irish workers in Britain have the same problems as their British brethren, and the Irish are usually first to be attacked...The Irish have a long history of struggle against British imperialism, and therefore some Irish exiles tend to separate themselves from the British trade union movement. This is a mistake. Most Irish emigrants belong to the working class and should join the organisations which fight for that class in Britain.⁴³⁰

The paper explained the things could be done through the trade union: self-protection in the event

⁴²⁷ 'Speakers' Class,' *Irish Democrat*, April 1956, p8

⁴²⁸ In 1900, Vladimir Lenin started this political newspaper of Russian socialist emigrants. It was published in exile and then smuggled into Russia. He also spent some time in London.

⁴²⁹ 'Survival,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1945, p4

⁴³⁰ 'Why Irish Should Join Trade Unions,' *Irish Democrat*, October 1952, p4

of accident, victimisation, low wages or unsatisfactory working conditions; the need of union backing and a ‘spokesman’ to deal with the employers if a worker happens to be put on a ‘charge’ by some overbearing superior or foreman, or when making a claim for subsistence allowance; the necessity for Irish workers in Britain to show a spirit of unity and solidarity with their fellow workers and by their actions, refute the insinuations sometimes levelled against them by a hostile press, that they are politically backward and a source of cheap labour.⁴³¹ The fellow workers include not only Irish workers but also British workers. The *ID* further identified Irish worker’s ‘special needs’ and suggested various points to challenge the status quo: the trade unions would improve standard of living for unprotected workers and ‘British Labour will fight with us’; the making illegal of all preaching of racial and national hatred or discrimination; improved and increased housing and hostel accommodation; unemployed benefits accumulated during work in Britain to be payable after return to Éire; improvement of travel facilities.⁴³² To deal with the hostility of the local society, the paper urged that the Irish should view British workers as allies, not enemies. ‘There has always been the suspicion that Irish labour coming into Britain might undercut the standard of living of the British workers, and in order to combat this, the first steps must be to remove any excuse for antagonism, to get the Irish into the Trade Union Movement and to remove any grievances which could create this ill-feeling.’⁴³³ The paper defended Irish workers with the help of trade unions and advocated solidarity not only with other Irish workers but British as well as other workers from oppressed countries and urged resistance against the British imperialism. In this process, the paper represented the working-class community, promoted workers’ solidarity, attempted making them aware that they were part of the large labour movement, providing all workers to feel a new sense of responsibility.

By organising and uniting workers, the newspaper played various roles in this process. Although it is impossible to estimate how much the paper and its organisation contributed as other left organs were also making an effort, trade union membership expanded rapidly during the war, rising from 6,053,000 in 1928 to 7,803,000 in 1945. In 1946, it passed the previous record level of 8,000,000 attained briefly in 1920.⁴³⁴ By 1950, trade union membership further increased to 9,500,000 as the

⁴³¹ ‘Survival’, *Irish Democrat*, January 1945, p4

⁴³² ‘Plan to beat crisis,’ *Irish Democrat*, November 1947, p3

⁴³³ ‘Irish, British Workers Must Unite to Fight Crisis,’ *Irish Democrat*, December 1947, p2

⁴³⁴ Lovell, *A Short History of the T.U.C.*, p151

Labour government created a National Health Service and nationalised the coal, rail and docks industries where a substantial number of Irish workers belonged. During the post-war reconstruction period, the Labour government's top agenda was also trade unions. In conjunction with the thriving industries, a substantial number of jobs were created and so was union membership.

The paper attempted to civilize the building trade. The industry employs 'a million men. Of these 500,000 are unskilled workers – so-called unskilled...of the tradesmen only 50 percent are organised. Of the unskilled workers only 10 percent are organised. The majority of these unskilled workers are Irish...It is the fault of the industrial conditions in England. The majority of them have never been approached never had a chance to join a union.'⁴³⁵ The paper repeatedly sent out the same message: 'join your trade union and safeguard your rights and demand a better standard of life.' The paper was aware that tens of thousands of Irish workers remained outside the trade union movement: 'it was an established fact that the mainstream of Irish workers coming to Britain gravitate naturally to the labour movement and a large number of Irish workers joined their unions, but at the same time, an equally large number of them were resisting.'⁴³⁶ Despite all the efforts, the paper lamented that Irish workers did not comprehend the value of trade unions: 'the task of organising the Irish was not an easy one...because so many had never been in a union before, and never worked on a union job.'⁴³⁷ There are various complex reasons for Irish people to refrain from joining the union. T. Watters, probably a local CA and trade union member, wrote in the paper, 'it is the fault of the Trade Union Movement that Irishmen are not in the union.' He highlighted:

the question of Ireland's policy in internal affairs and in international relations should be the responsibility of the Labour Movement in Ireland. In his view, the policy of the CA should be confined to working for 'the best possible relations between the British and Irish people by advancing demands for better trade relations,' to bring pressure on the British Labour Government on the question of partition and the Six Counties Special Powers Act, and to fight for the removal of the grievances of

⁴³⁵ 'Can we civilise the building trade?' *Irish Democrat*, March 1967, p3

⁴³⁶ 'Irish, British Workers Must Unite to Fight Crisis,' *Irish Democrat*, December 1947, p2

⁴³⁷ 'Irishmen on the job,' *Irish Freedom*, August 1939, p2

the Irish working in Britain.⁴³⁸

Unlike British workers, Irish workers viewed the trade union movement in Britain as a link to imperialism and other national issues, and something that needed to be worked on simultaneously. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Greaves may have pushed in on issues in the CP and IWL domain,⁴³⁹ the CC/CA considered that the issue was not just improving workers' lives, but the root cause needed to be concurrently dealt with holistically. Most of the readers were newly arrived immigrants from rural areas with farming background with no trade union concept. The paper argued Irish workers' yearning for national freedom and British workers' economic freedom would complement one another.

The struggle of the Irish workers for national freedom will be strengthened to the extent that they associate closely with the British workers who are struggling for the economic and political freedom. To the degree that the Irish workers in Britain remain aloof or dissociated from the British trade union and Labour movement when they are employed in Britain, and so long as the British Labour movement fails to support the demands of the Irish people, then just so much longer will the British ruling class take advantage of the situation and continue their oppression. Every sincere Irishman should participate whole-heartedly in the work of strengthening the British Labour movement.⁴⁴⁰

Articles on apathetic Irish workers towards trade unions in England were often highlighted in the paper. When a federation steward of a trade union stated that Irishmen are indifferent towards trade unions, a reader called Robert Keogh, builder's labourer contested:

I would like to contradict him. Many Irishmen became members of an English trade union before coming to this country for war work. The only benefit we have got out of it was pay our subscriptions every week. On my first job on an aerodrome in Norfolk when the organiser came to address a meeting on the site to get more members, we brought up the question about not being paid our proper bonus. After he attacked the Works Committee, he promised to get the matter fixed, but to our surprise we never got the money. Since the building industry got the last increase in pay, cost of living and other expenses has risen threefold, and the unions have time and again put in a demand for a rise in pay to

⁴³⁸ 'Irish, British Workers Must Unite to Fight Crisis,' *Irish Democrat*, December 1947, p2

⁴³⁹ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p647

⁴⁴⁰ 'Trade unionism and Irish workers,' *Irish Freedom*, July 1939, p7

meet the rise in prices but have been refused and they have made no effort to press the demand further. They bring up the old bogey that they cannot do anything till they have a hundred per cent membership. The Irish unions do not wait till they have a big membership but fight for their demands and collect members after. My advice is instead of talking trade unionism to act it and get on with the job and not to be taking it lying down as at present and then they will get all the members they want.⁴⁴¹

Editor replied: 'Trade unionism here, as elsewhere is not perfect, but the remedy is to strengthen the links as our correspondent suggests.'⁴⁴²

From a worker's point of view, organising meant a risk as they would lose time and wages, or even a job. For example, there were thousands of Irish wage labourers working at the Aldermaston atom plant site in Berkshire in 1952. It appointed a Welfare Committee, but the members lost time whenever they met to look after their welfare. A union steward said that the Transport Union was anxious to enrol every possible member.⁴⁴³ In 1966, the paper was still struggling to organise workers as it lamented: 'The Irish in Britain are insufficiently organised. Lack of organisation is linked with disunity. We have never yet risen above the childish idea that one can only cooperate with people who agree with us in everything. It is the most obstructive and hamstringing prejudice in the catalogue of political nonsense.'⁴⁴⁴

Article trends and evolution

The organisation's trade union contacts were not only their allies, but they were the writers and offered a valuable inside knowledge to the paper. The articles are mostly composed of comments from their own contacts and CA members. The paper carried various short and clear-cut industry articles. The articles that industrial correspondents would typically cover include strikes by teachers, milkers, turf workers, building workers, engineers and other professions in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Britain and abroad; demands by workers, wage increase and working conditions; building workers and their accommodation problems in England; legal issues such as lodging substance, benefits, allowances, unemployment insurance, death and injuries, workmen's

⁴⁴¹ 'Our Readers Write Abo,' *Irish Democrat*, November 1947, p2

⁴⁴² 'Our Readers Write Abo,' *Irish Democrat*, November 1947, p2

⁴⁴³ 'Open that hut all day Sunday, say workers,' *Irish Democrat*, March 1952, p2

⁴⁴⁴ 'All out on June 19th,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1966, p2

compensation; activism such as protests, campaigns and marches with trade unionists; positive industrial initiatives such as starting a new union and group by workers, the CC/CA or other organs; TUC conference coverage; TUC statements and budgets; protest updates; trade disputes and legal actions such as dismissals, low wage, working conditions; history and educational features; all Ireland Congress-related; appointments and new representative notices; trade unionists and TUCs support for internees and prisoners⁴⁴⁵; trade unions' recruitment activities; internal disputes. Some of the most pronounced recurrent themes throughout the three decades were construction worker-related stories, issues in Northern Ireland such as unemployment of mostly Catholic but as well as Protestant people, unemployment in the shipping and linen industries, strikes, demands, appalling working and living conditions; the Northern Ireland Trades Council; and TUC disputes and trade unionists' civil rights activism.⁴⁴⁶

The newspaper specifically framed these articles to push their own narratives. In general, industry-related articles tended to contain multiple topics and issues such as politics, history, and economics because these all stem from the same root cause. As a campaigning paper with a specific angle, trade unionism was a core theme on the pages and frequently dedicated the whole industrial news page for Irish workers in England. Trade union and industry-related stories appeared throughout the paper, on a related subject placed adjacent, or sometimes on a completely unrelated subject - for example, construction strike articles appeared next to the boxing articles in order to send out the solidarity and fighting spirit.⁴⁴⁷ This indicates that the editorial team carefully emphasised on the juxtaposition of texts, rather than paying too much attention to layout. Irish workers looked to the paper to interpret events surrounding imperialism over Ireland, protection, and advice.

Industry stories evolved significantly during the research period. During the first decade between 1939 and 1949, the paper's focus was on urging all workers to join the trade union, namely, 'to demand an improvement in the disgraceful conditions now prevailing.'⁴⁴⁸ It is evident from newspaper articles that a large majority of Irish immigrants during this period belonged to the

⁴⁴⁵ As it was mentioned in the earlier section, the issues were frequently discussed at trade union branches.

⁴⁴⁶ The ID frequently printed articles on trade unionists' involvement with the civil rights movement. For example, 'TUs call for civil rights,' *Irish Democrat*, August 1969.

⁴⁴⁷ For example, *Irish Democrat*, August 1954

⁴⁴⁸ 'A call to Irish workers,' *Irish Freedom*, February 1939, p6

working class, therefore, most workers were typically involved with the labour movement with varying degrees from fully committed trade unionists to opportunists. The Irish influx made a vital part of British working-class history and the paper attempted to make a difference when the TUC was still relatively ‘a voice in the wilderness.’⁴⁴⁹ The war and post-war years were an exciting period for trade unions. Between 1939 and 1957, the British TUC became ‘an influential national organisation as a representative of trade unions to speak to the government’ and earned its position as a powerful tool and in Churchill’s words, ‘the trade union movement had become the Fourth Estate of the realm.’⁴⁵⁰ For working class people, ‘there was a deep yearning for change’⁴⁵¹ during this period. Along with other left-wing organs, the TUC continued to grow until the immediate post-war years. Between 1939 and 1949, home news such as Irish trade unions and industry articles were often featured in the front page. Two noticeable items during this decade were trade union recruitment activities and strikes. The paper reiterated to defend themselves against victimisation and discrimination through trade unions and these articles appeared prominently in this decade. For example, the paper reported every time the IRA exploded bombs, subsequent articles tended to report on Irish workers’ dismissal from their jobs. ‘This action must be met with the united voice of all Irish organisations in England and representations must also be made to the Governing bodies of the Trade unions Congresses in Ireland and England.’⁴⁵² According to numerous articles, the paper established friendly relations with a number of British trades unions and focused on working to convince workers who were reluctant to join trades unions. Whenever there was a successful settlement, it was covered in detail to inspire others to join. In April 1946, Irish workers in the Dagenham area have been ‘flocking into the Amalgamated Engineering, Electrical, Transport and General and other unions’ as result of the big strike victory at Ford’s in March. The paper meticulously reported every time when a case is settled positively, and an improvement was made such as the trade union workers’ victory at Fords in Dagenham.⁴⁵³ Simultaneously, they attempted to educate and persuade the British workers to give their support to the end of partition.⁴⁵⁴

During the height of Irish emigration in the 1950s, Britain formally recruited tens of thousands of

⁴⁴⁹ Lovell, *A Short History of the T.U.C.*, p144

⁴⁵⁰ Lovell, *A Short History of the T.U.C.*, p162

⁴⁵¹ Sewell, *In the Cause of Labour*, p247

⁴⁵² ‘Victimisation of Irish workers,’ *Irish Freedom*, April 1939, p7

⁴⁵³ ‘Trade union victory at Fords’, *Irish Freedom*, May 1944 p6

⁴⁵⁴ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p126

workers from the whole island of Ireland to work in Britain. The sluggish Irish economy in the 1950s pushed an incessant number of Irish people to England, and Britain pulled them as it was experiencing brisk economic growth. The Labour government created full employment and was moving towards the direction of socialism as it established the National Health Service, the public ownership of the Bank of England and other industries such as railways, road haulage, electricity, gas, the coal, and the steel. For example, by the mid-1950s facilities in the port which was the largest single employer of manpower in London, had an average of 1,000 ships docked there each week with the booming commonwealth trade.⁴⁵⁵ In addition to dockers, construction and building workers, nurses and catering workers from Ireland were the major workforce. To reflect the huge demand for labour, the paper printed regular job openings, mainly construction work, as Britain offered countless opportunities for Irish workers.⁴⁵⁶ Britain needed the labour force and Irish workers filled those positions.

During this period, constantly arriving Irish workers were making headlines of the paper. Affordable labour could suggest their vulnerable economic circumstances. The paper highlighted the plight of workers' working and living conditions as they were often exploited. The pages were filled with workers' atrocious lives and accidents in England, along with strikes and protest marches throughout London. To remove discrimination, the first step that the paper did was to identify the cases of discrimination. The paper framed workers' grievances and accused British people of not acknowledging their hard work. 'The British public...enjoy the amenities they do, gas, electricity, water, etc...thanks to the highly developed skill of the Irish navy...these men...they are called unskilled by the employers as an excuse to pay them lower wages.'⁴⁵⁷ On the other hand, due to loss of working population, Ireland both South and North had a devastating impact and further deteriorated the economic activities. As a result, trade union-related articles throughout Britain and Ireland constantly appeared in the pages. To make matters more complicated, all-Ireland congresses and internal dispute-related articles were a recurring theme.

⁴⁵⁵ Sheppard, Francis, 1998, *London: A History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p340

⁴⁵⁶ For example, 'There might be a job,' *Irish Democrat*, August 1954, p6

⁴⁵⁷ 'Rely on the Irish navy,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1956, p2

Although their working and living conditions in England were far from perfect, migrant workers were in a better position as they were paid more, Irish women were treated better and working people's lives were gradually improving in the 1950s as trade unions in England were better organised. The Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems between 1948 and 1954 reported domestic workers were treated as human beings in Britain in terms of treatment, wages, and other conditions. The paper emphasised the positive aspect of trade unions, featuring with successful settlement cases. For example, the working conditions in Coventry has significantly improved:

there was a time in the 30s when we had 10,000 unemployed, when Irishmen along with others who were newcomers to the city, were exploited, but most of them are now members of the appropriate Trade Union and enjoy the rate for the job as laid down by agreement between employers and unions. Many of them are active members of the Labour Party and Co-ops and I am convinced that the vast majority vote Labour and play a full part in civic affairs.⁴⁵⁸

During the 1950s and 1960s, trade unionism expanded amongst white-collar occupations as more workers were employed with rapidly growing economies. Trade union membership rose from 8,603,000 in 1946 (the first full post war year) to 12,639,000 in 1979.⁴⁵⁹ One of the drawbacks of the trade union was that despite the fact that they were a radical agent as they marched for civil rights in Northern Ireland, protested against apartheid in South Africa and fought against various injustice cases, their philosophy was oftentimes contradictory. The trade unions effectively safeguarded jobs in the arms industries where many Irish workers were employed. They 'exported to many fascist regimes and the trade union leaders became important public figures and an integral part of the war machine.'⁴⁶⁰ In addition, the unions were 'conspicuously poor on gender and ethnic issues and in appealing in youth.'⁴⁶¹ The *ID*'s coverage on female workers was sporadic.

Nevertheless, the paper continuously reminded readers that British workers needed to be educated about Ireland as the influx of Irish workers, although they were valuable to the war effort, were

⁴⁵⁸ 'Unity of workers will replace present system by more just one,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1952, p2

⁴⁵⁹ Wrigley, Chris, 2002, *British Trade Unions since 1933*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p18

⁴⁶⁰ Sewell, *In the Cause of Labour*, p237

⁴⁶¹ Wrigley, *British Trade Unions since 1933*, p3

met by the hostile reception. The Irish were constantly accused of stealing jobs. Moreover, they triggered some animosities of locals amongst those who had relations fighting abroad: ‘Our lads are fighting, and you Irish are coming over here to take our jobs, was a taunt commonly encountered by Irish workers and their children in London’s East End.’⁴⁶² Newspaper articles throughout suggest, this incident occurred across England where many Irish people worked, and not only in certain parts of London. The newspaper ran various stories regarding ‘Irish job stealers,’ by criticising local people’s ignorance about their own government’s mismanagement in Ireland and irresponsibility that was causing the stagnant economy in the whole Ireland, forcing Irish people to look for jobs in England. Divided Ireland kept causing never ending issues and was the sources of news articles. Because British people’s knowledge on Northern Ireland and Ireland was quite limited, the newspaper urged the Irish in Britain to join the appropriate trade unions and educate British people by bringing the Irish question through trade union meetings: ‘It is said that Irish workers are taking the jobs from people living here but if we are good Trade Unionists we shall be looked upon as allies not enemies. Also in the Trade Unions, we can explain to the English workers that their government is responsible for the conditions existing in Ireland which force us to emigrate;’⁴⁶³ and ‘English workers often don’t understand that it is the system of their country that forces Irishmen to work under rates for a time. An Irish worker is not entitled to unemployment benefit and if his pocket is empty, he has to take any job for a time.’⁴⁶⁴ As the partition had damaging consequences at varying degrees, the Irish question was often the theme of trade union branch meetings, and it was also discussed within the TUC as the paper started giving intense coverage on trade unions’ support for the anti-partition policy and CA’s activities. To those who had no choice but to come to work in England from a neutral State during the war, the paper offered them a renewed sense of purpose.

According to the paper, the trade union movement was typically against discrimination of workers. The CA’s annual conference coverage about the main task of the organisation was that it should unite the solidarity of British and Irish workers. ‘There has always been the suspicion that Irish labour coming into Britain might undercut the standard of living of the British workers, and in

⁴⁶² Coogan, Tim Pat, 2002, *Wherever Green is Worn: The Story of the Irish Diaspora*, Arrow Books, London, p122

⁴⁶³ ‘A call to Irish workers,’ *Irish Freedom*, February 1939, p6

⁴⁶⁴ ‘Cheap labour’, *Irish Freedom*, July 1942, p1

order to combat this, the first steps must be to remove any excuse for antagonism, to get the Irish into the Trade Union Movement and to remove any grievances which could create this ill-feeling.⁴⁶⁵ Greaves urged during the regular Hyde Park meeting: 1,000,000 Irishmen resident in London were a powerful political force who were at present impotent only because of their disunity.⁴⁶⁶ The newspaper never failed to publish about trade unionists' support for Irish unification. A typical article read: 'A resolution condemning the partition of Ireland and calling on the Labour Party when returning to power to revoke the Ireland Act and grant facilities for an all-Ireland referendum on the question of unity, was carried unanimously at the Ealing No.2 branch of the National Union of Railwaymen at their meeting.'⁴⁶⁷ According to the article, this was inspired by CA member and shop steward Thomas Leonard. TUCs and trade unions joined the CA-led initiatives and campaigns, and the CA frequently had meetings at TU branch offices. Other frequently covered articles include policy makers and LP MPs involvement in the trade union movement.

Due to emigration, Ireland suffered labour shortages particularly in health and construction industries. Articles appeared from the mid-1950s throughout the next decade that the Irish government formally called all workers in England to come home to build infrastructure, adding 'the economy is better.' According to the paper, 'Ireland has more money than she had a year ago and this should be invested at home in order to give employment and stop the drain of emigration. A set of proposals handed to the coalition Government by the joint committee of the two Irish Trade Union Congresses.'⁴⁶⁸ This article appeared amongst many unemployment-related articles in the South and the North. It would seem that the economy was certainly improving but there was still a huge gap between England and Ireland in terms of wages, working conditions and standard of living.

London had transformed into a bustling hub during the 1960s with a rapidly changing society. By around 1960, working Londoners' real incomes were almost double their pre-war levels,⁴⁶⁹ and

⁴⁶⁵ 'Irish, British Workers Must Unite to Fight Crisis,' *Irish Democrat*, December 1947, p2

⁴⁶⁶ NA, KV2 3363-2, p69, 10.2.1959

⁴⁶⁷ 'Railwaymen said end partition,' *Irish Democrat*, March 1954, p1

⁴⁶⁸ 'Work for Irishmen at home,' *Irish Democrat*, August 1956, p1

⁴⁶⁹ Sheppard, *London: A History*, p340

there was also ‘a large measure of social convergence, contrasts between the extremes of wealth and poverty became less pronounced, and political consensus prevailed’, but ‘race had hardly yet begun to replace class as a major source of antagonism.’⁴⁷⁰ During this decade, the TUC was ‘dominated by the problem of coming to terms with rapidly changing economic, social and political conditions.’⁴⁷¹ Compared to previous decades, the paper covered less industry news stories and individual breaking news appeared in the 1960s. Industry issues were incorporated into a bigger picture in the form of civil rights movement and British politics to protect all workers in Britain and Irish Catholic workers in Northern Ireland. With significant coverage of activism-related articles, the paper’s role became more action oriented, as they have been planting seeds of the civil rights movement since its inception. The broad-based civil rights movement occurred thanks to the various left-wing organs’ involvement. Through continuous vigorous civil rights campaigning activities, the paper as a political organiser, secured trade unionists and left movement supporters. The paper continuously reported various initiatives such as regular meetings, campaigns, marches with trade unionists. They worked to improve industrial relations with the TUCs and trade unions, along with other left organs and individuals, while former CA members played a similar role in Ireland. Trade unionists were regular speakers of CA events and the CA helped setting up local trade union branches across the country. An increasing number of civil rights-related articles⁴⁷² appeared along with the CA’s intense activism with the TUC and trade unions by lobbying MPs, directly working with the government. Trade unions and the TUC supported the Irish cause in general as they had a responsibility to protect their members’ civil and human rights such as unemployment problems, racial discrimination and all issues affected their members. The trade union movement was the formal place to address Irish workers’ grievances. In parallel with the divided Irish TUCs,⁴⁷³ the paper covered numerous Northern Ireland Committee-related articles as it was still not recognised by the British TUC yet. The paper’s stance remained the same: the root cause needs to be removed.

While more issue-focused articles had been written in the past, those were incorporated with civil rights activism in the 1960s. Prisoners-related articles are mainly focused on those who were in

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p340

⁴⁷¹ Lovell, *A Short History of the T.U.C.*, p165

⁴⁷² This subject will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁴⁷³ The Irish trade union body was split in 1945 between Irish-based unions and British dominated unions.

prisons in England and Northern Ireland. In May 1958, nearly 200 citizens of Northern Ireland were interned in the Crumlin Road Prison, Belfast.⁴⁷⁴ Many of them have been interned for nearly two years without charge or trial. Trade unionists played a key role in the CC/CA's release prisoners' campaign which was their core mission. Since their first successful campaign to release Frank Ryan which highlighted the plight of the Irish leader in the Spanish prison during the Spanish Civil War, their activities attracted the 'broad labour movement and progressive support.'⁴⁷⁵ The following campaign was to release Mallon and Talbot who were detained trade unionists in the Belfast prison. As part of the civil rights movement, trade unions' involvement was paramount when the CA's petition demanding an enquiry into the alleged torture of Mallon and Talbot case. All the executive committee members of the national union of Vehicle Builders signed it in August 1959. The paper revealed that the union executive also started speaking up and raising the Irish question with the TUC. The CA sent a British lawyer to analyse the case and they were released in 1958. The CA's release prisoners campaign became solidly aligned with the trade union movement as internees and prisoners were trade unionists. Many articles were written on the bases of the resolution of trade union meetings: 'Shop stewards and builders demand free the internees.'⁴⁷⁶ These successful campaigns with trade unions in the early years solidified their commitment to civil rights on a broader canvas as the foundation for the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Keable explains: 'It was as a result of a CA deputation to the leaders of the Belfast Trades Council that the civil rights movement was established at a conference on 8 May 1965. The leaders were anxious for an assurance that solidarity action would be forthcoming, and this was given.'⁴⁷⁷ One of the most productive co-operations with the TUC was that when the CA requested the enactment at Westminster of a Northern Ireland Bill of Rights and wrote to Prime Minister Harold Wilson in August 1968. According to Sean Redmond, because the request was ignored, the CA started a petition for this demand and obtained almost 100,000 signatures. When the annual conference of the TUC was held in September 1971, the TUC adopted the demand for a Bill of Rights as their policy. It additionally endorsed a motion moved by Belfast trade unionist Andy Barr who later became president of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ NA, KV2 3362-1, p69

⁴⁷⁵ Keable, Ken, 2003, *The Missing Piece in the Peace Process*, Connolly Publications, London

⁴⁷⁶ 'Shop stewards demand free the internees,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1960, p2

⁴⁷⁷ Keable, *The Missing Piece in the Peace Process*

⁴⁷⁸ Redmond, Sean, 1999, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland*, Connolly Association Pamphlet

The 1960s coincides with the influx of Commonwealth immigrants from the West Indies, India, Pakistan amongst others. Curtis states that the Irish were ‘displaced from their position at the bottom of the hierarchy.’⁴⁷⁹ However, discrimination against Irish people did not automatically disappear. In the 1960s, when the British authority introduced legislation to restrict immigration from the Commonwealth, ‘Irish citizens were exempted from any form of control, ostensibly owing to the ‘special’ historical relationship between Ireland and Britain, but clearly the fact that Irish citizens were white was a crucial factor in these considerations.’⁴⁸⁰ Their special status created layers of complications. Even though the British authorities restricted Irish people’s movement during the war, Irish and British citizens could live and work freely under the common travel area and Irish people traditionally have a special status in Britain under the 1949 Ireland Act. While many Irish immigrants gradually improved their overall lives as less articles on grievance-related toward the late 1960s indicate, certain Irish people who came to the UK in the 1940s and 1950s shortened their lives by coming to England due to a variety of reasons such as perpetual low paid casual jobs, unsettled lives, homelessness, alcoholism, amongst other issues.

Framing discrimination

According to James Curran, the function of the radical press was ‘to forge a connexion between disparate groups fragmented by localist loyalties, and promote a sense of common identity,’ while in the words of the Chartist leader and the founder of the *Northern Star*, Feargus O’Connor, newspapers were ‘the link that binds the industrious classes together.’⁴⁸¹ In the twentieth century, the *IF/ID* viewed Irish people in England as the oppressed and functioned as a vigilant defender of the Irish interests as well as a public service because their ultimate aim was to democratise Britain. As a campaigning newspaper, it engaged in printing the urgent problems and framed issues of working people that were not covered in the national general press. The paper stigmatised Britain throughout by condemning its undemocratic practices such as employment and accommodation discrimination in England and in the North.⁴⁸² As a campaigning paper, it took

⁴⁷⁹ Curtis, Liz, 1984, *Nothing but the Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism*, Information on Ireland, London, p74

⁴⁸⁰ Delaney, *Gender and Twentieth-century Irish migration, 1921-1971*, p219

⁴⁸¹ Curran, *Media and Power*, p85

⁴⁸² This will be examined in the following chapter.

the side of Catholic and Irish people, and their tone was sympathetic. Within the Northern Ireland context, there was no coverage on loyalists who got killed or injured as a result of sectarian violence, while in the case of England, misbehaving Catholic Irish people were not reported. With regard to workers' grievances in the North, the newspaper coverage focused on Catholic workers' unemployment and poverty, although the newspaper embraced both Catholic and Protestant workers' unemployment issues in the 1960s along with the civil rights movement, political articles were all written from the Catholic/Irish, nationalists and oppressed people's perspective and reinforced by their grievances.

Within this context, it is important to briefly mention about the background of discrimination against Irish people in Britain. Discrimination against the Irish are deeply embedded in English culture as they were subject to daily acts of unconscious bias and microaggression. Anti-Irish, anti-Catholicism and all forms of discrimination have a long-standing tradition which created layers of social class divisions that could be seen in Ireland and throughout the British Empire across the world. Discrimination against the Irish, the so-called legal 'exception of Irishry' is a common place of Irish medieval history and 'it was in the forefront of a long tradition culminating in the Nazis and South African apartheid.'⁴⁸³ One of the earliest writers to portray the Irish as 'the cultural and racial other' was Geraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald of Wales, who described the Irish as barbarous murderers and thieves in his works, *The Topography of Ireland* in 1187 and *The Conquest of Ireland* in 1189.⁴⁸⁴ The Irish were meant to be more Anglicised, nevertheless, to those who failed to be transformed, the British provided with various laws to punish them. A number of poor laws were enacted since the sixteenth century in order to distinguish poor people between natural, unavoidable poverty and voluntary pauperism,⁴⁸⁵ while several acts and codes to oppress Catholic and Irish working-class people existed, most notably, the Penal Laws⁴⁸⁶ and the Master & Servant Act⁴⁸⁷ which had long lasting consequences.

⁴⁸³ Ellis, Steven, 'Racial Discrimination in Late Medieval Ireland', in Halfdanarson, Guomundur (ed.), 2003, *Racial Discrimination and Ethnicity in European History*, Edizioni Plus Universita di Pisa, Pisa, p28

⁴⁸⁴ De Nie, Michael, 2004, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press 1798-1882*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, p5

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., p18

⁴⁸⁶ The British penal laws are to uphold the establishment of the Church of England against Catholicism, while the Irish Penal laws is to coerce the Irish to accept the Anglican Church of Ireland.

⁴⁸⁷ This act provided for criminal sanctions of up to three months imprisonment for a variety of breaches of the employment contract.

A few monographs that examined the British system's inveterate prejudice against the Irish exist such as Roy Foster's *Paddy and Mr Punch*, Michael de Nie's work *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press 1798-1882* and *How the Irish became white* by Noel Ignatiev. De Nie argues that the Irish were historically seen with the fatal disease or plague of Irishness after the failed attempt to civilise the Irish through anglicisation: 'chauvinistic notions of Ireland's racial, class and religious identity were fundamental to British constructions of Paddy and Paddyism, to the hierarchical relationship of Ireland and Britain, and instrumental in how British interpreted the Irish question and Irish policy.'⁴⁸⁸ The British historically did not consider the Irish completely outsiders but as an enemy within the system. That tradition was passed on and observed in the mid twentieth century by immigrants from the Caribbean. 'An Irishman can be the worst man out...he can drink, fight, he can run brothels, same as the darkie. He can do anything...I've seen myself in Shepherd's Bush, in Acton, in Camden Town, in numerous parts of London, I've seen Irishmen in trouble.'⁴⁸⁹ Moreover, the British press mostly had been reporting to reinforce the bias and prejudice against the Irish since the Victorian period. The *ID* lamented increasing racial incidents are consequential: 'so many newspapers engaged in publishing matter critical of or offensive to the Irish, the 'hate the Irish' campaign of the past few months is no accident. Beginning with subtly phrased sly digs at Irishmen who take a pint, it passed through the phase of 'IRA' scares to what is now becoming blatant incitement.'⁴⁹⁰

Discrimination against Irish people is rooted in imperialism and the newspaper interpreted that imperialism and fascism are interlinked. 'Many Irish people think that Fascism and Imperialism are the same thing...The answer is yes. The methods used by British Imperialism in Ireland and India are the methods of Fascism, and many be called the running dogs of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.'⁴⁹¹ Ken Heskin argues that 'the question of Irish people living in England can be used by Fascist minded people in the same way as the Jewish people have been used by Hitler.'⁴⁹² In the case of Northern Ireland, it had a 'paranocracy', or 'the basis of power was the successful

⁴⁸⁸ De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, p5

⁴⁸⁹ Glass, Ruth, 1960, *Newcomers: The West Indians in London*, Centre for Urban Studies and George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, p266

⁴⁹⁰ 'Yellow press steps up hate the Irish stunt', *Irish Democrat*, April 1953, p3

⁴⁹¹ 'Fascism, do you know what it is?', *Irish Freedom*, July 1939, p2

⁴⁹² Heskin, Ken, 1980, *Northern Ireland: A Psychological Analysis*, Columbia University Press, New York, p100

appeal to paranoid fears in the Protestant electorate about the political, social, philosophical and military potential of their Catholic neighbours' and it was in 'the same political tradition as Hitler.'⁴⁹³ The paper also compared Northern Ireland to apartheid South Africa as it shared similar political conditions. As a matter of fact, the South African government was inspired by the SPA and applied it in their own country. The then South African Minister for Justice, Hendrik Vorster's remark in 1963 is well-recorded. Gerry Adams wrote: 'It is hardly surprising...that he would be willing to exchange all the legislation of that sort [Coercion Acts] for one clause of the Northern Ireland SPA.'⁴⁹⁴

The paper made it clear that it is in their interest to support the independence of countries oppressed by their own imperialists, and to invite all immigrants from those countries to join the trade union and labour movement. Guest writers from India and South Africa also contributed articles to the *ID*. The paper covered on trade unionism in Malaysia, Nigeria, Ghana, amongst others. Its frame shaped patterns of their news coverage and its attitude about social justice, equality and race. The paper, from an internationalist perspective, repeatedly condemned all racial and ethnic inequality, challenged the status quo and called its readers to seek solidarity. In this process, the paper constantly reminded readers that they were fighting for the interests of the Irish in Britain: 'defending you against slander and misrepresentation in the millionaire Press, investigating injustices, and doing so effectively BECAUSE we go WITH the British workers who are the greatest fighting power in this country and will end for ever Imperialist oppression of other countries as soon as they are genuinely in the Government.'⁴⁹⁵

Employment and housing discrimination

As mentioned earlier, the issue of Irish workers' working and housing conditions in England became increasingly prominent in newspaper coverage in parallel with the highest emigration period of Irish people in England. During the Second World War, more than 10 percent of Ireland's population emigrated to Britain and it could be nearly 15 percent if children and the elderly and travel restrictions on youth are taken into consideration, according to Girvin and Roberts's

⁴⁹³ Ibid., p100

⁴⁹⁴ Adams, Gerry, 1986, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, Brandon, Dingle, p22

⁴⁹⁵ 'To every Irish man and women,' *Irish Democrat*, May 1953, p3

estimate.⁴⁹⁶ Between 1941 and 1943, approximately 85,000 relocated to Britain and 50,000 enlisted in the British Army.⁴⁹⁷ One of the main push factors was caused as a result of a reprisal for the neutral Éire government's refusal to hand back the naval bases under the Anglo Irish trade agreement 1938. Consequently, the export of basic industrial requisites from Britain to Ireland fell, industry became stagnant and the unemployment rate climbed, social welfare payments were stopped and rationing of basic foodstuffs was imposed.⁴⁹⁸ Ireland was considered 'as an invaluable reservoir of labour for the British war effort.'⁴⁹⁹ The labour was initially organised 'by private agents representing individual British employers and these agents liaised with the unions, posted information at the employment exchanges, or placed advertisements in newspapers.'⁵⁰⁰ Despite their essential contribution, they received a cold reception by the host society upon arrival. The term 'victimisation' is commonly used in the paper to describe unfair treatment of an individual or a worker by employers when they faced challenges and issues such as minimum wage, equality at work and basic working conditions. During the mid-twentieth century, the experience of victimisation of Irish workers was the norm as ample newspaper articles show. This proves a point made by Michael Rowe as he claimed, 'much of the routine of racist harassment is experienced by victims as a continuing process, rather than a single incident.'⁵⁰¹ The paper highlighted: 'it continued and several firms who previously employed Irish people have sacked some of their Irish staff and have refused to employ anymore.'⁵⁰² Incidents at the Labour Exchange were also well-documented in the paper. Irish people were persistently humiliated and belittled at various Labour Exchange offices in England: A young Irish girl was refused a job on a 'green card' from the Labour Exchange because she was Irish.⁵⁰³ In England, Irish people from Northern Ireland who were supposed to be treated equally in England as British citizens also suffered from discrimination. Irish people from South or North were treated in the same way in England. The newspaper disclosed all the issues arising from Irish workers.

⁴⁹⁶ Quotes in O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, p130

⁴⁹⁷ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p187

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p187

⁴⁹⁹ Wills, Clair, 2007, *That Neutral Island: A History of Ireland During the Second World War*, Faber and Faber, London, p313

⁵⁰⁰ Wills, *That Neutral Island*, p314

⁵⁰¹ Rowe, Michael, 2004, *Policing, Race and Racism*, Willan Publishing, Devon, p115

⁵⁰² 'Victimisation of Irish workers,' *Irish Freedom*, May 1939, p4

⁵⁰³ 'Irishmen treated like cattle,' *Irish Freedom*, June 1941, p1

To effectively check the knavery of the agencies, unemployed workers should realise that there is a Labour Exchange dealing exclusively with catering workers in Denmark Street, London WC2. Irish workers who form a large percentage in the catering trade should completely boycott this vicious form of exploitation and in other towns outside London demand a Catering Section in the Labour Exchanges to protect the workers.⁵⁰⁴

In the catering trade, some 15,000 Irish workers were compelled by the policy of British imperialism and Irish economic policy. As a result, they had to emigrate to England.

Men and women, very many of whom are Irish, are driven to work 14 to 16 hours a day for 10/- to £1, with lodgings, or £1 to 30/- if they live out. Only one-half day is allowed out of a seven-day week, and in many cases the food provided for the staff is unfit for animals to eat. I myself have seen the staffs of London hotels fed on scraps from the customers' plates.⁵⁰⁵

The paper highlighted Irish workers' protest actions: '2,000 Irish in London, Onslow Square Residents protest at low wages.'; 'Irish building workers in Britain are finding it increasingly difficult to live on the present miserably low level of wages. Labourers in many cases are drawing less than £5 weekly and find it almost impossible to maintain themselves in Britain and at the same time send money home to their wives and families in Ireland.'⁵⁰⁶

While social housing allocation discrimination in Northern Ireland is well-documented and researched at length as state crime,⁵⁰⁷ Irish migrant workers in England generally lived in hostels, or private houses and rooms. Accommodation discloses the most tangible class issue that required urgent attention. The 1940s have the most accommodation-related coverage, compared to other decades. Construction workers were the most affected from the housing shortage. The paper constantly exposed the atrocious Irish construction workers' housing conditions such as five men squeezed in a tiny room in Camden town, double-decker beds and light breakfast. In 1946, 'London's hostel population of building operatives has been compulsorily reduced from nearly 30,000 to less than 10,000 within a few months though thousands are clamouring for

⁵⁰⁴ 'Check the racket,' *Irish Freedom*, September 1939, p4

⁵⁰⁵ 'Fed on scraps,' *Irish Freedom*, September 1939, p4

⁵⁰⁶ 'Tension rises among 1,000,000 building workers,' *Irish Democrat*, September 1947, p4

⁵⁰⁷ The term is commonly used by disciplines of sociology and criminology.

accommodation and ‘digs’ remain scarce and expensive.’⁵⁰⁸ Under such conditions, some Irish workers who were unable to find a place had no choice but slept in an unoccupied building and empty hotels in the West End as the authorities and employers failed to provide adequate accommodation for Irish workers. As a result, squatting Irish workers became an increasingly prominent topic of the paper. The housing problem was urgent as they were ‘forced to sleep in shelters, public lavatories, railway sidings and parks owing to lack of suitable accommodation’⁵⁰⁹ throughout the country.

Accounts of exploitation and intimidation by landladies, often Irish women, were widely reported in the paper.⁵¹⁰ All kinds of jobs were available in England if one was prepared. However, newspaper evidence suggests that rooms were not for everyone. Unlike nurses who were provided accommodation by their employers upon arriving in England, men, especially navvies suffered from overcrowded and inadequate housing conditions as they were frequently crammed into a tiny space with others to share. As a result, the paper recurrently protested. ‘No suggestion Irishmen misbehave but one lady in four refuses Irish lodgers in Birmingham.’⁵¹¹ Photos of atrocious housing conditions were frequently disclosed. A front page article with a photo of two men in a tiny room asks: ‘WHAT’S WRONG HERE? LANDLADIES BEWARE! –That lodger may be the Irish Democrat reporter. THAT TOOLBOX MAY HOLD A CAMERA!; NOT ENOUGH BED CLOTHES FOR MARCH 1955; WHERE DO THEY HANG THEIR CLOTHES?; BEDS TOO MANY AND TOO CLOSE. WRITE IN YOUR IDEA OF WHAT ‘DIGS’ SHOULD BE LIKE’⁵¹² According to a report by Maurice Foley, an Irish social worker in Birmingham, the accommodation available for Irish manual workers was ‘grossly overcrowded, ill-kept, dirty and the cost was exorbitant.’ For example, there was a house in which fifty young Irishmen lived, ‘paying a rent of £2 a week each for the privilege of sleeping fifteen to a room and supplying and cooking their own

⁵⁰⁸ ‘Keep the hostels open,’ *Irish Democrat*, August 1946, p1

⁵⁰⁹ ‘Stop the emigration scandal,’ *Irish Democrat*, November 1946, p4

⁵¹⁰ Evidence suggests certain Irish people tended treat their fellow workers badly and abused power. Irish tricksters who deceived newcomers from Ireland typically existed in England and throughout the British colonies probably stemming from its brutal history namely the land-tenure system. According to Streib’s research on social stratification, its stratification system is very complicated and class solidarity is ambiguous.

⁵¹¹ ‘Irish Democrat protest,’ *Irish Democrat*, March 1953, p1

⁵¹² ‘Landladies beware!’, *Irish Democrat*, May 1955, p1

food.’⁵¹³ The letters were repeatedly sent to politicians and the Ministry of Labour to improve the status quo and when it received a reply, it was detailed in the paper.

The paper produced plenty of material on NINA, or No Irish Need Apply.⁵¹⁴ The sign was put up by the windows and in job advertisements when employers or landlords had vacancies for workers or lodgers. Believed to have first appeared in England after the 1798 rebellion, it was a common slogan during the Victorian period. This is the most palpable example that Irish residents in England had been excluded from public discourses, while in Scotland, ‘No Catholics’ was used. After the war, this tradition remained but along with a large numbers of Commonwealth immigrants from other parts of the world, the sign has turned into ‘No Irish, No coloured.’ It is certain that more actual incidents occurred than the number of newspaper articles as the majority of people tended not to report such incidents.

According to the newspaper, as soon as Labour Exchange clerks learned that a worker was Irish, their behaviour changed. The paper was determined to challenge the status quo: ‘A Dublin lad, electrician’s mate, was going to be sent to the Aldermaston atom-bomb station, but suddenly the Labour Exchange clerk asked him: ‘Are you Irish? ‘Yes,’ he replied. ‘What part of Ireland?’ asked the clerk. It would only employ men from the six counties....The CA Executive Committee pledged itself at its last meeting to fight this pernicious principle of discrimination tooth and nail.’⁵¹⁵; Irishman alleges insult at Labour exchange⁵¹⁶; Acton Labour Exchange tells Irishman ‘No Job’ - Two Irishmen who went for jobs at Acton Labour Exchange were asked which part of Ireland they came from. They replied ‘the Republic.’ ‘Sorry,’ said the clerk, ‘only British subjects for this job;’⁵¹⁷ Coventry Irishmen are told ‘No Irish Need Apply’ When Mr. Declan Mulholland, Belfast worker compelled to emigrate because Imperialism cannot keep Belfast industries going, applied for a job at the Coventry City Concrete Company, he was told by the foreman that no Irish need apply. ‘We explained,’ said Mr. Mulholland, ‘in a letter to the *Irish Democrat*, that we were supposed to be enjoying the benefits of British citizenship.’ ‘No use,’ said the foreman, ‘I couldn’t

⁵¹³ Coogan, *Wherever Green is Worn*, p162

⁵¹⁴ A couple of examples are demonstrated in the later section.

⁵¹⁵ ‘Open that hut all day Sunday,’ *Irish Democrat*, March 1952, p2

⁵¹⁶ ‘Irishman alleges insult at Labour Exchange,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1954, p4

⁵¹⁷ ‘Acton Labour Exchange tells Irishman no job,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1957, p1

touch you.’⁵¹⁸

The paper disclosed employment agency rackets were the norm:

A Northern Ireland worker, because of unemployment and poverty there, came to London. After being here a few days, he picked up the *Irish Independent* and found that a well-known agency had advertised that jobs were to be had just by application. He went down, and a fee of 15/- was demanded with the further demand that another payment of 15/- should be made if a job were obtained for him. This Irish worker got a job all right and paid the fees, but after two weeks got the sack. This really exposes the racket. Unscrupulous managers of public houses and restaurants seek other means to increase their income and batten on the unprotected worker.⁵¹⁹

The paper was filled with such articles: Labour exchanges told ‘No Irish, No coloured’ in that order’;⁵²⁰ ‘Birmingham City Council’s shameful but ridiculous effort to have the City barred to Irish and coloured immigrants.’⁵²¹ One of the protests against anti-Irish discrimination was occurred in Birmingham in 1955. Attended by Greaves, Eamonn Lyons, Desmond Logan which was gathered by a large crowd.⁵²² The protest action in 1956 included Wolverhampton city councillor joined in the growing volume of protest against ‘No Irish.’⁵²³ The formula was to disclose discrimination practices, organise workers, working with policy makers and politicians, lobbying and participating in activism, and share positive settlements or results.

More coverage appeared during the 1950s as local people expressed their fear and concern whether their jobs were all taken by immigrant workers. Therefore, they refused to hire them or rent out their accommodation to them because they believed Irish workers ‘behaved badly’. The paper defended Irish workers against discrimination by working with trade unions and challenging the local authorities. The CA’s protest actions eventually became intense, not only against the British government but the Irish government. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, hostels in England were

⁵¹⁸ ‘Coventry Irishmen told No Irish Need Apply,’ *Irish Democrat*, July 1953, p1

⁵¹⁹ ‘Employment agency rackets,’ *Irish Freedom*, September 1939, p4

⁵²⁰ ‘Labour Exchange told no Irish,’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1961, p1

⁵²¹ ‘He was offered a job but...’, *Irish Democrat*, January 1955, p2

⁵²² ‘This must stop!’, *Irish Democrat*, February 1955, p1

⁵²³ ‘Rising protests against Midland no Irish ruling,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1956, p1

mostly appalling conditions and the paper demanded the Irish government to protect their workers: ‘Whatever may be done individually or collectively, the primary responsibility for the welfare and protection of Irish citizens in Britain rests with the office of the Éire High Commissioner in London. We would ask again why this urgent and minimum protection for our hard-pressed workers in Britain should be refused?’⁵²⁴ Similar to the method used to release prisoners, the CA aligned with trade unions as homeless people were trade unionists. P.J. Hope from Hostels Campaign Committee London wrote a letter to the Editor, ‘Britain’s housing programme is held up in many areas because building trade workers cannot find anywhere to live...The National Federation of Building Trade Operatives, which was responsible for hostel welfare must face up to its responsibilities and not allow private interests exploit the workers’ needs.’⁵²⁵ The paper and its organisation attempted to raise such injustices in the Westminster Parliament by collaborating with lawyers and policy makers to make a law against discrimination by constantly aligning itself to stimulate a labour movement through numerous campaigns and protest marches against injustice. From its inception, the paper took such matters up with the British and Irish labour movements and ‘demanded that this victimisation be immediately stopped.’⁵²⁶

Police misconduct

Articles related to police misconduct such as attacks, arrest, intimidation, raids, fingerprint, stop & search were written throughout the research period, but more articles appeared during the height of Irish emigration in England. Discrimination against Irish people in the British system had been a tradition that remained for centuries. In eighteenth-century England, Irish residents were viewed as suspects. A rise in ‘footpad crime’ was blamed on Irish residents who were also held to cause problems for the authorities as they ‘brought with them the foreign habit of resistance to street arrest.’⁵²⁷ In Victorian London, the host society’s attitude remained the same as the Irish community was primarily viewed as the ‘dangerous classes’, and the principal suspect of the police. Police officers’ misuse of their powers escalated further and the process of stop and search targeting Irish people was widely and commonly practised. The situation was similar in the US. The Irish immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century were ‘the poorest and most disadvantaged the

⁵²⁴ ‘Hostels,’ *Irish Freedom*, September 1944, p3

⁵²⁵ ‘Hostels,’ *Irish Democrat*, December 1946, p2

⁵²⁶ ‘Victimisation of Irish workers,’ *Irish Freedom*, May 1939, p4

⁵²⁷ Rowe, *Policing, Race and Racism*, p78

US had seen as they were the top immigrant group for arrest, imprisonment, and confinement in poorhouses and mental hospitals both in the US.’⁵²⁸ Until the end of the 1970s, the UK Metropolitan Police had legal power to stop and search individuals under the terms of the 1824 Vagrancy Act to deal with the public delinquency and drunkenness. Similarly, the 1839 Metropolitan Police Act gave powers to stop and search if it was ‘reasonably suspected’ that an individual was in possession of stolen property.⁵²⁹ Nevertheless, the necessary criterion to stop and search an individual was ‘the highly subjective grounds that a police officer was suspicious of their behaviour and no external objective factors.’⁵³⁰ Therefore, police officers exercised their power to stop the most suspicious minority group as a matter of habit. Because there was no properly defined legislation, ‘vague powers available under the breach of the peace doctrine, police officers were afforded wide discretion.’⁵³¹ Iain Channing has claimed that the police traditionally had ‘inconsistent attitudes and practice between the liberties of free expression and political activism.’⁵³²

There is no shortage of examples in the newspaper, namely arresting individuals and newspaper sellers on a number of occasions, taking fingerprints of Irish people for no reason, the CA’s meetings were constantly monitored by police officers, marches were stopped, and Gaelic games were banned, paper sellers were heckled, attacked, arrested, their houses and offices raided. One of the incidents occurred in September 1939: ‘Editor of *IF* Jim Prendergast, appeared at Great Marlborough Police Court on September 2nd on a charge of ‘obstructing the highway’ while selling *IF* at Marble Arch. Mr. Harris, the magistrate, in dismissing the case, said that he had a strong feeling that the defendant was arrested because he was selling a paper that was regarded as ‘political.’ The paper condemned that the charge was a trivial one and should never have been brought before the court.’⁵³³ According to the article, while he was held in jail, Special Branch officers from Scotland Yard raided his flat and seized a number of documents. This was not an isolated incident. Four leading members of Manchester CA were arrested while selling the *ID* in

⁵²⁸ Kenny, Kevin, ‘Race, Violence, and Anti-Irish Sentiment in the Nineteenth Century,’ in J. J. Lee, (ed.), 2007, *Making the Irish American*, New York University Press, New York, p367

⁵²⁹ Row, *Policing, Race and Racism*, p80-1

⁵³⁰ Row, *Policing, Race and Racism*, p81

⁵³¹ Channing, Ian, 2015, *The Police and the Expansion of Public Order Law in Britain 1829-2014*, Routledge, London, p21

⁵³² *Ibid.*, p229

⁵³³ ‘Editor of Irish Freedom charged,’ *Irish Freedom*, October 1939, p1

Oxford Road, All Saints.⁵³⁴ Irish people were fingerprinted for no reason. The paper demanded:

1 A clear order to police to quit fingerprinting Irishmen taken up on petty charges, except by court order or written consent.

2 Nobody (English or Irish) to have fingerprints taken BEFORE his trial. Any written consent to be given to the court, not the police.

3 The public production and destruction of all fingerprints taken in contravention of the above provisions.⁵³⁵

Furthermore, Irish people were arrested simply by wandering around. The paper reported a young Irishman named Patrick Scanlan was charged with loitering. In answer to this accusation, he replied that he had searched Croydon for work, and 'he had always got the response that he could not get a job as he was Irish.' The paper castigated that this was but one instance of hundreds taking place in England:

In order to stop this practice once and for all, we call upon Irishmen who find themselves in such circumstances, or anyone who knows of such specific cases, to communicate with us at once. The CC will see that these matters are taken up in Parliament, the Press, and the Labour Parties here and in Ireland. It must ever be borne in mind that it is the policy of British Imperialism which forces Irishmen into exile to seek work in England. Let Britain cease interfering with Ireland, and Irishmen will be glad to return to their own country to build an Ireland where unemployment and emigration will be no more.⁵³⁶

When Irish people arrived in England, they were automatically put into this framework. The paper attempted to link their status within the British system to other oppressed people and interpreted by suggesting that Irish and black problems as being related. In the October 1954 issue, there was an article 'Colour Bar' which explained racial discrimination in Birmingham. Below the article, there was an article 'Toussaint L'Ouverture: Negro hero of revolt' about a leader of the revolt of

⁵³⁴ 'Connolly Association Leaders arrested in Manchester,' *Irish Democrat*, March 1960, p1

⁵³⁵ 'Irishmen fingerprinted,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1958, p1

⁵³⁶ 'Victimisation of Irish workers continues,' *Irish Freedom*, June 1939, p4

the people of San Domingo in August 1791.⁵³⁷ The paper located thematic articles together that are relevant to each other. Newly arrived Commonwealth immigrants immediately recognised the status of Irish immigrants and viewed it from a traditional class perspective. After the Nottingham and Notting Hill racial incidents in 1958, a BBC reporter interviewed some black Teddy boys⁵³⁸ at Shepherd's Bush, from one large estate. They viewed the Irish in England within the same framework of their class.⁵³⁹

Banning on Gaelic games

Unlike in the North, banning on Irish events was not always imposed by the authorities but by local business owners and individuals based on their stereotypical views and prejudice. According to the paper, banning on GAA events in England was common: Gaelic games ban in Manchester⁵⁴⁰; Gaelic games ban in London⁵⁴¹; Irish hurlers banned in Finsbury Park.⁵⁴² As the newspaper suggests, their excessive use of force and harassment against Irish people were opportunistic that remained at the community level. The paper strategically published statements and letters. In March 1961, regarding the banned Irish games in Willesden, the *ID* wrote a letter to the Borough Engineer and Surveyor, Mr. John C. Morris, asking him to receive a deputation. A couple of letters were exchanged, and the paper printed them all. In June 1961, an invitation to see a Hurling game at Wembley as guests of the CA was accepted by Councillor Travena of the Willesden Labour Party, and Mr. P. Whittaker of the Willesden Trade Council. Travena said hurling should be played in Willesden. After persistent attempts by the paper and its organisation, Gaelic games ban was lifted in Willesden in August 1961.

Uncertain times

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the newspaper demanded that the neutrality of the twenty-six counties should be extended to the six and often criticised de Valera.

⁵³⁷ He was a former slave who helped fight colonial forces in the French colony of St Dominique, present Haiti. He is considered as an inspiring figure as he had successfully led black resistance to several European invasions.

⁵³⁸ Teddy Boy is a style of fashion and youth culture that originated in England in the 1950s. They are from the working class with a reputation for wild behaviour.

⁵³⁹ Glass, *Newcomers: The West Indians in London*, p266

⁵⁴⁰ *Irish Democrat*, October 1960

⁵⁴¹ *Irish Democrat*, December 1960

⁵⁴² *Irish Democrat*, June 1963

In the October 1939 issue, a big headlined front-page article appeared ‘Conscription for exiles – De Valera’s betrayal.’ It read: ‘Irish workers resident over two years in Great Britain will be liable for conscription into the British Army and the only protection offered them by the De Valera Government is return to the misery and starvation from which they were forced to emigrate,’ resulting ‘the war situation will come as a tragic and bitter blow to hundreds of thousands of Irish exiles.’⁵⁴³ The paper opposed the conscription of Irishmen into the British Army and demanded that De Valera would ‘fulfil to the letter the obligations involved in the declaration of neutrality.’⁵⁴⁴ Despite the fact that Ireland was neutral during the war, an announcement of conscription by the British government caused an uproar amongst Irish residents in Britain. Every issue kept them informed on unpredictable regulatory practices that could directly affect Irish residents’ lives. To the Irish, the war was imperialism, and the newspaper strongly condemned that Irish neutrality was violated by Britain. A petition against the conscription of Irish citizens was promptly organised by the paper. From September 1939 onwards, the adult population was mobilised for the war effort and conscription had been extended to all males between the ages of 18 and 41 years which gave rise to an immediate shortage of skilled labour.⁵⁴⁵ The paper further explained ‘Irishmen resident in Gt. Britain should remember that if they are resident less than two years in this country; if they can prove temporary residence here; if they can prove they are here solely for educational purposes, are not, under the Act, liable for compulsory military service.’⁵⁴⁶ The paper and Irish male workers vigorously opposed to conscription.

‘Chamberlain refuses to grant full independence to the Irish people and his policy is destroying the prosperity of our people. Thousands of Irishmen and women are yearly being driven out to seek a livelihood in what is an unfriendly country. He is trying to convert Ireland into a fascist Morocco. By persecution, provocation and insult he is rendering out Republican youth desperate and driving a wedge between them and their English fellow workers.’⁵⁴⁷

While the paper opposed the conscription of Irish citizens and defended Irish neutrality, it

⁵⁴³ ‘Conscription for Exiles,’ *Irish Freedom*, October 1939, p1

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p1

⁵⁴⁵ Sewell, *In the Cause of Labour*, p236

⁵⁴⁶ ‘Irishmen and conscription,’ *Irish Freedom*, June 1939, p5

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p5

supported the allies' war effort following the invasion of Russia in 1941.⁵⁴⁸

During the war, Britain and the neutral Irish authority attempted to control and regulate the free movement of labour from Ireland and changed the regulations a few times at short notice. Prior to the outbreak of war, there was no restriction on the free movement of labour from Ireland to Britain.⁵⁴⁹ However, during the war, 'no person is allowed to leave Éire unless they are in possession of either a passport or a travel permit card.'⁵⁵⁰ The authorities constantly changed regulations such as identity card, exit permit and police registration, as if they were not certain how to deal with Irish workers who incessantly crossed the Irish Sea back and forth to join the war time economic activities. The Ireland Act of 1949 declared Éire a Republic and reiterated the claim to jurisdiction over the whole island.⁵⁵¹ It ultimately affirmed Northern Ireland's territorial integrity, hence reinforcing partition. Things remained the same as, under the Act, the British government continued not to treat Ireland as a foreign country or its citizens as foreigners. However, the authorities did not offer them the same status as the British but instead created a new category 'special non-foreign'. This legislation ensured that Irish citizens who were no longer British subjects, were to be treated with the same rights as those conferred on them under the British Nationality Act of 1948, although the Irish Republic had left the Commonwealth.⁵⁵² In principle, all residents in the British Isles were supposed to be treated equally, regulations for Irish citizens nonetheless remained inconsistent throughout the war and early post-war years which caused much confusion particularly with regard to conscription of Irish workers in Britain and travel regulations and permits as if it was a punishment for being neutral. For example, people from Southern Ireland who received new travel permits to go to employment to Britain in 1943-1945 were 50,229 men, 35,502 women, while males 66,075 and females 78,119 in 1946-1950.⁵⁵³

Taoiseach de Valera's war time policy caused much confusion for Irish workers. It is apparent from the paper that Britain was indecisive regarding the status of Irish residents in England. The

⁵⁴⁸ Greaves, *Reminiscences of Connolly Association*, p18

⁵⁴⁹ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p117

⁵⁵⁰ NA, LAB 8/1301

⁵⁵¹ Buckland, Patrick, 1981, *A History of Northern Ireland*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, p88

⁵⁵² Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p208

⁵⁵³ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p195

newspaper office received a large number of enquiry letters from concerned individuals. The newspaper continued to offer updates:

From the various letters received during the month, it appears that exiles are not yet clear as to how to obtain Exit Permits. Application must first be made to the Irish High Commissioner, 33 Regent Street, London, S.W.1. for an Irish Travel Permit. You must then apply for application forms from the Passport Authorities Dartmouth Street, London, S.W.1. Having completed these, you must return them, enclosing your Irish Travel Permit, and you will then receive your Exit Permit. For a temporary Permit it is necessary to obtain a note from your employer stating you are going on a holiday. If you are going home for good, you must apply for a 'letter of recommendation' to the Irish High Commissioner. Send your queries to 'Exiles Advisory Council,' 58 Theobalds Road, London, W.C.1. enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. Donations will always be welcomed to help us with our important work.⁵⁵⁴

The paper offered vital information to Irish workers such as conscription and regulatory changes that no other papers provided. Coincidentally, the paper reported its sales increased dramatically during this period.⁵⁵⁵ Britain shortly realised that it was impossible to restrict their movement if the industries had to function. It would seem that this process slowed down the flow of workers and British farms and factories instantly stopped operating without their main workers.⁵⁵⁶ Issuing an exit permit when they went home to Ireland on holidays is the epitome of this bewildered immigration procedures. Shortly, the regulation had to be abolished.

In parallel with ever changing travel regulation-related articles, the articles on travel conditions appeared just before summer and Christmas when many Irish workers returned home for holidays. Atrocious travel conditions had been well documented at length and the paper offered updates on transportation facilities, sailing and railways-related articles appeared. Although they were contributing to the British economic activities in a considerable way, the local authorities failed to provide some basic travel needs for them. A worker, Thomas G. O'Connor complained:

⁵⁵⁴ 'Irishmen treated like cattle,' *Irish Freedom*, June 1941, p1

⁵⁵⁵ 'Tasks of the CC,' *Irish Freedom*, October-November 1941, p3

⁵⁵⁶ NA LAB 8/1301

Sir, - I wish to express through the medium of your paper my disgust at the terrible conditions to which Irish boys and girls were subjected while travelling home to Ireland for Christmas. The boats were terribly overcrowded, and those who could not find seating accommodation in the saloons, had to sit outside on their cases. I travelled on the 6.30 a.m. boat from Holyhead on December 23rd, 1955. It was a very rough crossing and with the conditions described above it can be imagined just how miserable and uncomfortable the unfortunate passengers were. On the way over I got to discussing the conditions we had to endure with a fellow passenger; he told me that he had travelled all the way from London in an unheated train. On arrival in Dun Laoire we were subjected to almost one hours delay before any effort was made to let us disembark. The delay really exhausted the patience of the passengers who started to chant, 'We want off,' 'Don't treat us like cattle,' etc. A few young men tried to climb out on to the pier but were prevented by a member of the Garda Siochana who was lustily booed for his pains. The Irish Democrat is the one and only paper that agitated throughout all last year for better travelling conditions between Ireland and Britain. I suggest that anyone who suffered the same unbearable conditions while crossing to Ireland should write to the Irish Democrat, because it is only by organisation of the Irish workers in Britain that a change for the better can be made in travel conditions. The British transport commission must be made to realise that Irish boys and girls will not accept any old thing as good enough.⁵⁵⁷

Construction workers

The paper reported a substantial number of articles on construction workers', or navvies', grievances, the most numerous immigrant group in the mid-twentieth century. They were the most disadvantaged group within Irish workers in Britain, with the inevitable consequence of 'debt, drink, drugs and equally inevitably lots of mental health problem'⁵⁵⁸ which lingered on for a couple of decades in some cases. The paper certainly framed construction workers as victims although it did not focus on their psychological issues but their appalling working and living conditions and poor health. In order to improve working conditions, the paper wrote from the standpoint of the oppressed and never mentioned their misdeed or misbehaviour as it gave attention to defending them by providing legal, practical information and a support system, and helping to improve their lives by defending workers' rights within their marginalised frame.

⁵⁵⁷ 'Do British Railways think Irish people are cattle?,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1956, p8

⁵⁵⁸ Coogan, *Wherever Green is Worn*, p164.

One of the most high-profile industrial conflicts was the Isle of Grain⁵⁵⁹ case. The main civil engineering contractor is McAlpine, and tens of thousands of workers toiled day and night. Every day, 252 buses (both single and double-deckers) carried refinery labour to transport 6,000 workmen to the site on the Isle of grain, including on Saturday and Sunday with special church buses.⁵⁶⁰ In the early 1950s, when the BP's oil refinery was being constructed there, 7,000 strikers, many of them Irish 'refused to allow any of their number to be treated like animals' and 'showed what can be done when men pull together' and they 'brought the arrogant bosses to heel'⁵⁶¹ in April 1952. However, according to the May 1952 issue, the dispute was clearly not solved yet as they were still demanding the site money.⁵⁶² The June issue reported that 4,000 MacAlpine workers had won 11/2d. an hour site money, following negotiations with the Civil Engineering Construction Conciliation Board.⁵⁶³ The paper disclosed every brutal practice of MacAlpine and Wimpey. The paper revealed that even trade union member workers were being made redundant on purpose although there was clearly work to be done. On June 21, 1952, all Wimpey's electricians on the Isle of Grain downed tools because of the sacking of 50 E.T.U. (Electrical Trades Union) members on grounds of alleged redundancy. 'Inquiries conducted by the *ID* led to the conclusion that some of the leading participants in the March strike, are no longer on the site, however, that several cases of reinstatement have been settled. Policy of many big civil engineering contractors is to dismiss a certain number of men for no stated reason each week, and thus by maintaining a continual flux, to prevent Trade Union organisation securing a firm hold.'⁵⁶⁴ On the same front page, there was a headline: 'Three thousand walk off oil refinery site.' This case is the Corydon oil refinery, also demanding better working conditions.⁵⁶⁵ This implies that the Isle of Grain dispute was not an isolated incident. The July 1952 issue exposed the case on the Isle of Grain: 'Investigation by the E.T.U. shop committee disclosed that there was work for weeks waiting to be done. Suspicion grew that real motive behind dismissals was to uproot trade unionism which is well established among the electricians. Redundancy has faced Irish workers on this site

⁵⁵⁹ The easternmost point of the Hoo Peninsula within the district of Medway in Kent.

⁵⁶⁰ *The Commercial Motor*, February 5, 1954,

⁵⁶¹ 'Victory', *Irish Democrat*, April 1952, p1

⁵⁶² 'Isle of Grain men still want site money,' *Irish Democrat*, May 1952, p1

⁵⁶³ 'Grain boys get half site money,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1952, p1

⁵⁶⁴ 'Grain boys get half site money,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1952, p1

⁵⁶⁵ 'Three thousand walk off oil refinery site,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1952, p1

for a long time. A certain number of labourers are put off every week.’⁵⁶⁶ This practice continued as the January 1954 issue revealed:

With this vast job nearing completion – in spite of refining tanks sinking in the mud! – the contractors are continuing their policy of sacking large numbers of men while continuing night shifts and overtime for the rest. There is considerable resentment among the lads at this typical place of employers’ meanness. As I write, another 500 men are due to go before this paper appears.⁵⁶⁷

The paper exposed that tens of thousands of workers were being fired on a regular basis:

One hundred and thirty Irish workers from MacAlpine’s job on the Isle of Grain went gaily home for Christmas, thinking all was well, and had a good time.’ While they were away, MacAlpine’s decided they were ‘redundant,’ and sent on their cards telling them not to return. But the Christmas posts were bad. Many of them did not receive them, especially as some were in the West of Ireland. They arrived back on the job – but found no jobs, no cards to get another job, and worst of all, no beds.⁵⁶⁸

The paper was a real *exposé* reporting major dispute cases, accidents and deaths. For example, no other papers reported on Patrick Joseph Sharkey from Roscommon’s death beside a bucket of poisonous carbon tetrachloride at Isle of Grain oil refinery. He had been using it for cleaning a tank. ‘One juror said there seemed to have been some neglect in watching Mr. Sharkey.’⁵⁶⁹

The paper placed small advertisements of its Exiles Advisory Service until the immediate post-war years on a regular basis. It was the time when Irish workers were not able to find a place to live, getting injured or killed at building sites with no insurance or allowances. In 1944, the advisory service was inundated helping members and non-members alike, dealing with ‘a large number of enquiries concerning the following subjects: billeting, workmen’s compensation, travel permits, subsistence allowance, national service and miscellaneous matters. The increasing cost of running the Advisory Service led to the decision to make the nominal charge of 1/- per enquiry for

⁵⁶⁶ ‘Isle of Grain electricians refuse to be redundant,’ *Irish Democrat*, July 1952, p2

⁵⁶⁷ ‘Sackings on the Isle of Grain,’ *Irish Democrat*, January 1954, p5

⁵⁶⁸ ‘MacAlpine’s trick on Grain men,’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1954, p8

⁵⁶⁹ ‘Irishman gassed at Isle of Grain,’ *Irish Democrat*, April 1954, p2

non-members.⁵⁷⁰ While trade unions attempted to protect their members, the paper advertised their activities, always printed personal letters from readers who had problems or concerns to share with others who might have the same issues and offered a place to discuss and solutions. The letter to the Editor section functioned as a forum and the paper carefully selected letters to be discussed. A letter from an elderly reader in Birmingham was published: ‘should we be grateful to Britain for giving us jobs?’ He ‘thought we should.’ The paper disapproved of his opinion by writing: ‘the reason why the British employers can give people jobs at all is that years ago they stole and enclosed the British yeomen’s land and compelled them to work for their living in factories and mines. Those same British capitalists stole the Irish peasants’ land but would not allow factories to be built in Ireland. So, the Irish had to emigrate when their land was taken.’⁵⁷¹ The paper continuously reminded the status quo of workers and urged to organise:

Powerlessness! The most galling, the most demoralising, weakening, and dehumanising feeling man can have – and at the same time most unnecessary one. How many times have pundits told us, man is weak? And as the farmer from Ireland, emigrating because his land will not give him the living he wants, picks up the boss’s shovel, or starts wiping dishes in that big hotel or restaurant, he can be excused for dreaming of Friday, and payday, and the relaxation of a drink or a dance? But though the solitary man is weak, men organised are strong.⁵⁷²

The most vulnerable aspect of construction workers was working ‘on the lump’ or casual work being paid in cash, often in pubs. This money-in-hand system was ‘the ruination of the Irish’ as they did not pay tax nor put up any stamps, therefore they were ‘left without entitlement to a pension after a lifetime in the building industry.’⁵⁷³ Many workers were not serious about joining the union because they were not aware of the implication of working on the lump. But at the same time, this was a strategy of large construction companies such as MacAlpine and Wimpey so that trade unions would not secure a firm hold: ‘Policy of many big civil engineering contractors is to dismiss a certain number of men for no stated reason each week, and thus by maintaining a continual flux, to prevent Trade Union organisation securing a firm hold.’⁵⁷⁴ In addition to the

⁵⁷⁰ ‘12 months of progress,’ *Irish Freedom*, 1944, p2

⁵⁷¹ ‘Dear readers,’ *Irish Democrat*, May 1952, p3

⁵⁷² ‘The only people who can do it,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1952, p8

⁵⁷³ Coogan, *Wherever Green is Worn*, p138

⁵⁷⁴ ‘Grain boys get half site money’, *Irish Democrat*, June 1952, p1

lump system, another obstacle why it was hard to organise Irish workers in Britain was that they tended to change professions on a regular basis. Nevertheless, the paper reiterated that workers should be organised: 'The best thing you could do for the Irish workers in Britain would be to secure 100 per cent trade unionism in all trades especially, building, nursing and catering.'⁵⁷⁵

In the late 1960s, things remained relatively the same for workers as the paper reported: 'building workers are still among the poorest-paid and least-secure of any industry. They slog in hail, rain or snow from the tops of skyscrapers down to the bowels of the earth. Deaths and accidents make the building industry like a battlefield.'⁵⁷⁶

In October 1967, the building unions submitted a package proposal for a three-year agreement to the building bosses. It included a basic wage of £17 11s. 8d. for craftsmen and £15 for labourers on a 40-hour week. Other demands included a fully guaranteed 40-hour week, holiday improvements, advance to a sick pay scheme, etc. Realisation of these demands has been frustrated by employer counter-demands, the Government wage freeze and the Prices and Incomes Board interference.⁵⁷⁷

The paper and workers were certainly getting louder every year as they continued to demand not only for improved working conditions but for their civil rights. 'In 1967, 14 giant contractors and 23 building material firms made combined profits of £127 million, or enough to pay 50s. a week increases to one million workers for a year.'⁵⁷⁸ Their activism was in full swing.

Over the past months they have marched to Parliament, produced and distributed masses of leaflets, held site and other meetings to further their demands. Their fight is not only for better pay and conditions, but against victimisation, blacklisting, transfer from site to site and other employer methods to smash or restrict trade union site organisation.⁵⁷⁹

It is apparent from articles that there were still many building workers that were not organised. 'United and given effective leadership the militancy and fighting capacity of building workers are

⁵⁷⁵ 'Willesden TC greets Dublin and Belfast,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1958, p1

⁵⁷⁶ 'Building workers' pay,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1969, p2

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p2

⁵⁷⁸ 'Building workers' pay,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1969, p2

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p2

capable of accomplishing big advances for wages, regular work proper training opportunities to meet changing methods, adequate holidays, sickness pay, adequate bonus payments, etc.⁵⁸⁰ The problem of the lump workers was still the major concern in 1969. The paper continued to update on their work with politicians: ‘The lump labour only subcontracting, which now involves an estimated 50,000 contractors and 250,000 workers should be abolished. The widespread attacks by Tory Councils to destroy Council Direct Construction schemes must be repelled.’⁵⁸¹

Their complexity of social stratification has already been mentioned and workers were frequently exploited by their own people. Although news coverage on nurses being mistreated by their fellow Irish matrons and sisters occasionally appeared in the newspaper, it was primarily young, naïve and ignorant navvies who were deceived and manipulated by their fellow Irish foremen, publicans, and landlords/ladies as various articles demonstrate. Moreover, a large number of navvies from the west of Ireland contained Irish native speakers who were not good at English, according to MacAmhlaigh. They were also the subject of exploitation.

Nothing affects me so much, I think, as seeing the little groups of Irish walking aimlessly around town every Sunday evening with no interest in anything at all, the creatures – only waiting for the pubs to open...it’s hard enough on young Irishmen who were reared out in the country to have nowhere to go on their day off except the pubs. It’s small wonder that we are getting a bad reputation over here.⁵⁸²

Construction companies throughout Britain did significant work during the war and post-war years by building, repairing, and rebuilding. McAlpine and Wimpey were not Irish companies, but they relied on a considerable number of Irish labourers as they dispatched Irish agents and gangers to their home counties in Ireland in order to recruit among the local population. Agents of Wimpey, Irishmen from Achill Island, recruited local workers with false promises. A huge influx of migrant workers sometimes arrived in England with their local priest. With the majority of Wimpey’s workforce coming from Ireland and arriving continuously, the company was dubbed ‘We Import More Paddies Every Year.’ The brutal treatment by Irish foremen is well documented, in various oral history publications and personal memoirs. Irish foremen’s cruel behaviour was observed by

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p2

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p2

⁵⁸² MacAmhlaigh, *An Irish Navvy: The Diary of an Exile*, p44

MacAmhlaigh, a navvy himself: 'Irish foremen have such bad reputations here when the half of them haven't the manners of a dog.'⁵⁸³ Another example was referenced in the paper:

A large crowd of Irishmen arrived for a job run by Wimpeys. The men say that the gangers who engaged them treated them like cattle...they were forced to spend the night in the coaches without food or drink. Here is a clear case where organisation is necessary, and already attempts have been made to form a CC in Nottingham. The National Committee of the CC are making immediate representations to Wimpeys and also to the Éire High Commissioner.⁵⁸⁴

The paper continued to expose various misconducts such as a low paid trick by an agent of Wimpey's.⁵⁸⁵ Another 'dirty trick' by the construction company that hired a significant number of Irish workers was 'the contractors get subsistence money from the railway company for every man employed and instead of paying it over to each man, they arranged for cheap snacks to be supplied to save money for themselves.'⁵⁸⁶ Another example was addressed by a local Labour Councillor during a meeting of the North London CA. 'Café proprietors take their share of men's earnings, since landladies do supply sufficient food. Some landladies were Irish and trying to make a fortune out of their own countrymen.'⁵⁸⁷ In a separate case, a reader appreciated the paper as it exposed the conditions awaiting Irish workers upon their arrival in France in search of employment. He was sent home 'because French officials require them to defray the transport costs of the immigrant employed and certain maintenance costs prior to employment.'⁵⁸⁸

Nurses

For female immigrants, the most visible group was nurses. Many hospitals in England were staffed by Irish nurses. For example, on 27 Aug 1946, Runwell Hospital in Wickford, Essex had their 'female nursing staff over 70% are from Éire, no less than 10 out of 14 Sisters and an Assistant Matron being Irish.'⁵⁸⁹ Desperate to acquire more nurses hurriedly, newly recruited were not always suitable for the job. 'Too many were hastily recruited from Éire to fill the nursing staff

⁵⁸³ Ibid., p93

⁵⁸⁴ 'Irishmen treated like cattle,' *Irish Freedom*, June 1941, p1

⁵⁸⁵ 'Low paid district trick,' *Irish Freedom*, September 1941, p8

⁵⁸⁶ MacAmhlaigh, *An Irish Navvy*, p149

⁵⁸⁷ 'Five in one room in Camden Town,' *Irish Democrat*, April 1954, p2

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid., p2

⁵⁸⁹ NA, LAB 8/1301

shortages in England, there were complaints. In 1949, Ministry of Labour and National Service were talking about 'the poor quality of the student nurses who are being sent from Ireland. Many of them are said to be suitable only for domestic work.'⁵⁹⁰ Nonetheless, Irish nurses' contributions were significant. The newspaper brought nurses and events together in order to mobilise them. One of the articles invited all readers who were in the nursing profession to attend the conference on Health of Irish Exiles.⁵⁹¹ There were push and pull factors for nurses and other medical professionals. Irish workers needed a better paid job, and the NHS actively sought them. As a result, the paper warned 'the wholesale emigration of nurses to Britain is causing a crisis in Irish hospitals. Understaffing has become so serious that some wards have had to be shut down.'⁵⁹² Higher wages were the chief reason why Irish nurses came to Britain. Under Rushcliffe⁵⁹³ scale, a staff nurse received £100-140; in Éire she received only £75-100. Irish nurses were most numerous but there were other immigrant workers, namely Indian, Caribbean, and Jewish nurses from Germany. According to the paper, Irish nurses unsuccessfully attempted to improve the working conditions by themselves. Therefore, they concluded that the only solution was the introduction of trade unionism among nurses.⁵⁹⁴ Although wages and conditions were better, the paper frequently reported that Irish nurses were being treated unfairly:

even in Britain, conditions lag far behind what is desirable...Hours are far too long, food is insufficient. Living-in is another source of grievance...It is time that there was a complete abolition of those out-of-date Victorian petty restrictions which do so much to make a nurse's life a misery...A big organising drive by trade unions is as necessary in our hospital as it was in the West End luxury hotels and restaurants.⁵⁹⁵

The paper detailed their working conditions. Louise Ryan's study uncovered that an Irish nurse in England received about £6 a month in the 1950s and typically sent home about £2 every month.⁵⁹⁶ Although each nurse had different experiences, 'there was open hostility towards the Irish based

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ 'Nurses', *Irish Democrat*, February 1955, p8

⁵⁹² 'Hospital crisis as Irish nurses go to Britain,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1947, p2

⁵⁹³ A district in Nottinghamshire.

⁵⁹⁴ 'They treat us like dirt,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1951, p4

⁵⁹⁵ 'Hospital crisis as Irish nurses go to Britain,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1947, p2

⁵⁹⁶ Ryan, Louise, 'Becoming Nurses: Irish Women, Migration and Identity Through the Life Course', in *Gendering Migration*, Ryan, Louise and Webster, Wendy (ed), Ashgate, Aldershot, p125

on stereotypes of dirtiness, fecklessness and backwardness.’⁵⁹⁷ British hospitals desperately needed a large number of Irish nurses during the post-war period but ‘upon arrival these women were confronted by negative stereotypes based on racialised images and religious prejudice,’ and some people used positive ethnic stereotypes about caring and hard-working Irish women to counter negative labels.’⁵⁹⁸ Maire Kilroy wrote in the *ID* that nurses should organise as ‘having spent a number of years in the nursing profession I was interested to see the refutation of Mrs. Latham’s extraordinary statement that: Irish girls make good nurses because they are completely callous and indifferent to human suffering.’⁵⁹⁹ In this process, the paper ‘performed a worthy service on behalf of all Irish nurses by publicly decrying this silly and stupid insinuation, and the paper must be congratulated on securing a statement from the Principal of the Nursing Association on this matter.’⁶⁰⁰ Nurses were well-organised as several articles appeared on successful strikes.

Insufficient and inadequate meals were given as reason for the strike of sixty nurses who refused to take meals in the dining room of the Ancoats Hospital of Manchester. For lunch, it was claimed that a sausage and a half were served with vegetables. Officials ordered an immediate investigation into the complaints. The strike was spontaneous and lasted only a day. It is generally commented here that if all the nurses had been members of a Trade Union, the matter could have been settled long ago by the expedient of bringing in the T.U. organiser.⁶⁰¹

Compared to construction workers, it is clear from newspaper articles that Irish nurses were better organised and having good results. Although they had successful outcomes, discrimination against Irish nurses persistently existed.

With regard to doctors, they also had identical grievances. ‘A house surgeon in Éire starts at only £50 a year, in Britain he gets £200...It has been estimated that eight out of ten Irish doctors must practice overseas, mostly in Britain and the British Dominions and Colonies.’⁶⁰² This indicates

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p126

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p133

⁵⁹⁹ ‘Nurses should organise,’ *Irish Democrat*, March 1954, p4

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰¹ ‘Nurses strike in Manchester,’ *Irish Democrat*, April 1952, p2

⁶⁰² ‘Hospital crisis as Irish nurses go to Britain,’ *Irish Democrat*, January 1947, p2

that Irish doctors were not traditionally trained to consult patients in Ireland but there was an established system that Irish doctors primarily served in the interests of the British Empire.

Challenges

As a pressure organ, the newspaper's role within the trade union movement evolved. Despite the fact that they operated with limited resources in many aspects, one of the decisive factors that affected their *raison d'être* is the absence of strong trade union leaders. Since the Chartist movement, there had been always some notable Irish leaders in England but during the research period, the Irish in Britain suffered from a lack of leadership. Within the working-class movement in the British Isles in the early twentieth century, no charismatic leaders equivalent of Connolly or Larkin existed. Novik argues that these revolutionary socialists were 'loosely allied with other advanced nationalist movements in 1914, the struggle was seen first and foremost as a class issue'⁶⁰³ and consistently brought 'the class issues and attacked the British and the rich with equal vigour, calling on the international working class to unite,'⁶⁰⁴ Kevin O'Connor also echoed this sentiment as he observed that the Irish workers in Britain in the 1930s suffered from:

'a profound absence of social leadership, rendering them as mere factory and building-site fodder, totally at the whim of economic forces. Only in the traditional immigrant areas of Scotland and the North-East was there in existence the semblance of a receiving community structure into which they could absorb with confidence, being the continuum of previous generations' activity in community and trade union affairs.'⁶⁰⁵

This analysis applies to the whole research period. Some of the factors of weak leadership and organisation are that Irish workers' movable nature and lack of commitment as they changed their work on a regular basis along with a rapidly changing society and a wide range of job openings. Moreover, the attitude of English trade union officials was not aligned with the paper. They tended to spend 'more time looking for new recruits than in looking after the members they had got. Yet as often as not the new members disappeared into the bottomless pit of contract labour.'⁶⁰⁶ Another

⁶⁰³ Novik, *Conceiving Revolution*, p52

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p53

⁶⁰⁵ Quoted in Coogan, *Wherever Green is Worn: The Story of the Irish Diaspora*, p121-2

⁶⁰⁶ 'Can we civilise the building trade?' *Irish Democrat*, March 1967, p3

issue the paper further identified was ‘the lack of attendance at branch meetings, taking the militancy on the job into the policy-making structure of the trade union.’

Although the paper’s aim was to function as a voice of the working-class movement and gave them a reason to be part of the solution, persuading workers who were coping with day-to-day problems was unrealistic. The majority of job-related articles asserted that the economic woes were part of the same problem. The newspaper interpreted the status quo by constantly bringing readers’ attention to the root cause:

As the current Irish question manifests itself on the building sites and on the breakfast table. It appears most obviously as an economic question...the following three points can form the basis of a common agreement amongst the majority of Irishmen and their friends in Britain: To plan immediate measures for the improvement of British trading relations with Ireland; To secure equitable treatment for the Irish workers in Britain and that public recognition to which their services entitle them; Advocacy of the democratic solution of all problems affecting the Irish people.⁶⁰⁷

The newspaper offered a place where all could express their opinions on these urgent problems through its columns.⁶⁰⁸

Advisory Service-related ads or articles completely dissolved after the war. According to the newspaper, it had fewer issues to handle. A decreasing number of articles suggest Irish workers sought less help and advice. The frequency of articles mentioning working and housing problems steadily decreased towards the end of the 1960s. These topics had gradually become a less noticeable aspect of news coverage which implies that Irish people’s status, living and working conditions in England had steadily improved and become integrated and closer to the local people’s standard of living. The problem that Irish people faced was certainly decreasing and becoming less visible and urgent, although it may not have completely disappeared because a few support organisations were established in the 1950s, such as the Irish Centre in Camden, which helped Irish workers. The articles on travel conditions also decreased in the last decade, indicating improved infrastructures along with the growing British economy. As the newspaper demonstrated

⁶⁰⁷ ‘The modern Irish question,’ *Irish Freedom*, November 1943, p1

⁶⁰⁸ ‘The modern Irish question,’ *Irish Freedom*, November 1943, p1

throughout, civil rights-focused articles in the 1960s were meant to fight against imperialism, fascism, discrimination which were all tied to the principal cause. The newspaper considered all their educational activities, activism and the trade union movement as being interlinked, stemming from the primary cause, and strived to unravel it. Curran points out that the role of the radical press is to consider 'society not in terms of a series of disconnected events but as a system of exploitation.'⁶⁰⁹ By framing their belief system, the paper provided a place to stand in solidarity against injustice and through these collective efforts and to connect to the Irish question by engaging with the public.

The paper characterised the Irish diaspora as exiles due to British misrule and oppression in Ireland. Its main framework was based on social progress as it addressed all issues of social injustice arising within the disadvantaged diaspora community from an activist point of view. Many framing scholars consider journalists, policy makers and readers as individual players but in the case of the *IF/ID*, there were the limitations of framing as it functioned as a protest group and therefore there is no distinct division between writers, readers and activists, policy makers and even politicians. As its readers were mostly the diaspora population, there was generally no conflict between the readers and the writers. Their reporting was unsurprising and predictable as it was aligned with readers' expectation. Within this frame, the paper used trade unionism to push their own narratives.

Although workers' basic needs were slowly improving every year, policy documents, such as discrimination laws, typically bypassed this fact as Irish immigrants were not considered foreigners. The gradual decline of discrimination-related articles indicates that Irish people were steadily integrating into the host society, however, general anti-Irish sentiments tenaciously existed as a matter of habit. The issues were stemming from lingering stereotypes and habitual practices due to 'a combination of ignorance, propaganda, rumour, history and hearsay,'⁶¹⁰ as Jackson outlined. Irish people were still socially and economically disadvantaged and met by hostility, as newspaper evidence suggest, even though the position of Irish immigrants in England had

⁶⁰⁹ Curran, *Media and Power*, p86

⁶¹⁰ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p152

gradually improved by the mid-twentieth century in parallel with the influx of Commonwealth immigrants, and the Irish were ‘no longer the principal target of British racism.’⁶¹¹

Conclusion

This chapter provides new insights with regard to the paper’s role. As evidence reveals, the peak period of Irish immigration to England in the 1950s coincided with the worst and last phase of major discriminatory incidents against them. The war and immediate post-war period were the time when the paper had the largest circulation. This demonstrates that the publication was the only reliable organ to operate for the interests of Irish workers. Anti-Irish sentiment in Britain mostly remained at a community level but institutional also as police biases were thoroughly documented in the paper. Making the public aware of something does not change present circumstances, thus, newspaper articles reiterated action needs to be accompanied. Every issue of the paper framed articles, wrote action-oriented articles and advertisements such as lectures, meetings, and demonstrations, as it attempted to shape their views, engage with the public and mobilise workers to create a movement. Although, it seems like a remote possibility, they believed that tackling workers’ rights issues in England was equally the first step for a united Ireland and they were assertive with tactical plans. Within this context, the paper’s collective effort helped to clarify policies and enforced a movement as a political organiser. It is hard to measure what impact their campaigns in the trade union movement had on a wider public, to evaluate the effectiveness of newspapers on public confidence and whether political messages of newspapers were successfully carried out or not. Because of its limited resources and size, the influence of the *IF/ID* was probably marginal. Greaves may have overestimated the role of Irish workers within the labour movement. Smylie pointed out that Greaves was ‘in a state of denial about the true extent of their marginality amongst Irish immigrants, whilst arguing amongst themselves how best to overcome their frequently self-imposed isolation.’⁶¹² However, the paper was an essential tool for diaspora politics and an indispensable element in the trade union movement and political opinion. There is no doubt that the CC/CA with other left organs helped to bring a large number of people to trade unions, although there were equally many workers who were resistant and could not be persuaded to join their unions. For those who had a job in Britain were considered fortunate when

⁶¹¹ Curtis, *Nothing but the Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism*, p75

⁶¹² Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p647

the unemployment rate was high in Ireland and from the mid-1950s onwards, construction workers in Britain started losing their jobs. Irish workers were in the vulnerable situation in many aspects. The majority of them were struggling with immediate needs, moreover rural immigrants required some time to adjust emotionally and psychologically in an urban English city. To those, joining the trade union and demanding their rights at the risk of losing their jobs made no sense.

All Irish political newspapers in England were established to protest. Greaves attempted to deal with ‘every issue that arises from an Irish community in Britain and to develop it in a way which promotes the independence of Ireland and their welfare.’⁶¹³ By framing certain articles, the paper functioned as activist journalism, a forum, a bonding agent and provided workers and trade unionists a common platform to unite with a sense of shared community and purpose. After all, ‘there was no distinctly Irish initiative possible that did not begin with an effort for independence.’⁶¹⁴ While organising workers, making the Irish question as a political issue simultaneously was their mission which is a central theme of the next chapter.

⁶¹³ Greaves, *Reminiscence of the Connolly Association*, p36

⁶¹⁴ Greaves, *Sean O’Casey: Politics and Art*, p77

Chapter Four: How to unite Ireland

Former MI5 agent James Miller lamented the complexity of security policies of Northern Ireland: ‘It is like layers of an onion, and the more you peel them away, the more you feel like crying. There are two laws running this country: one for the security services and one for the rest of us.’⁶¹⁵ Shaped by British policy, Irish and Northern Irish history can be interpreted in numerous ways, depending on the point of view. In order to promote Irish unity, the paper selected certain articles to frame the issue. Their biggest mission was to make the Irish question a political issue in Britain and democratise the country. How did they attempt to carry it out? How did they contribute to the working-class movement in England on a political level? In order to set them in context, this chapter considers the relationship between the CC/CA and its allies and how they handled the Irish question during the research period as their complicated reality was reflected on the newspaper. This section also analyses how the paper viewed the civil rights reform as a step forward to reunification by specifically focusing not only on Catholic people’s grievances in Northern Ireland, but also on state crime and initiatives with their allies for the civil rights movement. In addition, in order to illustrate the overall political context in Britain towards Northern Ireland, their ideological divisions within the labour movement and the development of the paper’s activism stance will be examined.

Irish question

Just before the Great Hunger was officially declared, the Irish question was formally discussed during the debate amongst British politicians. In 1844⁶¹⁶, Benjamin Disraeli, a future British prime minister stated:

That dense population in extreme distress inhabited an island where there was an established church which was not their church; and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom lived in distant capitals. Thus, they had a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church, and, in addition, the weakest executive in the world. That was the Irish question.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁵ Ken Loach’s film *Hidden Agenda*’s closing quotation.

⁶¹⁶ The years of the Great Hunger are varied depending on the source 1845-1849, 50, 51, 52 as there were famines throughout the century. The issue discussed here was during the precursor period of the Great Hunger.

⁶¹⁷ https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1844/feb/16/state-of-ireland-adjourned-debate-fourth#column_1016

The term ‘Irish question’ which contains infinite issues depending on one’s perspective. It has developed over the years and keeps evolving along with the changing political and social climate as long as the border exists. When trying to define, categorise and analyse an issue to create a strategy, the term Ireland, Northern Ireland, or Irish people in Britain almost seems like an evasive concept. The partition added layers of complication and challenges, various policy divisions and the left-wing organs’ inconsistent attitudes and strategies manifested themselves toward the border issue. Schism and confrontation within left-wing organisations in three geographical entities were the norm and tradition. Planting a seed of an idea in different localities with a distinct history, unique characters and political climates resulted in different outcomes.

The paper offered its readers a simple explanation: ‘LEFT means ANTI-IMPERIALIST, RIGHT-WING means IMPERIALIST.’⁶¹⁸ The paper repeatedly attempted to spread this message through its articles, but their achievement did not go beyond advocacy until the 1960s. J. A. Jackson also echoed that the majority of Irish in Britain revived the Irish question issue but made ‘no widespread attempt to organise the Irish vote.’⁶¹⁹ The fact that the British government assumed that the issue in the North was taken care of by Stormont had severe consequences. Mark Monaghan elaborates that this had further implications as ‘it may have been due to ignorance and repeated warnings by politicians to junior colleagues telling them to stay clear of the Irish issue and that the question was too complicated to answer.’⁶²⁰ As the paper articulates, there was clearly a knowledge and consciousness gap between London and Northern Ireland. The paper frequently ran a story entitled ‘British MPs don’t know their own laws.’⁶²¹ For example, while the *ID/CA* and other civil rights organisations started intensively focusing on civil rights initiatives in the 1950s, the British government was reluctant and slow to act as they attempted to solve the Northern Ireland conflict by treating it as a sectarian problem at a community level. Although Terence O’Neill, the future Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, thought the status quo was unacceptable, his analysis of the problem was a failure. He believed sectarianism in Northern Ireland was ‘a behavioural problem

⁶¹⁸ ‘An Easter message to the Irish in Britain,’ *Irish Democrat*, April 1955, p8

⁶¹⁹ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p127

⁶²⁰ Monaghan, Mark and Prideaux, Simon, 2016, *State Crime and Immorality: The Corrupting Influence of the Powerful*, Polity Press, Bristol, p169

⁶²¹ ‘British MPs don’t know their own laws,’ *Irish Democrat*, September 1959, p4

caused by several generations of sullen opposition by nationalists to the Stormont system,' therefore, 'the problem was 'not the structural imbalances within the system over political representation, differential unemployment levels between Catholics and Protestants.'⁶²²

By the 1960s, it had become apparent that Westminster and Stormont's lukewarm strategies and tactics were not sufficient to remedy the issue as things were getting worse and uncontrollable. Catholic people's oppressed status remained the same and violent incidents never ceased, suggesting that the conflict was more than sectarian problems. British failure in Northern Ireland implies that it was unable to recognise the root causes of the problems. Christopher Hewitt stressed that one of the first requirements of 'successful conflict regulation is correctly identifying what the conflict is about.'⁶²³ The paper's coverage on the British media and the Stormont and British government's ambiguous and changing strategies toward the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland throughout the 1960s showcases that the British government failed to define the terminology properly. James Callaghan who became British Home Secretary in 1967 recollected how his despatch box contained papers on various pressing issues of the day such as prisons, race relations and the police without 'a single word about Northern Ireland.'⁶²⁴ In his autobiography, many years later, Callaghan continuously used the term 'province' by force of habit. The Stormont and the British governments could not agree with the strategies to adopt as the civil rights movement rapidly progressed in the 1960s.

Catholic grievances

The paper's mission was to bridge the gap by promoting equality for all people in Northern Ireland and Britain and to defend the Irish and Catholic against discrimination and to offer support. As numerous articles demonstrate, the way they planned to accomplish their goals in Northern Ireland was in the following order: eliminate discrimination; sectarianism will be removed; full civil rights will bring Catholic and Protestant together; all people will respect each other; the unification of the working-class people will lead to an anti-Unionist Government being elected; finally, a United Ireland will be achieved. In this process, the paper played a role of activist and journalistic

⁶²² Cochrane, Feargal, 2021, *Northern Ireland: The Fragile Peace*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p38

⁶²³ Hewitt, Christopher, 1993, *Consequences of Political Violence*, Dartmouth, Aldershot, p124

⁶²⁴ Monaghan, *State Crime and Immorality: The Corrupting Influence of the Powerful*, p169

watchdog in order to discredit Ulster unionism in Britain. The paper probed the Irish question and confronted the system by addressing the status quo and protesting the British government and writing about them. Almost no mainstream British media in the period covered the issues related to Ireland and Irish people up until the Troubles began in 1969.

The constant theme of the paper throughout the three decades was that Catholic people in the North had primarily grievances about discrimination in employment and housing, stemming from not having the control of local councils as a direct result of the ‘self-imposed apartheid’ or gerrymandering system. The paper produced plenty of articles on the status quo of Northern Ireland since the inaugural issue, and from the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, articles became more focused on civil rights investigation initiatives and activism. The articles on Northern Ireland during the research period were categorised into three main fields: grievance-related such as unemployment and poverty, housing and rent act; state crime-related law and legal issues, the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act (SPA), RUC/B-special raids, stop & search, assaults, arrests, banning of meetings, gerrymandering; and activism-related. Catholic and Irish people suffered from chronic poverty as evidenced by a large number of grievance-related articles constantly appeared in the pages. The ‘six-counties unemployment’ topic was a recurring topic as many of them desperately tried to make ends meet.

‘I wish to God there was a war. It would bring us work.’ These words were spoken often by the unemployed of Northern Ireland in the period from 1932 to the outbreak of the present war... That war is now in progress. Has it brought increased prosperity to Northern Ireland? The official figures for unemployment prove the opposite... There has been an increase in unemployment of at least 14,000 since the war began. And this ignores those who have been starved into the English Army!⁶²⁵

Similar to the recruitment method that the British government applied in Ireland, on a smaller scale, the government launched an initiative to recruit workers in Northern Ireland. The Ministry of Fuel and Power in 1951 recruited men from Northern Ireland for coalmining.’⁶²⁶ Although, the unemployment situation in Northern Ireland was severe, a lack of urgency and interest resulted in

⁶²⁵ ‘The War hits Belfast’, *Irish Freedom*, April 1941, p1

⁶²⁶ NA, HO45/25194 900499/85 Coalminers recruitment campaign folder

the government being unable to implement a rigorous plan. NILP Samuel Napier complained to Prime Minister Churchill on 16 May 1952:

A lack of urgency on the part of the Government to deal with the acute crisis here. We are also convinced that no plan exists in the cabinet to take the constructive measures which will be necessary not only to halt the increasing unemployment, but by long term measures to mitigate the difficulties of the future. Because of the lack of interest shown in Government circles here to our proposals we believe they will not be represented in any memorandum submitted to you on behalf of the Northern Ireland Government.⁶²⁷

The paper repeatedly highlighted that Catholic and Protestant people were leading completely separate lives. One of the most palpable ways to measure poverty and inequality was the conditions of housing. The allocation of housing and the manipulation of electoral districts at the local governmental level were directly linked and housing segregation maintained ‘predictable electoral outcomes and prevented the development of mixed communities.’⁶²⁸ The newspaper frequently bemoaned substandard housing issues, calling them ‘scandalous’: ‘overcrowding in the city (Belfast) is lamentable and the density of population is considerably higher than for comparable British cities (which are supposed to be already overcrowded). The density in Belfast in 1951 was 28.9 persons per acre, compared with 14.4 for Edinburgh and 16.8 for Bristol.’⁶²⁹

Some active Labour politicians started voicing their concerns. For example, during a visit to Northern Ireland in 1954, James Callaghan, a Labour politician then a British Prime Minister, was distressed at what he witnessed. In his own words, he was ‘particularly incensed by the blatant discrimination shown in the building and letting of houses by Local Authorities. Some of them hardly troubled to deny that they built new housing estates only in Protestant areas and had little or no intention of relieving overcrowded slum conditions for Catholic families.’⁶³⁰ When he became Home Secretary several years later, he ‘applied strong pressure to the Stormont Government to remove their housing powers from the Local Authorities,’ but ‘they were reluctant

⁶²⁷ NA, HO45/25194 900.499/89 unemployment difficulties folder.

⁶²⁸ O’Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, p51

⁶²⁹ ‘Belfast Housing Scandal,’ *Irish Democrat*, December 1953, p2

⁶³⁰ Callaghan, James, 1987, *Time and Chance*, Collins, London, p271

to act.’⁶³¹ As a step forward to remedy the situation, the *ID* urged its readers to unite with Protestant and British workers.

The Irish worker must view the partition problem as it is. We must expose the schemes that are afoot. Protestant and Catholic – let nobody be afraid to proclaim to the Protestant workers of the North that their interests lie with the rest of us in a struggle for security and progress – Protestant and Catholic – both have their part in ending partition, and ending it on a basis which will make the further footing and dividing of our people by sectarian prejudices and religious bigotries, a thing of the outmoded past. Orange or Green, let us work together as brothers to make a free Ireland and a peaceful world.⁶³²

Unionists refused this view as numerous *ID* articles show. They ‘justified the situation’⁶³³ even though they recognised ‘discrimination against Catholics was common in the civil service.’⁶³⁴ Furthermore, what they perceived was ‘the mainland British as unreliable allies.’⁶³⁵ This view is well-founded. Since the devolved Stormont parliament was established, the British government behaved as if it was not their responsibility. ‘British governments distanced themselves from the Irish question and ignored the discrimination.’⁶³⁶ Additionally, Unionists considered Dublin governments as a ‘threat’ in particular when it launched a propaganda campaign against partition in 1938 and 1948⁶³⁷ and continued to have that frame of mind. Prince claims that the CA had identified ‘discrimination as Unionism’s weak spot as early as 1955.’⁶³⁸ In effect, the paper had been systematically writing about it since 1939 but the CA’s new constitution in 1955 made it clear that they would primarily focus on democracy and their defence first. They regarded ‘civil rights reform as a steppingstone to reunification.’⁶³⁹ Discrimination against Catholic people certainly existed but assessing discrimination is not straightforward. Paul Dixon postulates that ‘crude statistics are often misleading and there is complex debate over how to measure

⁶³¹ Callaghan, *Time and Change*, p272

⁶³² ‘Conference Discussion’, *Irish Democrat*, November 1948, p8

⁶³³ Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, p168

⁶³⁴ Bew, Paul, Gibbon, Peter and Patterson, Henry, 1979, *Ireland: The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72: Political Forces and Social Classes*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, p77

⁶³⁵ Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, p146

⁶³⁶ Dixon, Paul, 2001, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, p56

⁶³⁷ Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, p147

⁶³⁸ Prince, Simon, ‘Mythologising a Movement: Northern Ireland’s ’68,’ in *Historical Ireland*, vol. 16, No. 5 (Sep-Oct 2008), p28

⁶³⁹ Prince, *Northern Ireland’s 68*, p47

discrimination.’⁶⁴⁰ For example, Teague has identified, disparities between Catholics and Protestants include: lower Catholic educational standards; Catholics discouraging their co-religionists from serving the state; differences in attitudes to work; inadequate knowledge of job opportunities; concentration of Catholics in peripheral areas and the uneven development of capitalism; the larger size of Catholic families; and the legacy of past discrimination.⁶⁴¹ These occurred as a result of gerrymandering.

Specially created

Although Larkin and Connolly in the decades prior and the United Irishmen at the end of the eighteenth century had tried to unite Catholic and Protestant workers,⁶⁴² the fact is that the basic civil rights for Irish people had never been addressed systematically and formally. As a consequent, oppressed communities had remained in the lock of history and could not develop into a fair society. Britain’s divide and rule strategy in Northern Ireland had a disastrous effect as it widened the gap between Catholic and Protestant people, which is viewed as a perfect example of mismanagement and abuse of power. The division of the working class was intentionally conducted. Milotte states that the British ruling class ‘encouraged sectarian rivalries knowing that a divided working class was more easily dominated and knowing also that the forces of Unionism could be relied upon to defend Britain’s imperial interests in Ireland.’⁶⁴³ Since partition, Northern Ireland created its special laws and the electoral system so that the authority could keep Catholic people at the bottom of the hierarchy. Consequently, the majority of Catholic people had lowest paid jobs or tended to be unemployed as numerous articles show. Paul Bew acknowledges that the Catholic lower strata further deteriorated during the existence of the Northern Ireland state: ‘most significantly, while everywhere else (including the Protestant community) the unskilled section of the working class was diminishing as a proportion of the workforce, in the Catholic community, it was actually increasing.’⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴⁰ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p66

⁶⁴¹ Quoted in Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p66

⁶⁴² It is debatable in the case of the United Irishmen.

⁶⁴³ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p14

⁶⁴⁴ Bew, *Ireland: The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72*, p170-1

The newspaper's tactics was to focus on exposing the state crime⁶⁴⁵ and advocating to alter the system. The main grievance stemmed from the SPA.⁶⁴⁶ Created in 1922, the government intended it to be used as a means to establish order in the province, but 'the statute continued to be employed even after levels of political violence had all but disappeared.'⁶⁴⁷ Throughout the research period, the SPA was operating in full swing. 'Any attempt to garner support for a united Ireland was perceived as an attack on the Northern Irish constitution.'⁶⁴⁸ The newspaper had regular columns such as *Notes from the North* to criticise it. Numerous SPA/Royal Ulster Constabulary-related articles in the 1940s and the 1950s suggest that the abuse of power became ubiquitous and abrupt, and escalated throughout the North as the authorities randomly exercised their power. As a result of meticulously writing on the SPA, the paper met with bitter opposition from its enemies.

Six-County Unionists banned us, blue shirt hooligans threatened our sellers with violence, and pro-Fascist papers like the 'Standard' have poured forth an unending stream of lies and misrepresentation against us. Catholic Bishops, who at no time in Irish history have been in the van of progress, have tried to prevent us telling the truth to the Irish people.⁶⁴⁹

The paper assertively dubbed itself: 'For Irish workers and patriots with the courage to think.' It was essentially speaking on behalf of the voiceless people. The RUC and B-special related articles demonstrate that it was not only IRA members, but ordinary Irish and Catholic people were also assaulted, and their houses raided. For example, a local trade council chairman was also raided for no reason. The newspaper reported: 'Evidence that the SPA of Northern Ireland is not alone directed against Republicans is forthcoming from Derry where the chairman of the local Trade Council was raided by the RUC. His rooms were ransacked, and the police insisted on searching a room where a 13-day old sick baby lay sleeping.'⁶⁵⁰ This is one of the countless incidents that the paper reported which confirms the local authorities were operating indiscriminately. The

⁶⁴⁵ The term is commonly used in the field of sociology, namely, criminology.

⁶⁴⁶ According to Donohue in *Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts*, p1090, the 1922 SPA included the power to impose curfew, close licensed premises, prohibit public meetings and processions, ban military drilling, military uniforms and uniforms indicating membership of proscribed organisations, and to establish stringent requirements for the possession of firearms, explosives, or petrol.

⁶⁴⁷ Donohue, Laura, 'Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-1972,' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 41, No. 4 (1998), p1089-90

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p1089

⁶⁴⁹ 'Irish Democrat 10th Anniversary,' *Irish Democrat*, January 1949, p2

⁶⁵⁰ 'Trades Council Chairman raided,' *Irish Freedom*, February 1940, p3

newspaper lamented: ‘one of the most revolting aspects of the SPA is the fact that prisoners are denied any right of trial – or even to know what their ‘offence’ is alleged to be. This is easily explainable when the responsible Minister admits that the State is not even in a position to put forward a case against them.’⁶⁵¹ Therefore, the newspaper frequently depicted Stormont as fascist. The paper depicted British imperialism as Nazi fascism by writing that ‘the antisemitism of Hitler began the same way, gradually working up to a crescendo of hate’⁶⁵² and ‘Gestapo methods are used by the police in Northern Ireland,’⁶⁵³ or ‘home truth on the Stormont dictatorship.’⁶⁵⁴ The then Home Secretary Dawson Bates was labelled ‘Gestapo Gates’ who explained to John Campbell, Ulster Unionist member of Parliament, that the reason why he had introduced the SPA was ‘because of the impossibility of getting proof of guilt.’⁶⁵⁵ Ample articles of the unfair treatment of local Irish and Catholic citizens indicate that the local government failed to distinguish ‘between republicanism and nationalism, or violent and non-violent challenges to the government.’⁶⁵⁶

There is some clear evidence to assess that Catholic residents were legally discriminated, and gerrymandering practices further crystallised their status. Gerrymandering is a system of manipulating electoral boundaries and the number of votes is typically arranged in favour of a certain party. In Northern Ireland, it functioned in the following way: the election of Protestant candidates to the Northern Parliament were guaranteed; Catholics were discriminated against and victimised by a pogrom; the creation of a police force called the Special Constabulary for the sole purpose of protecting Protestant interests; and the Special Powers Act gave the Minister of Home Affairs or policeman ultimate power.⁶⁵⁷ Throughout the research period, articles that criticised such uncivil practices consistently appeared. The October 1946 issue explained a few examples of how gerrymandering worked: In Fermanagh 39,000 Nationalists elect one M.P., while 24,000 Unionists elect two M.P.s.⁶⁵⁸ In Derry 29,000 Nationalists elect the same number of M.P.s as 18,000 Unionists. In Tyrone County Council 76,000 Nationalists elect 11 members, but 59,000

⁶⁵¹ ‘Notes from the North, *Irish Freedom*, April 1941, p2

⁶⁵² ‘Yellow press steps up hate the Irish stunt’, *Irish Democrat*, April 1953, p3

⁶⁵³ ‘Gestapo methods in Belfast’, *Irish Democrat*, November 1956, p1

⁶⁵⁴ ‘Home truths on the Stormont dictatorship’, *Irish Democrat*, March 1967

⁶⁵⁵ ‘Notes from the North, *Irish Freedom*, April 1941, p2

⁶⁵⁶ Donohue, *Regulating Northern Ireland: The Special Powers Acts, 1922-1972*, p1113-4

⁶⁵⁷ Hull, *The Irish Triangle: Conflict in Northern Ireland*, p37

⁶⁵⁸ ‘Gerrymander how it works,’ *Irish Democrat*, October 1946, p4

Unionists 11;⁶⁵⁹ and the November 1948 issue kept readers informed on the development of the latest gerrymander: ‘Unfortunately, they made the mistake of handling the whole operation of the Act in Northern Ireland over to the Stormont Government, who, true to type, jumped at the chance of another Gerrymander. All the members of the redistribution commission with one or two exceptions were appointed by the Unionist Government.’⁶⁶⁰ Sean Redmond wrote a letter to Northern Premier Terence O’Neill in May 1966.

(pointing out that the 1949 Ireland Act offered Stormont no protection) ‘if the British Parliament decides in its wisdom to abolish your government altogether’. To which O’Neill replied denying the existence of gerrymandering, discrimination and police repression in the North and saying, ‘I was entertained to read your complex and ingenious version of our constitutional status’, but the constitutional position of Northern Ireland “has a conventional as well as legislative basis.”⁶⁶¹

As this example shows, there were discrepancies in understanding the situation as Protestant and Catholic people traditionally view and interpret the same event differently and use different terminologies. As a consequent of this practice, the region became a ‘dictatorial substate which was run for the good of all Protestants but maintained for the powerful few of the modern Protestant Ascendancy.’⁶⁶² Gerrymandering further increased opportunities for discrimination in local government employment as one official admitted, ‘there can be little doubt that in those areas where there was a Protestant majority in the councils, in practice, posts do not often go to Catholics.’⁶⁶³

During the early years, the newspaper highlighted Northern Ireland-specific laws and other regulations, however, these informative articles gradually disappeared. This does not imply a dramatic decline in legal problems but rather less coverage in the late 1960s explains that the angle of news coverage changed as the issue evolved throughout the years and the paper gradually shifted to cover more practical sides of the issue namely activism-oriented stories to mobilise masses of

⁶⁵⁹ ‘Gerrymander, Lynch, Boycott,’ *Irish Democrat*, October 1946, p4

⁶⁶⁰ ‘The latest gerrymander,’ *Irish Democrat*, November 1948, p4

⁶⁶¹ Trade Union Left Forum, ‘Death of Sean Redmond,’ <http://www.tuleftforum.com/death-of-sean-redmond-former-connolly-association-general-secretary-irish-trade-union-official-and-historian/>

⁶⁶² Hull, *The Irish Triangle: Conflict in Northern Ireland*, p37

⁶⁶³ Bew, *Ireland: The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72*, p69

people as it started gaining momentum. The newspaper coverage shows that CA members directed ‘their protest toward the harsh implementation of the SPA and have conducted a series of effective marches holding meetings in various places.’⁶⁶⁴

Media

As the collective identity of Irish people was defined within the British system, from the point of view of the *IF/ID*, the presence of frames that reinforce imperialism in the British media in general was their reason for activism. The British press had characterised the Irish as criminals and a threat to the social order. African diaspora media scholar Ola Ogunyemi pointed out that ‘the mainstream press marginalises the minority constituent groups and overrepresents them in the crime news.’⁶⁶⁵ As early immigrants, Irish people had similar experiences.

The paper played an advocacy role as it published stories that the British press showed no or little interest in covering even though many stories had news values from a civil and human rights perspective. When the British press published an Irish-related article, it tended to be prejudiced. Media distortion-related articles on Ireland or the Irish has a long history in Britain which further reinforced the discrimination against Irish people, whether it was intentional or not as it was described in the preceding section. De Nie’s study suggests Ireland and Irish people were often mentioned in British newspapers throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, but mostly in a biased way. It was not surprising that *Liverpool and Southport News* on 10 August 1880 wrote: ‘very few Englishmen really understand Ireland or Irishmen.’⁶⁶⁶ The British media superiority treated Ireland as ‘the minor, the disobedient child, the sick patient’⁶⁶⁷ and used ‘badly prejudicial and bigoted leading articles.’⁶⁶⁸ Although De Nie’s research was based on the previous century, the old habits had a lingering effect. After partition, Irish affairs further became a hidden subject as British journalists covered no Irish politics and local pupils were taught no Irish History. Consequently, people in England continued to have no or little knowledge of Ireland. Republican-related articles

⁶⁶⁴ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p126

⁶⁶⁵ Ogunyemi, Olatunji, ‘The News Agenda of the Black African Press in the United Kingdom’, in *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 37, No.5 (May, 2007), p640

⁶⁶⁶ De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, p255

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p267

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p270

were non-existent. The IRA's border campaign of 1956-1962 passed 'almost unnoticed in the British press.'⁶⁶⁹

The paper challenged deep-rooted prejudices and pervasive discrimination which stemmed from British media traditions affecting people's consciousness. One of the examples is that the February 1960 issue covered a story about another police outrage in Belfast: 'civil liberties man arrested and lamented news of the incident has not yet been published in any British or Irish newspaper.'⁶⁷⁰ This confirms that the British and Irish media deliberately avoided to report on Northern Ireland and Ireland-related issues. In June 1962, the CA organised a large scale demonstration at Trafalgar Square. Despite the fact that there was a presence of media, no national media covered the event. Perplexed and exasperated, the *ID* questioned: 'was this an inspired blackout?':

Media no reporting on the demonstration, despite many members of Parliament, and British public figures were present... How are we to explain the almost total Press black-out on the CA demonstration in Trafalgar Square on June 17th? Reporters were there in plenty. They swarmed round the plinth and interviewed speakers. There were two television cameras in evidence. Yet not a word appeared on any six-county paper. Not a word on any daily Twenty-six county paper. Not a word on any British daily paper with one exception... The crowd was large, orderly and attentive. There was not much else happening in the world of news. Yet there was the most astonishing failure to report the meeting, and it is significant that the only paper to carry a report was the London *Daily Worker* which is usually regarded as the 'odd man out' of Fleet Street.⁶⁷¹

Much research has been conducted regarding the British media's biased reporting. According to various studies, it is not surprising that the BBC was one of the most biased organisations in Britain. The BBC summarised 'discussion concerning partition and its consequences, or debate about the constitutional question was defined as unacceptable for broadcasting.'⁶⁷² Their attitude in the late 1960s was: 'no comprehensive description of the unrest was allowed and interviews that might contain emotional outbursts or inflammatory accusations were banned.'⁶⁷³ Waldo Maguire, the

⁶⁶⁹ Boyce, D.G., 1988, *The Irish Question and British Politics 1868-1996*, Macmillan Press, London, p107

⁶⁷⁰ 'Another police outrage in Belfast,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1960, p1

⁶⁷¹ 'Was This an Inspired Blackout?', *Irish Democrat*, July 1962, p5

⁶⁷² Savage, Robert, 2017, *The BBC's Irish Troubles: Television, Conflict and Northern Ireland*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, p8

⁶⁷³ Savage, *The BBC's Irish Troubles*, p1

BBC Controller for Northern Ireland explained its handling of events: ‘In the present atmosphere of hatred and fear, we have to recognise that the broadcasting of violently opposed views, passionately and offensively expressed, could have direct and immediate consequences on the streets of Belfast and Londonderry.’⁶⁷⁴ In this process, Robert Savage highlighted that ‘government-imposed censorship, together with self-censorship practised by anxious broadcasters, complicated the BBC’s efforts fully to inform viewers of events taking place in Northern Ireland.’⁶⁷⁵

The *ID* had been attempting to find ways of making the British press write about Northern Ireland, but a major obstacle was the reluctance of the media in Northern Ireland and in England to cover Irish issues as they were adamantly indifferent. British politicians continued to avoid mentioning these centuries-old issues as they attempted not to open a can of worms, while local British people had no knowledge on life and laws in the North. In the words of the Campaign for Social Justice, it believed that ‘if the plain truth was presented to the British press, public and politicians, then Westminster would intervene to put right Unionist wrongs,’ while, the secretary of the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster concluded that ‘the mass of the British people know little and care less.’⁶⁷⁶

Historical facts about Northern Ireland were consciously and unconsciously hidden from the British population, with the result that journalists had not enough knowledge of Northern Ireland or Irish affairs to write about them. Within this space, the *IF/ID* was the only newspaper that had been functioning as an exposé of abuses by the authorities and atrocious working and living conditions of mostly Catholic people in the North. One of the biggest catalysts for the British press and government to realise its urgency and severity was the emergence of television that influenced public opinion, not only in Britain but across the world. Rapidly unfolding developments started surfacing from the end of the 1960s as the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland gained momentum. Society was briskly changing, and the British media finally started reporting Northern Ireland affairs. Another factor that led the press to start covering it was that journalistic practice shifted in the 1960s. According to Boyce, during this period, investigative journalism ‘became

⁶⁷⁴ Quoted in Savage, *The BBC’s Irish Troubles*, p1

⁶⁷⁵ Savage, *The BBC’s Irish Troubles*, p2

⁶⁷⁶ Prince, *Mythologising a Movement*, p28

fashionable.’⁶⁷⁷ The CA’s move to hire a lawyer John Hostettler from England to examine the Mallon and Talbot case was a turning point. The RUC were reading the *United Irishman* and the *ID*, but ‘concerns became more widespread still when the *New Statesman* on 16 August published a letter from J. Hostettler.’⁶⁷⁸ Hosteller was often quoted by British journalists which ‘encouraged the Labour-learning press – the *Guardian* and the *New Statesman* – to take an interest in the case.’⁶⁷⁹ For the media, it was easier to write about Hostettler as he was a human rights lawyer than reporting about CA’s activism which could be contentious. It was in November 1968, the British press, the *Times of London*, for the first time mentioned the CA in its newspaper. After the Troubles broke out, the CA marched from Hyde Park to 10 Downing Street ‘asking that Captain O’Neill should introduce a system of democratic government or else form an independent state to which British subsidies would not be given... it must be obvious to Captain O’Neill that a prime cause of the persistent demands for ‘intervention’ has been his government’s tardiness in reforming the franchise.’⁶⁸⁰

Activist journalism

The Irish diaspora community has been an influential part of activist journalism. According to the *IF*, they laid out the labour movement in Britain and they had a role to play.

Bronterre O’Brien, Michael Davitt, Fintan Lalor, Henry George, James Larkin and James Connolly, all played their part in building the foundations of the present-day British Labour Movement. In the past, they forged close links between the Irish people and the British working-class. Today more than ever we must follow their example and try to do the same.⁶⁸¹

A substantial number of Irish and Irish descent people were part of the Chartist Movement in England as they tended to be politically minded.⁶⁸² Even though this cannot be proved, Dorothy

⁶⁷⁷ Boyce, *The Irish Question and British Politics 1868-1996*, p11

⁶⁷⁸ McConville, Sean, 2014, *Irish Political Prisoners, 1920-1962: Pilgrimage of Desolation*, Routledge, London, p799

⁶⁷⁹ Prince, *Northern Ireland’s 68’*, p94

⁶⁸⁰ ‘Gentle persuaders in Ulster talks,’ *Times*, 4 Nov. 1968, p. 2. The Times Digital Archive, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS34697060/TTDA?u=uvw_ttda&sid=bookmark-TTDA&xid=5a3cea6d. Accessed 22 July 2021.

⁶⁸¹ ‘Irishmen Built Britain’s Labour Movement’, *Irish Freedom*, January 1939, p5

⁶⁸² Thompson, Dorothy, 1982, ‘Ireland and The Irish in English Radicalism’, pp121-151, in Epstein, James and Thompson, Dorothy, ed., 1982, *The Chartist Experience*, Macmillan, London, p138

Thompson claims that ‘many of the Irish Chartist leaders and speakers up and down the country came from families with United Irish connections.’ Newspapers are an essential tool for movements. In 1843, Bronterre O’Brien had his short-lived paper called *Poor Man’s Guardian and Repealer’s Friend*.⁶⁸³

While the *IF/ID* wrote to defend Irish people in England and Catholic Irish people from Unionists and the Stormont regime, it simultaneously challenged section 75 by proactively working directly with the politicians, constantly setting up meetings, proposing motions, lobbying, writing letters and mobilising workers to rally, demonstrate and collect signatures, as all their activities were meticulously covered in the paper. Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act 1920 is to be understood as reading that ‘the supreme authority of the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things in Northern Ireland and every part thereof.’⁶⁸⁴ One of the constructive developments was described in the July 1961 issue: ‘Greaves headed a delegation to meet shadow Home Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker in June 1961 and he promised to facilitate a debate in the House on the questions of unemployment and civil liberties, and Article 75.’⁶⁸⁵ The *ID* and CA’s initiatives with their allies eventually bore some fruit. In October 1961, the front page published a scoreboard. There were still many challenges ahead, but it accomplished three points: acquittal of Mallon and Talbot (1959); release of Belfast internees (1961); making the Irish question a political issue in Britain (1961). As the newspaper illustrates, civil rights-related articles of the decade became broader and more political as they put pressure on the Stormont and British authorities, less individual news pieces appeared in the paper. With the IRA’s disastrous border campaign (1956-1962), the paper reported that its organisation’s activism intensified and entered a next phase.

By the 1960s, the balance of power had significantly changed, namely, the strength of Northern Protestants relative to the British government had weakened; Southern Ireland had grown in economic and political strength; the political capacity of Northern Catholics had grown.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸³ Ibid., p141

⁶⁸⁴ Coughlan, *Northern Ireland: Conflicts of Sovereignty*, p182

⁶⁸⁵ ‘Britain is Responsible’, *Irish Democrat*, July 1961, p3

⁶⁸⁶ Ruane, Joseph, and Todd, Jennifer, 1996, *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Power, Conflict and Emancipation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p125-6

Gradually, articles on civil rights activism - protests, walks, rallies, marches, petitions, investigation initiatives by the CA, cooperating with allies, as well as the US and the UN - increased and dominated the pages of the paper throughout the 1960s. With the availability of television, the world witnessed the Stormont system which proved to be increasingly irrelevant.

The paper attempted to influence the Northern Ireland Labour Party⁶⁸⁷, but it had its limitations as the CA worked only through their local contacts, but they supported all civil rights organisations by offering advice and encouragement, and continuously worked with supportive NILP politicians when they were in London. They gave talks at CA meetings and marched together and contributed articles to the *ID*. The CA ultimately attempted to unite Protestant and Catholic workers such as focusing on unemployed protestant people's grievances by putting pressure on the NILP and the LP. Numerous newspaper articles suggest that the CA was persistently engaging with MPs to call for security and social reforms in the North. While maintaining a non-party political stance, the paper and its organisation validated that Irish self-determination would depend on the election of a Labour government at Westminster. In this process, Treacy claims 'the Republic could play its part by strengthening the state sector against economic imperialism and making it more attractive to northern Protestant workers' and 'the CA was seen as the bridge between the progressive movements in Britain and Ireland.'⁶⁸⁸

Friends of Ireland

From its inception, the paper encouraged readers to vote for the Labour Party at the general election, as it supported the Irish cause. In 1945, the LP won the general election. In November, in order to bring the Irish question to the parliamentary proceedings at Westminster, 50 Labour politicians established Friends of Ireland (1945-49). Their primary contacts were the Irish Trade Union Congress (ITUC)⁶⁸⁹ and with the Six-County and Éire Labour Parties, and members planned to visit Ireland, acquainting themselves with conditions there and having discussions with all shades of opinion.⁶⁹⁰ It was not officially recognised by the LP nor government-sponsored but merely a

⁶⁸⁷ The NILP came into operation in 1926. It operated as an independent organ but fraternal inks with the British LP existed. It adopted no firm policy on partition and continued the pre-partition traditions of conflicting republican and Unionist elements, according to Patterson. (Class Conflict and Sectarianism, p149)

⁶⁸⁸ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p78

⁶⁸⁹ The ITUC has become known as the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) since 1959.

⁶⁹⁰ 'We aim to foster good relations,' *Irish Democrat*, December 1945, p1

gathering of ‘back-bencher Labour MPs who were interested in Ireland’⁶⁹¹ and ‘a sympathetic group.’⁶⁹² The Home Secretary’s letter added that ‘no report is made by the group to the Party who accept no responsibility for its activities.’⁶⁹³

The CA supported the Friends of Ireland from its inception and the paper meticulously put its coverage on the front page. After returning from a fact-finding visit to Dublin and Belfast, Friends of Ireland MPs identified some urgent issues: ‘partition must be ended but the British government would not take the initiative until some of their more pressing difficulties were solved; the six-county government of sir Basil Brooke and the Unionists was completely out of step with the Labour Government in Britain; the unity of a 32-county Ireland would only finally be achieved by a Labour Government in the North and South.’⁶⁹⁴ According to the paper, the CA had a high hope with the group in order to persuade NI Labour, Commonwealth – Labour, Socialist – Republican and Communist Parties to work together for a common policy.⁶⁹⁵ The paper decried that it was time to start a new initiative: ‘just as Dublin cannot afford to let the Larkin-O’Brien quarrel continue to poison the trade union atmosphere, so Belfast cannot afford to let differences of individuals like Beattie and Midgley hold up Labour’s plans to oust the Tory clique at Stormont.’⁶⁹⁶ There is no doubt that the British government was extremely anxious. According to an intelligence report,

The Friends of Ireland group are openly associating themselves with the anti-partition movement and are thereby providing very welcome material for the anti-British propaganda machine, both in Éire and the US....whether we can usefully do anything more to control the activities of these people, who are becoming a real source of embarrassment to the Government.⁶⁹⁷

The Friends of Ireland intentionally collaborated with the CA. It supported campaigns to release the Irish prisoners to ‘promote better relations.’⁶⁹⁸ In 1947, the CA’s Irish Prisoners’ Welfare

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., p1

⁶⁹² Interview with Coughlan, December 2020

⁶⁹³ NA, DO 35/2060 Friends of Ireland folder

⁶⁹⁴ ‘We Stand for Unity of Ireland,’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1946, p1

⁶⁹⁵ ‘Redundant Tories,’ *Irish Democrat*, January 1946, p3

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., p3

⁶⁹⁷ NA, WX101/1/95 Friends of Ireland folder, 12/04/1946

⁶⁹⁸ NA, DO 35/2060 Friends of Ireland folder

Committee took the initiative and the Friends of Ireland group visited Parkhurst Prison to interview the 30 IRA prisoners.⁶⁹⁹ The newspaper asserted this intervention would finally force the British Home Secretary to release the prisoners. Although at the beginning, the Friends of Ireland cooperated with various allies including the Anti Partition League, also established in 1945, and its MPs were eager to solve the Irish question by visiting Northern Ireland, there were usual tensions and numerous challenges to discuss the Irish question on a political level, even though they successfully raised many issues such as the travel permit, residence permit and the questions of cattle exports to Great Britain and also they ‘needed to show support for the United Ireland otherwise, lose support.’⁷⁰⁰ Calling for the unification, the group was not popular amongst Unionists.⁷⁰¹ Referring to the Friends of Ireland, Basil Brooke, Northern Ireland Prime Minister, openly expressed his aversion:

It was a remarkable thing that strangers should come and try to raise trouble in a country that had its established constitutional position. How would they have been received in Australia, Canada or NZ? What kind of people do they think we are? I resent it bitterly.⁷⁰²

The British government also found it aggravating. Bew pointed out that ‘the Friends of Ireland were largely ignored by their own government. A distaste for involvement in Ulster.’⁷⁰³ Peter Rose claims it ‘was accompanied by a general reluctance, on the part of the English ruling class to appear to take sides against a Northern government which was seen as having ‘done its bit’ during the war in contrast to the government in the South...’⁷⁰⁴ Bob Purdie highlights that ‘the convention about discussing Northern Ireland’s affairs effectively prevented a reopening of the political questions raised in 1947 and 1949,’ therefore, ‘the Irish question sank once more beneath the surface of British politics.’⁷⁰⁵

⁶⁹⁹ ‘Labour MP’s visit IRA prisoners,’ *Irish Democrat*, October 1947, p1

⁷⁰⁰ NA, DO 35/2060 Friends of Ireland folder

⁷⁰¹ ‘Unionist’ refers to Irish proponents of the Act of Union, and ‘unionist’ to trade union members.

⁷⁰² *The Irish Press*, February 8, 1946

⁷⁰³ Bew and Patterson, *The British State and the Ulster Crisis*, p8, quoted in Rose, Peter, 2000, *How the Troubles Came to Northern Ireland*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, p2-3

⁷⁰⁴ Rose, *How the Troubles Came to Northern Ireland*, p2

⁷⁰⁵ Purdie, Bob, ‘The Friends of Ireland: British Labour and Irish Nationalism 1945-49,’ in *Contemporary Irish Studies*, 1983, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1988, p93

The most crucial aspect was that members of this group were clearly not unanimous in what they believed in. ‘The suspiciously’ named Friends of Ireland group supported the young Desmond Donnelly as Labour candidate for the Northern Ireland Westminster constituency of Down who assured people that the Labour government ‘was not seeking to undermine the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, and one of the Friends of Ireland group assured the electorate that his organisation did not stand for uniting Ulster and Éire.’⁷⁰⁶ The members disagreed over the Irish question as they looked at it ‘through British eyes’ and it also ‘proved impotent when confronted with the opposition of the party leadership.’⁷⁰⁷ After a few years, ‘the Friends of Ireland broke up in disarray.’⁷⁰⁸ This pressure grouping failed to attract supporters as Greaves remarked that the left could not penetrate Northern Ireland. According to Purdie’s analysis, the Friends of Ireland has demonstrated ‘how Irish interests failed to inflame Irish nationalist sympathy among Labour backbenchers’, while Rumpf and Hepburn summarised ‘even British socialism has been unable to intervene in Northern Ireland affairs outside the sectarian framework.’⁷⁰⁹ Cronain O’Kelly also asserts that the marriage of Irish Republicanism and British Socialism ‘was never consummated’.⁷¹⁰

The National Council for Civil Liberties/The Movement for Colonial Freedom

In order to take up a self-determination campaign, the CA had affiliated with two British organisations: The National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) and the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF). The CA identified a peaceful way to end the partition of Ireland was by securing maximum equality between nationalists and unionists in the six counties. It took the initiative to focus on developing the Irish policy of these affiliated organs and adopted a ‘broad organisation strategy’. Cooperation with others was critical for their broad operations and all intended to have reciprocal relationships with one another. Affiliating with British organisations was crucial as the CA strongly believed that their base of activities was in Britain where the British government’s policy of Northern Ireland was primarily formed and that the political climate within Britain itself

⁷⁰⁶ Boyce, *The Irish Question and British Politics 1868-1996*, p98-99

⁷⁰⁷ Prince, *Northern Ireland’s 68*, p55

⁷⁰⁸ Greaves, C, Desmond, 1972, *The Irish Crisis*, International Publishers, New York, p125

⁷⁰⁹ Quoted in Edwards, *Social Democracy and Partition: The British Labour Party and Northern Ireland, 1951-64*, p595

⁷¹⁰ O’Kelly, Cronain, ‘British Socialists and Irish Republicans’, in *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, vol. 1, No. 1, 2001, p17

needed to be changed. Since the problem was caused by the British government, it needed to be solved by them. Ken Keable has pointed out: 'British governments created this Frankenstein monster called Northern Ireland. The sectarian hatred is British made. The tendency to political violence is British made. The problem is British-made, and we must make Britain solve it.'⁷¹¹ The efficacy of exile politics was quite influential and a tradition. For example, the famine created the Fenian (or Irish Revolutionary) Brotherhood, an oath-bound secret society in 1858 and Fenianism or Irish nationalist movements were helped financially by exiled Irish people in Britain and America.⁷¹² Greaves has also claimed that religious sectarianism originated in Britain⁷¹³ and Sinn Féin was invented in England not in Ireland, as it was forced upon an island looking for cooperation.⁷¹⁴

For all citizens in Northern Ireland to obtain the same civil rights as the rest of the country, the NCCL was the key organisation in the development of the civil rights movement. Founded in 1934 in London to protect civil liberties, it had a parliamentary group that was supported by MPs from the three main parties at Westminster. The CA promoted civil rights issues within the NCCL which called for an inquiry into the continued violations of human rights in Northern Ireland as they were convinced that Westminster was ultimately responsible for Northern Ireland. In 1962, the NCCL produced a seven-point programme for civil liberties in the North which included the repeal of the SPA and electoral reform, and the CA joined forces with various parties and groups in the North, including the Nationalist Party.

During the time when colonialism was still prevalent, the MCF, a political civil rights advocacy group was launched in London in 1954 by Labour Party MP Fenner Brockway who also wrote articles for the *ID*. He declared 'Ireland was 'John Bull's Other Island' or even worse 'John Bull's Plantation', its national heritage was deliberately suppressed, and the people kept in a semi barbaric state.'⁷¹⁵ Brockway supported the republican cause. He had correspondence with

⁷¹¹ Keable, *The Missing Piece in the Peace Process*

⁷¹² Hepburn, A.C., 1980, *The Conflict of Nationality in Modern Ireland*, Edward Arnold, London, p19

⁷¹³ Greaves, *The Irish Crisis*, p61

⁷¹⁴ Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, p345

⁷¹⁵ Brockway, Fenner, 1973, *The Colonial Revolution*, St. Martin's Press, New York, p71

Bernadette Devlin, George Bernard Shaw⁷¹⁶ and Éamon de Valera.⁷¹⁷ The fact that the CA was affiliated with the MCF implies that the way it viewed the problem of Northern Ireland was the unfinished business of decolonisation. An amalgamation of most of the anti-imperialist elements in Britain, the MCF extended the campaign against colonialism by bringing ‘in wide sections of the Labour movement, peace organisations, academics and groups of African, Asian and Caribbean students.’⁷¹⁸ Its sponsors included Harold Wilson and ministers in the subsequent Labour Government and within a year, the affiliated membership, through trades unions, constituency Labour Parties, university student societies and peace organisations, was more than one million.⁷¹⁹ Future prime minister Wilson had been supporting and remained in close contact with the CA. Some people believed that the MCF was a communist group. The intelligence reports described its propensity for communism: ‘The MCF is a broad organisation within which Communists can work to secure the Party’s aim in the Colonial and Commonwealth fields, rather than conduct campaigns on its own which might well be recognised as being Communist inspired,’ and ‘The CPGB encourages its members to join and stimulates trade unions which are affiliated to the MCF, and in which the CPGB has influence, to play an active part in the MCF.’⁷²⁰ Treacy also labelled the MCF ‘effectively another CPGB front organisation.’⁷²¹ Brockway was not a communist although Harry Pollitt called him ‘a comrade’ in the 1930s. Socialist, humanist campaigner and anti-war activist Brockway was one of the most powerful friends of the CA/ID and his relationship with Greaves was good, but Brockway kept some distance from the CP. Nevertheless, it is certain that many progressive and communist members participated in MCF activities as members of a broad left movement. The MCF renamed itself to Liberation in 1970.

One of the drawbacks for adopting a broad strategy by the CA and other similar-minded organs was that radical political forces clashed. For example, the British LP refused to cooperate with the CPGB. The LP leadership consistently ostracised the CP, even though the CP members were the principal movers in the labour movement and ‘necessarily equivocal about the rival which

⁷¹⁶ Shaw and Fenner were close friends as they exchanged a substantial number of letters. After reading letters, it seems that Shaw inspired him greatly and shaped his political view and lifestyle, including vegetarianism.

⁷¹⁷ FEBR/79, Brockway folder

⁷¹⁸ Brockway, *The Colonial Revolution*, p42

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., p42

⁷²⁰ NA, 168/761 MCF folder

⁷²¹ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p83

commanded most working-class votes.⁷²² As was its custom, the MCF cooperated with all organs of the left and had to be flexible and to adopt a broad strategy to pursue their own goals. During the process of launching the MCF, anti-imperialist and anti-fascist CP members played an indispensable role; however, when the MCF was established, the CP was excluded⁷²³ as a founding organisation. Attempts at affiliation by Party branches were frustrated: ‘When the inaugural conference of the MCF took place at the Waldorf Hotel on 11 April 1954, delegates representing 22 trade unions, 38 constituency Labour Parties, and 21 other organisations were present but Communist organisations were absent from the list.’⁷²⁴

Nevertheless, the *ID/CA* attempted to cultivate relationships with all progressive forces and people who might have different opinions to unite against racism and injustice. To democratise Britain, one of the systematic actions the CA took was to put pressure on the government to create an anti-discrimination bill. The CPGB was the first political party that started advocating anti-racial discrimination in Britain which aligned with the CA’s belief. Since a Charter of Rights was formulated in 1955 by the CPGB, its flagship newspaper *The Daily Worker* had run a series of articles and 100,000 copies of a mass leaflet were distributed along with a pamphlet, *No Colour Bar for Britain*, selling 10,000 copies.⁷²⁵ Because of the CP’s proactive initiatives, the MCF took up the matter and ‘steps were taken’ to make racism a live issue within the unions.⁷²⁶ By working with the MCF, the *ID* produced plenty of material on the anti-racial bill. The CPGB also supported Brockway’s bill on racial discrimination.⁷²⁷ The Bill was introduced by Brockway in June 1956. If it would become law, it would become a punishable offence (£5 rising to £25) to refuse any advantages to any other person on the grounds of colour, race or religion.⁷²⁸ The *ID* suggested that ‘employment exchanges should not be allowed to accept discriminatory stipulations or to act upon them in anyway’ and called all the readers to write their MP and ask him to support it.⁷²⁹

⁷²² Callaghan, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict*, p195

⁷²³ It is discussed in Chapter three.

⁷²⁴ Callaghan, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict: The CPGB 1951-68*, p137

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, p107

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, p107

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, p106

⁷²⁸ ‘Bill to illegalize race discrimination,’ *Irish Democrat*, July 1956, p4

⁷²⁹ ‘Bill to illegalize race discrimination,’ *Irish Democrat*, July 1956, p4

There have been studies on discrimination against Catholic people in the North before 1969 but with various interpretations. Some view it 'as all pervasive', while others reject its very existence.⁷³⁰ Discrimination against Irish people is deep-rooted as it was explained in the previous chapter. Alfred Lee stresses that it is a prerequisite to understand 'the centuries-long use of geneticist or racist rationalisations to justify class and ethnic differences and especially upper-class English efforts to control the other peoples of the British Isles.'⁷³¹ Greaves initiated 'a campaign for a petition to encourage the sponsors of Brockway's anti-discrimination bill to have the legislation extended to Northern Ireland.'⁷³² In 1957, Brockway tabled before Parliament a bill on the subject of race relations in the country for the first time. However, the anti-discrimination campaign and legislation from the 1950s failed to obtain voter support because 'there was little public awareness of the nature or extent of racial discrimination.'⁷³³

The CC/CA had been pressing the British government for decades by actively promoting equality but in the 1960s, leaders of the minority in the North concluded that Stormont was inadequate to improve socio-economic conditions. The method the *ID* used was to create the environment to make policy makers, politicians and lawyers involved in order to alter the system. To bring working people's grievances to the next level, the newspaper expanded the article with suggestions and opinions by experts, lawyers and politicians. According to the paper, Coughlin demanded the labour-minded lawyers to probe into the Irish and racialism during a conference on racial discrimination in London.⁷³⁴ During the period when signs of 'No Irish or Coloured' existed, racial tension was high, affecting various groups and dividing London communities. Irish people have frequently been involved with racial skirmishes directly and indirectly. Some of the most notable high-profile racial incidents took place in London's Notting Hill in September 1958 and there was a major racial incident in Nottingham just a month before in August. Many Irish immigrants were caught in these incidents. A sudden surge in immigrants from Commonwealth countries during the post-war years increased local hostility towards newcomers as well as conflicts within immigrants, and violent attacks on them. Coughlin suggested in the paper that the

⁷³⁰ Kennedy-Pipe, Caroline, 1997, *The Origins of the Present Troubles in Northern Ireland*, Longman, London, p42

⁷³¹ Lee, Alfred McClung, 1983, *Terrorism in Northern Ireland*, General Hall, New York, p19

⁷³² Treacy, *The IRA, 1956-69*, p72

⁷³³ Lee, *Terrorism in Northern Ireland*, p35

⁷³⁴ 'Irish and Racialism,' *Irish Democrat*, March 1959, p3

proposal that Parliament should legislate making racial discrimination of any kind punishable by law.⁷³⁵

Release prisoners

After the success of the first major campaign to release Frank Ryan, the paper was determined to release all the incarcerated: ‘Only the *ID* gave details of the grey hell in which these determined and courageous democrats were confined. Following the exposures, the authorities’ main interest was to get rid of them at all costs, before the British public learned too much about the prisons they pay for, and to get rid of them with maximum face-saving and maximum inconvenience for the prisoners.’⁷³⁶ The next successful initiative was the release Mallon and Talbot campaign in 1958. Two republicans Kevin Mallon and Francis Talbot had been accused of murdering a member of the RUC in Tyrone. The CA challenged the SPA by working with legal professionals and enquired the British Home Secretary about this trial. However, he replied by saying ‘it had no power to intervene in matters transferred to the Stormont.’⁷³⁷ Since Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act reserved ultimate power in the six counties to the Westminster Parliament, the Parliament was entitled to use its power at its discretion.⁷³⁸ The CA then initiated the NCCL and the MCF to press for a Commission of Enquiry into the working of the 1920 Ireland Act Section 75.⁷³⁹ During this process, the CA hired lawyer John Hostettler from London to legally analyse the ‘torture trial’ case and the way they were tortured in the prison was described in the paper. Before conducting the official report, Hostettler was shocked at what he witnessed in Northern Ireland: ‘a strange sight to English eyes is that of men of the R.U.C. carrying truncheons and revolvers at all times and sometimes sten guns. This is the outward sign of extensive police powers that are quite startling.’⁷⁴⁰ This was an eye-opening experience for him, as he was not aware of its severity and immediately became an active advocate for the civil rights movement.

Though I was already long aware of Britain’s imperialist record in Ireland, it was only when I attended

⁷³⁵ ‘Irish and Racialism,’ *Irish Democrat*, March 1959, p3

⁷³⁶ ‘Free men’, *Irish Democrat*, January 1949, p3

⁷³⁷ Greaves, *The Irish Crisis*, p127

⁷³⁸ Theoretically yes, but the Speaker had established in 1922 that Westminster was not to debate Northern Irish affairs.

⁷³⁹ Greaves, *The Irish Crisis*, p127

⁷⁴⁰ NA, KV2 3362-1, p69 Memorandum of Police Powers in Northern Ireland by J. Hostettler folder

the murder trial of Mallon and Talbot in 1958 that I began seriously to think of the implications of the Northern Ireland situation for the English people...What surprised me beyond measure was the unreal atmosphere of a place where nobody thought it the slightest bit odd that accused persons should accuse the police in this way, and were surprised only that defence managed to convince a jury, virtually selected by the prosecution, that the prosecution must fail...It was like being in some colonial country under a tyranny all truth about which was suppressed.⁷⁴¹

He examined how the SPA infringed international human rights conventions and presented in front of the government and his opinions and involvement in the case were exclusively described in the newspaper. Under the Act, almost 200 people were interned in the six counties, imprisoned without charge or trial. Hostettler's contribution to the civil rights movement was a turning point as he analysed the Stormont regime and formally disclosed it to the public. Subsequently, Hostettler, the 'true eyewitness' as the newspaper described, gave numerous talks to the public at CA-organised events across English cities, wrote articles in the *ID* and helped contributing to the labour movement.

Another vital role of the paper was that it offered updates on the development of civil rights and labour movements and those who were jailed without charge or trial. The paper was circulating in Irish and British prisons. High profile republican figures, namely Gerry Adams and Danny Morrison, started reading the paper for the first time in prison⁷⁴² during the formative years which would influence their political thinking. But how did it attempt to release the prisoners? The paper explains that when a trade unionist from Manchester was jailed at the Crumlin Road in Belfast, Greaves went to Manchester to cooperate with the Manchester Trades Councils, the Manchester branch of the CA and delegate from the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers.⁷⁴³ Then, Greaves gave a detailed talk on 'Police methods in Northern Ireland' to the trade union audience in Manchester. After the meeting, protest walks or demonstrations followed. Upon returning to London, Greaves continuously put pressure on LP politicians, or local MPs, to demand the release of prisoners and protested to Home Secretary of Britain and other politicians in the North, and constantly lobbied at the parliament. The *ID* reported every development and event, called for

⁷⁴¹ 'Three non-Irish views of the Irish question,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1967, p3

⁷⁴² Interview with Danny Morrison, March 2022

⁷⁴³ 'Manchester trade unionist held in Crumlin Road jail, *Irish Democrat*, September 1958, p1

protest actions across English cities with trade unions as most prisoners were trade unionists, and gathered participants and the newspaper wrote up follow-up stories and persistently appealed to readers to take part. In the early 1960s, their formula was working as various upbeat headlines appeared, including, ‘Now a big push to end Belfast jailing! Internees are trade union members.’ As the CA repeatedly wrote letters to Home Secretary, open letters were published in the paper.⁷⁴⁴ One of the examples of combining with activism was: ‘Do not let the prisoners rot in jail, see your MP... You have a part to play.’⁷⁴⁵ The paper urged to:

Come to the House of Commons at Westminster on Wednesday December 12th and see your Member of Parliament and tell him that you want him to raise his voice for the release of the prisoners. Everyone is entitled to go to Westminster and see their M.P. It is part of the democratic rights which the British people fought to gain. We must now exercise this right in the interest of the prisoners. Unless the Irish people, together with our friends in the trade union and working-class movement, put pressure on the British Government and on Stormont these men will be left to rot in jail. If you are living outside London, write to your M.P. and ask him to work for the release of the prisoners, and also to meet those who lobby on December 12th. If you live in London, COME TO THE LOBBY.⁷⁴⁶

As newspaper articles showed, they had been regularly marching in London and protesting at Westminster since the first London rally was announced in the paper in April 1939, planting the seeds of the civil rights movement. As the prisoners were being released, the paper and its organisation’s extensive work started paving the way for the political development in Northern Ireland. Dixon acknowledges that the role of the CA and the republican movement ‘in the origins of the civil rights movement has been underestimated.’⁷⁴⁷

Civil rights marches

The IRA’s disastrous border campaign between 1956 and 1962 caused nothing but damage. Gerry Adams wrote: ‘A few of the released internees set about picking up the pieces of a scattered and demoralised organisation at the beginning of the 1960s,’⁷⁴⁸ therefore, ‘the need for assessment was

⁷⁴⁴ ‘Letter to British Home Secretary,’ *Irish Democrat*, December 1962, p2

⁷⁴⁵ ‘Do not let the prisoners rot in jail,’ *Irish Democrat*, December 1962, p2

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p2

⁷⁴⁷ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p73

⁷⁴⁸ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p1

naturally apparent in the IRA as a whole.⁷⁴⁹ There was a palpable shift in sentiment as more republicans were politicised and the civil rights movement was gathering momentum. As an increasing number of civil rights and investigations-related articles in the late 1950s imply, the paper believed that the time was ripe for a larger scale civil rights march, simultaneously hoping to attract more media attention. In 1960, Coughlan was hired full time in order to organise long-distance national marches through English cities and ‘strictly speaking, these were the first Irish civil rights marches.’⁷⁵⁰ Coughlan was clearly influenced by Greaves as he called him ‘the intellectual progenitor of the civil rights movement of the 1960’ because he ‘pioneered the idea of a broad-based civil rights campaign,’⁷⁵¹ while Prince also acknowledges that Greaves pioneered ‘many of the tactics used in the civil rights campaign.’⁷⁵² According to the paper, in 1961 and 1962, the CA organised three civil rights marches in total across England to draw attention to the abuses in the North with the support of LP MPs, trade unionists, the TUC, the CPGB and other like-minded organs. The first march was launched from London to Birmingham (110 miles/177 km), then from Manchester to Huddersfield (165 miles/266 km), and finally from Liverpool to London (250 miles/402 km).⁷⁵³ After the second march, Coughlan returned to Ireland, and Sean Redmond took over and organised the third march. The purpose of the march was to end the SPA; release republican prisoners; recognise the Irish Trade Unions; get a public enquiry into the conduct of the Belfast government; defend Irish neutrality.⁷⁵⁴ The information obtained were quickly written up in the paper. Fourteen people participated in the second march, held in August 1961.

Ten men and four women, who walked for nine days over dusty, hot, petrol-stinking, transport-ridden roads’ because ‘we marched to tell the British people what is being hidden from them by their big-business press.’ We wanted them to know that the Irish people will never be satisfied until Ireland is one country in reality as well as in name. And we carried a banner with that written on it.⁷⁵⁵

The ‘freedom marches’ were specifically aimed at British people to raise awareness. The last

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., p4

⁷⁵⁰ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² Prince, *Northern Ireland's 68'*, ix

⁷⁵³ ‘London Irish Demonstrate,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1961, p5

⁷⁵⁴ ‘What We Are Walking For,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1961, p4

⁷⁵⁵ ‘The Irish Freedom March,’ *Irish Democrat*, October 1961, p2

march in 1962 was from Liverpool to London, the longest in terms of distance. The CA made sure civil rights meetings were held in every town the march passed through in particular at trade unions and Labour Party branches. The local Irish community and the Labour movement provided overnight accommodation. However, monotonous marches without a violent confrontation through English cities failed to generate national media coverage. The paper was dismayed as the ‘wall of silence’ was still largely maintained by national newspapers, although CA members and participants made sure they talked to reporters along the way and detailed articles were read by enthusiastic supporters in the US and Australia. Nevertheless, not only did it fail to interest the British media, but it became too humiliating to continue. Greaves admitted ‘they were not met by brickbats but by hoots and ridicule: less hurtful perhaps, but harder to keep going after.’⁷⁵⁶ What the CA strived to achieve was to perform a similar role with civil rights as they had ‘won the support of half the Parliamentary Labour Party for the release of internees during the border campaign.’⁷⁵⁷

In conjunction with marches, the CA conducted a comprehensive survey of the civil rights abuses in Northern Ireland. Greaves, Tom Redmond, Sean Redmond, and Coughlan spent ten days visiting Belfast, Newry, Derry, Strabane, Omagh, Enniskillen and Dungannon and interviewed former internees, documented religious discrimination in employment and housing. The April 1962 issue revealed detailed results on discrimination against Catholic residents. Around this time, national newspapers gradually started showing interest in Irish affairs. Sean Redmond was interviewed by the *Guardian* and offered it the facts as their reporter was working on an article on the situation in the six counties. The May 1962 issue featured an article on the NCCL promoting civil rights issues based on the CA’s findings. The NCCL had called for an inquiry into the continued violations of human rights in Northern Ireland and produced a seven-point programme for civil liberties which included the repeal of the SPA and electoral reform. The CA had made many contacts within the Nationalist Party and organs to promote civil rights, while Greaves was closely working with Nationalist Party MP Cahir Healy. In January 1964, Brockway hosted a meeting for them in the House of Commons and Nationalist Party MPs visited London and the CA took up the preparatory work for the meeting. Nationalist Party MPs also had a meeting with the

⁷⁵⁶ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p20

⁷⁵⁷ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p73

leader of the Liberal Party Jo Grimond MP. In 1966, Sean Redmond was elected in the NCCL's executive committee and boasted that it 'took the CA to convince the NCCL that Westminster was ultimately responsible for Northern Ireland.' However, Prince points out that the CA simply 'reawakened' this interest as 'the NCCL had sponsored a commission of inquiry into the SPA during the 1930s and in 1948 and described the human rights situation there as very grave.'⁷⁵⁸

The Campaign for Social Justice

In the 1960s, the *ID* specifically framed articles on job and housing in Northern Ireland within the civil rights context, as it believed these are the key topics of the labour movement in the North. Frustrated with the status quo, a couple of pressure groups started at a local level. Their primary grievance was housing discrimination and Conn and Patricia McCluskey started the Homeless Citizens League. The CA supported the McCluskeys as it asserted local organs needed to take initiatives. However, as the nationalist representatives were 'ineffectual in putting the minority's case,'⁷⁵⁹ the McCluskeys started the Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ) in Dungannon, Tyrone in January 1964 to further remedy the situation. Similar to the CA, the CSJ viewed the issue in the wider context and focused on Westminster and British public opinion. While the organisations in Northern Ireland handled the local issues, the CA simultaneously dealt with the British government in London, and the paper reported in detail. The then Labour leader Harold Wilson who shortly became Prime Minister was in touch with the CSJ and the CA. At the 1964 Westminster General Election Wilson promised the CSJ 'that a Labour Government would do everything in its power to see that the infringements of justice to which you are so rightly drawing attention are effectively dealt with.'⁷⁶⁰ As a result of atrocious living conditions, Catholic residents constantly suffered from health problems such as the incidence of virus, tubercle diseases, rheumatism, and arthritis. However, they were refused appropriate medical treatments, the newspaper lamented: 'When they are sick the treatment in the Mater Hospital and other hospitals where Catholics go, the service generally is inferior to that given to protestants because of Tory hands on the purse strings.'⁷⁶¹ Similar to the CA, the CSJ had a political approach, and their urgent priority was on human and civil rights. Jonathan Tonge claims that the CSJ was 'unconcerned with traditional Nationalist

⁷⁵⁸ Prince, *Northern Ireland's 68*, p97-8

⁷⁵⁹ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, p615

⁷⁶⁰ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p62

⁷⁶¹ 'Spotlight on discrimination,' *Irish Democrat*, February 1964, p5

border politics of anti-partitionism'.⁷⁶² Although the CSJ's focus was on equality, no Catholic or progressive people were 'unconcerned' on the Irish question. Patricia McCluskey described Northern Ireland as 'a police state and that the abolition of...partition was an important matter.'⁷⁶³ The CSJ and the *ID* identified that Protestant workers also needed to be aligned with the Labour movement as tens of thousands of them were becoming unemployed due to the closure of main industries. Patricia McCluskey confessed about her struggles in a 15 June 1969 letter to Brockway:

When we launched our Campaign in January 1964, our inexperience led us to believe that all we had to do was bring the true facts of the situation in Northern Ireland before the leaders of British public opinions, and their sense of fair play (of which we had heard about for years!) would impel them to act. We were convinced that if they even dreamt of the calculated injustices being done to the underprivileged poor of Dungannon and elsewhere, the British would be up in arms. Things have not proved as simple as this.⁷⁶⁴

The Campaign for Democracy in Ulster

Since the demise of Friends of Ireland, the situation remained relatively the same. As working-class Catholic residents' basic needs were still severe and urgent, a new initiative emerged. This time the Labour Party in Derry, as a principal organiser to handle the issue and 'secular leaders with secular agendas were coming more to the fore, seeking social justice before Irish unity,'⁷⁶⁵ while active LP MPs and CP members campaigned for 'jobs and homes' by means of public meetings, deputation and mass demonstrations. The CA had been closely working with all involved with this issue and Sean Redmond was invited to address a meeting of the Streatham LP and suggested the setting up of a support group within the LP. In June 1965, the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster (CDU) was promptly launched in the Grand Committee Room of the House of Commons, led by chairman Brockway and rank-and-file members of the LP MPs, Paul Rose, Stanley Orme, Hugh Delargy and Eric Ogden received the sponsorship of seventy of their Parliamentary colleagues.⁷⁶⁶ Apart from Redmond, at least two of its founding members were the

⁷⁶² Tonge, Jonathan, 1998, *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Change*, Pearson, London, p37

⁷⁶³ Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68*, p75

⁷⁶⁴ FEBR 220/c, CSJ folder

⁷⁶⁵ O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, p163

⁷⁶⁶ Redmond, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland*

CA members.⁷⁶⁷ According to the *ID*, CA members were always present during the CDU's London committee meetings. The founding secretary was the former Treasurer of the CA's South London branch William O'Shaughnessy. Paddy Byrne from Dublin who had been a member of the Republican Congress, was vice president and 'driving force of the CDU.'⁷⁶⁸ When it was launched, the tone of the *ID* was upbeat: 'the CA's long arduous campaign to interest British Labour in the Irish question bore important fruit...56 members of parliament have agreed to sponsor the campaign, whose purpose is to secure an official enquiry into the working of the Government of Ireland Act, with special reference to civil rights in the six counties.'⁷⁶⁹ Creating the London-based CDU was an attempt to reconstruct the failed Friends of Ireland more than a decade before. The CDU took over what the Friends of Ireland previously failed to accomplish. Purdie points out that the CDU 'revived the issues raised earlier by the Friends of Ireland.'⁷⁷⁰ The *ID* highlighted that the CDU was not committed against partition, but additional focus was on the application of a bill to outlaw religious discrimination in Northern Ireland.⁷⁷¹ The term 'Ulster' was used on purpose to embrace all residents in the North.

O'Shaughnessy claimed the CDU's priority would be 'urging Labour parties and trade unions to pass resolutions to annual conferences.'⁷⁷² Betty Sinclair and Billy McCullough, close allies of the CA and regular contributors of the *ID*, proposed Greaves that the Belfast Trades Council hold a vital civil rights conference in Belfast on 8 May 1965. This was 'a historic event,'⁷⁷³ as the first ever civil rights gathering in the North. A 'great speaker' Sinclair is considered as 'one of the most resolute activists ever produced by the Irish Labour Movement,'⁷⁷⁴ and 'even her enemies had the greatest respect for her debating ability.'⁷⁷⁵ During this conference, the republicans discussed with Labour members about the launching of a campaign for civil rights. The CDU secretary Byrne wrote an article in the March 1968 issue, claiming that they were focusing on the discrimination on religious and political grounds and the election rigging, in parallel with the Ulster question.

⁷⁶⁷ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p75

⁷⁶⁸ Hennessey, Thomas, 1997, *A History of Northern Ireland 1920-1996*, Macmillan, London, p135

⁷⁶⁹ '64 Labour MPs' found anti-unionist organization,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1965, p1

⁷⁷⁰ Purdie, *The Friends of Ireland: British Labour and Irish Nationalism 1945-49*, p93

⁷⁷¹ '64 Labour MPs' found anti-unionist organization,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1965, p1

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, p1

⁷⁷³ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p33

⁷⁷⁴ Morrissey, Hazel, 1983, *Betty Sinclair: A Woman's Fight for Socialism*, John Freeman, Belfast, p20

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p21

According to him, cooperative parties were the CA, United Ireland Association, NCCL, the CP and numerous London Irish Societies - an indication of the growing interest of British and Irish democrats in the Ulster question.⁷⁷⁶ Because the Labour Government failed to improve the status quo, the CDU initiated to work with various organs. During the CDU conference in April 1968 and May 1968, the issues surrounding the partition were discussed. Greaves talked about the origin, its content and significance of the Government of Ireland Act. A new development was the new race relations bill, which was explained in the May 1968 issue of *ID*: 'The National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants cautioned that several changes need to be made to be operatable, but it welcomed the new race relations bill as it extends to housing and employment as well as to public places.'⁷⁷⁷ The CA and the CDU hoped that this would have a positive impact and it seemed like they were gradually moving to the next stage.

Although the CDU was effective in some ways, it failed to make a difference again. Dixon claims: 'between August 1966, when the use of the army in Northern Ireland was first mooted, and October 1968, the Labour government had taken no steps to improve its supervision of the region, and there was little information available when the conflict erupted' and between 1966 and 1968, the NILP and the CDU failed to persuade 'the Labour government and the wider labour movement of the importance of swift civil rights reform in Northern Ireland.'⁷⁷⁸ Moreover, Peter Rose who was the chief mover and became chairman of the CDU later, acknowledged that 'the arrival at the House of Commons of Gerry Fitt in 1966 signalled the end of 50 years of pretence that Northern Ireland did not exist.' However, he explains that the CDU 'never had the impact of other publicly led campaigns post world war two such as the anti-apartheid and anti-poll tax protest movements....The CDU simply had not the punch or credibility needed to turn this policy around....it was also unfortunately true that the CDU and the civil rights workers in Ulster received little attention from the media.'⁷⁷⁹ He lamented: 'up to the summer of 1968 they themselves believed that they had achieved nothing after nearly four years of Labour governments. Three successive Labour Home Secretaries had ignored them.'⁷⁸⁰ By the end of 1960s, things were

⁷⁷⁶ 'CDU and the tasks ahead,' *Irish Democrat*, March 1968, p2

⁷⁷⁷ 'Race relations bill, cautious NCCL welcome,' *Irish Democrat*, May 1968, p2

⁷⁷⁸ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p78

⁷⁷⁹ Rose, *How the Troubles Came to Northern Ireland*, p174

⁷⁸⁰ Rose, *How the Troubles Came to Northern Ireland*, p174

falling apart including the relationship between Brockway and Rose. Rose wrote a letter to Brockway on 9 October 1970, and complained about his treatment to the CDU members as he ‘bypassed the organisation in calling the meeting on Northern Ireland’ and asked him to step down as the president.⁷⁸¹

Wolfe Tone Society

Since the formation of the labour movement in Ireland at the end of the nineteenth century, republicans were active contributors and participants of the movement.⁷⁸² The 1960s is characterised by the politicisation of IRA members. In this process, the CA contributed a vital role as documents at various archives related to politicisation during this period typically contains the word CA. Dixon claims ‘the CA’s civil rights approach influenced the republican movement in a more political direction.’⁷⁸³ During this period, all civil rights organisations and pressure groups that emerged functioned with the CA’s indirect and direct involvement as evidenced by newspaper articles. One of the distinctive groups was the Dublin-based Wolfe Tone Society – the culmination of years of persistent work. This group was one of many initiatives emerged after the failure of the 1956-62 border campaign. It had faded out because ‘the Catholic minority largely withheld support or shelter from the terrorists’, while ‘the Protestants did not grasp the opportunity to turn this to the benefit of both communities, but continued to show bias, and discriminated against the Catholics in employment, in housing and in civil rights.’⁷⁸⁴ This disastrous event made a Republican movement ‘lost faith in physical force.’⁷⁸⁵ Ferriter describes that the IRA seemed in the same position as at the end of World War Two: ‘leaders in jail, weapons seized or dumped and low morale, though perhaps, as with other disastrous campaigns, they learned exactly what not to do the next time.’⁷⁸⁶ The IRA needed to find the right strategy to fight against England.

It initially started to mark the bicentenary of the birth of Wolfe Tone in 1763 and evolved from the commemorative directories. In 1964, the WTS was created by the republican movement.⁷⁸⁷ The

⁷⁸¹ FEBR/2206 CDU folder

⁷⁸² Many republicans followed in labour organiser James Connolly’s footsteps.

⁷⁸³ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p73

⁷⁸⁴ Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p270

⁷⁸⁵ Prince, *Mythologising a Movement: Northern Ireland’s ’68*, p28

⁷⁸⁶ Ferriter, 2004, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, p488

⁷⁸⁷ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of gunmen*, p4

brains behind the Society were Johnston and Coughlan⁷⁸⁸ who attempted ‘to produce a coherent and systematic argument to connect republican ideas to contemporary political issues.’⁷⁸⁹ Coughlan and Johnston were both CA’s key strategic members and after returning to Ireland, they remained closely in touch with the London organisation. However, Sheehy claims that they were not working under the instruction of Greaves.⁷⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the WTS-related articles were widely covered in the *ID* often by Coughlan. Coughlan was a regular writer with his own Dublin column, while Johnston was also contributing stories based on his own activities. After the disastrous IRA campaign, the republican movement was clearly ‘receptive to their ideas.’⁷⁹¹ The WTS was supposed to ‘breathe life into an ailing, failing, poorly developed political structure.’⁷⁹²

The WTS put emphasis on influencing republicans’ thinking. It also ‘discussed and advanced the CA’s agenda.’⁷⁹³ Johnston and Coughlan were already part of the left movement in Ireland before they joined the CA in London during their sojourn, but Greaves certainly crystallised and influenced their direction in the struggle for civil rights. As a prolific writer, Coughlan also contributed articles to the *United Irishman* and edited *Tuairisc*, the WTS’s newsletter. These publications functioned as an influential politicising tool. According to Treacy, Coughlan saw the purpose of *Tuairisc* as ‘helping to build bridges between republicans and activists in the Labour and trade union movements.’⁷⁹⁴ The CA was aligned with the WTS and Greaves was close to some key republican figures. Johnson joined the IRA and Sinn Féin, while Coughlan - he was invited to join but declined - actively offered lectures and advocated for the civil rights movement independently. Johnston recalled that if he and Coughlan ‘had confined themselves to working for the Irish socialist there would never have been a WTS or a civil rights movement in the North.’⁷⁹⁵ Greaves supported the republicans but not ‘aggressive republican minded people,’⁷⁹⁶ and when Johnston joined the IRA, Greaves was ‘furious and they never spoke again.’⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁸⁸ Feeney, Brian, 2002, *Sinn Féin: A Hundred Turbulent Years*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, p231

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p232

⁷⁹⁰ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of Gunmen*, p14

⁷⁹¹ Prince, *The Global Revolt of 1968 and Northern Ireland*, p858

⁷⁹² Sheehy, *In the Shadow of Gunmen*, p1

⁷⁹³ Moloney, Ed, 2002, *A Secret History of the IRA*, The Penguin Press, London, p57

⁷⁹⁴ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p67

⁷⁹⁵ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p252

⁷⁹⁶ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of Gunmen*, p11

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p15

As an Assistant Secretary and later Secretary of the Dublin WTS between 1965 and 1969, Coughlan played an essential role in the politicising process as an independent democrat. On the other hand, Johnston wrote the constitution of the WTS which ‘set off alarm bells in many republican circles’⁷⁹⁸ because of his connection with the CPGB. Scholars, for example, Roy Foster also called them ‘a ginger group of republican intellectuals.’⁷⁹⁹ Due to its connections with former members of the CPGB as some high-profile CP members were involved in the group, many republicans did not trust the WTS.⁸⁰⁰ They were sceptical about communists and disregarded their activities. Like the CA, the WTS operated with autonomy. Gerry Adams who became politically active during this period noted that the WTS was ‘a meeting point for republicans and socialists for Irish language enthusiasts and communists.’⁸⁰¹ The group grew and its Belfast WTS worked with the CPNI, the Queen’s University Labour Group and National Unity.⁸⁰² According to Johnston, Greaves viewed this as ‘a complementary progressive political development which could become ‘all Ireland’ provided the civil rights issue in the North were to be resolved.’⁸⁰³ Cork correspondent of the *ID* Jim Savage was influential in Sinn Féin as early as 1965 and also a member of the IWP who ‘was urging left-wingers who had left the movement to rejoin’ because the ‘IWP now had a foothold in the movement and that the WTS would provide the vehicle through which Communists would form a link to republicans and the Labour Party.’⁸⁰⁴

The WTS was particularly instrumental in the emergence of the civil rights movement. However, Johnston recalled that he and Coughlan should have been better co-ordinated as they were working independently: with Johnston ‘trying to build up a broad-based political understanding of non-violent political philosophy throughout Ireland, including an attempt to regenerate the co-operative movement, while Coughlan was concentrating on the Achilles heel of Unionism, civil rights, setting up the June 1966 Maghera meeting which led to the War Memorial Hall meeting and the setting up of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.’⁸⁰⁵ There was a time when the WTS

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p5

⁷⁹⁹ Foster, R.F., 1988, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, London, p576

⁸⁰⁰ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of Gunmen*, p6

⁸⁰¹ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p4

⁸⁰² Prince, *Northern Ireland's 68'*, p108

⁸⁰³ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p182

⁸⁰⁴ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p82

⁸⁰⁵ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p411

was ‘leading to increasing internal unease,’⁸⁰⁶ as Coughlan and Johnston were ‘seen as outsiders and, worse, communists.’⁸⁰⁷ Some IRA leaders thought they were agents of Greaves, ‘hence of the British Communist Party.’⁸⁰⁸

While the WTS had Fine Gael and Labour Cabinet members, Treacy claims that ‘Greaves’ initial desire to exercise a similar influence within Labour and within the republican movement through former CA members did not have the same success.’⁸⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Treacy stresses that Greaves’s influence was exercised in Ireland. Greaves’s main objective was ‘to republicanise Labour, which would explain why a number of CA members also joined the Irish LP at the same time that Coughlan and Johnson were making contact with the IRA.’⁸¹⁰ For example, Michael O’Leary who was elected as a Labour TD for Dublin North Central in 1965 and later party leader, had been in the CA.⁸¹¹ Nevertheless, former members of the CA were ubiquitous and considered as somewhat legendary by authorities in Ireland. Cathal McLiam, former literary editor of the *ID* and a WTS member, once told Greaves about the place where he was staying in Ireland. Greaves wrote in his diary:

A Garda is a lodger there, a Cavan man. He told Cathal about the unemployed struggles and asserted that the leaders were men with criminal records. ‘But it’s not those we are afraid of,’ said the policeman, ‘it is those who have been trained in the CA in England and sent back here to cause trouble.’⁸¹²

This demonstrates that the term ‘the CA’ had a different connotation in Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

In consequence, the WTS contributed to the launch of a group, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) in January 1967 in Belfast which was ‘the initiative that began to pass to the

⁸⁰⁶ Hanley and Millar, *The Lost Revolution*, p36

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p36

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p38

⁸⁰⁹ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p65-66

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p79-80

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, p80

⁸¹² Greaves, Desmond, journals volume 12. December 22, 1956

next generation of left-wing activists.⁸¹³ In effect, according to Johnston, ‘the initiative to set up the NICRA came via the WTS, basically from Coughlan,⁸¹⁴ and ‘along the lines suggested by the Dublin WTS’s paper.’⁸¹⁵ Modelled on the NCCL, the CA’s role in this process was to encourage the formation and development of NICRA and work with them, as every issue of the *ID* documented. There was a need for a locally grown pressure group and the CA encouraged to set it up as they believed ‘any civil rights organisation in the North should be set up and run from within.’⁸¹⁶ Greaves generally offered advice and moral support to locally grown organisations and quite a few former CA members in Ireland were typically involved. Greaves was often in Belfast and Dublin, giving talks and closely working with local leaders Sinclair and McCullough.

According to the paper, the NICRA was established ‘for the purpose of securing the restoration of normal civil liberties in the six counties’⁸¹⁷ after the meeting that included nationalists, republicans, NILP members, republican labour members, and representatives of the CP and National Democrats, and non-party organisations such as the WTS, the Belfast Trades Council, the CSJ, the National Union of Teachers, the National Union of Seamen and the Draughtsmen’s Association. The *ID* reported that there was one Unionist attended the inaugural meeting but left before the meeting had ended. The first secretary was Derek Peters, the chairman was Noel Harris with the CSJ’s Conn McCluskey as vice chairman, Fred Heatley was treasurer, and the press officer was Jack Bennett who was a Belfast correspondent of the *ID* and a member of the WTS. When Greaves was in Belfast, he always stayed at Bennett’s home. Bennett, a member of the Protestant community, warned:

In the past civil liberties bodies in the North had too often assumed a party-political character. They had become just a stick to beat the Unionists with. Yet objectively, most people, Unionists, Labour men and Republicans had an interest in civil rights in so far as they were democrats at all. NICRA should therefore seek to build a broadly-based movement and should not see itself as primarily a campaigning body against the Government or the Unionist Party.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹³ Prince, *The Global Revolt of 1968 and Northern Ireland*, p859

⁸¹⁴ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p187

⁸¹⁵ Feeney, Brian, 2002, *Sinn Féin: A Hundred Turbulent Years*, p236

⁸¹⁶ Redmond, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland*

⁸¹⁷ ‘United Organisation for Civil Rights,’ *Irish Democrat*, March 1967, p8

⁸¹⁸ ‘United organisation for civil rights,’ *Irish Democrat*, March 1967, p8

The NICRA's objectives were 'to defend the rights of the individual and freedom of speech, highlight abuses of power and inform the public of their lawful rights – it was composed of those who were looking both for revolutionary change and for gradual reform.'⁸¹⁹ Other activities included writing letters about harassment of political and social dissidents to the government, producing regular articles in the *ID*, *CA* pamphlets and leaflets, participating in demonstrations and public meetings at Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park always in collaboration with the *CA*. In addition to alleged discrimination against Catholics, Sinclair claimed the NICRA had other human rights issues to deal with such as: 'the civil rights of the mentally ill, of the unemployed, the behaviour of officials at the employment exchanges, securing equal access to education for children from the Protestant working class district of Sandy Row.'⁸²⁰ Their non-sectarian approach seemed to be yielding results as its membership extended beyond the nationalist community, bringing all people together, although Catholic people were the predominant members. The NICRA functioned similar to the NCCL and the CSJ, but it was more middle class in its origin and some leaders of civil rights campaigners, notably Sinclair, and the chairman of the Derry Citizens' Action Committee, Ivan Cooper, were from a Protestant background. Sinclair who shortly became chairperson of NICRA had regularly contributed articles to the *IF/ID* since its inception and was also a regular speaker of the *CA* events in London. Sinclair and Greaves, who became communist members in the 1930s, remained close confidants – Sinclair often seeking advice from him – until Sinclair's death in 1981.

From the *ID* coverage, many republicans were part of the NICRA and the civil rights movement. Dixon claims that the republican movement largely contributed and played 'the driving role in the establishment of NICRA,'⁸²¹ IRA members were actively involved in various civil rights initiatives, for example, 'in the Derry Housing Association Committee and in organising and stewarding marches.'⁸²² According to Gerry Adams, republicans were central to the formation of NICRA.⁸²³ An intelligence report noted that Adams was an active civil rights activist. His

⁸¹⁹ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, p615

⁸²⁰ Prince, *Northern Ireland's 68'*, p116

⁸²¹ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p73

⁸²² *Ibid.*, p84

⁸²³ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p12

‘association with the republican movement began in the mid-1960s when he became involved in various community action groups. He was a founding member of the NICRA.’⁸²⁴ Various documents note that republicans and communists’ principal role in the NICRA. For example, one of the documents found the NICRA ‘acts as a front for the Official wing of the IRA’⁸²⁵ and asserted its strong Communist element.

The CPI makes joint use with the IRA of NICRA as a front – an act of cooperation which is said to be doubly attractive from the Communist viewpoint, in that through NICRA, it hopes to exert even greater political influence on the official wing of the IRA. NICRA already acts as a reception point for all Soviet and East European journalists visiting Belfast.⁸²⁶

Some claim that the NICRA was launched by outside pressure rather than locals’ initiatives. Prince argues that the civil rights campaign ‘has its origins in the political calculations of a few activists from Ireland and Britain instead of in the spontaneous actions of ordinary Northern Catholics.’⁸²⁷ Although there is some truth in his argument, when the civil rights movement gained momentum, there were the mass of spontaneous local people, who genuinely hoped to have a fair society, as the *ID* shows that participants in the movement contained various people with different opinions. According to Prince, ‘representatives of every political party may have helped to found NICRA, but Republicans and Communists made the running and made up almost all the executive committee.’⁸²⁸ However, according to the analysis by Whyte and Dixon, this is a typical Unionist view. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson assert the civil rights movement contained ‘significant sections of the Protestant working class.’⁸²⁹ Feeny claims that republicans were only a minority in the WTS but ‘they were able to use the societies as a vehicle to carry their ideas’ and produced ‘the plans for a civil rights movement.’⁸³⁰ Treacy also claims that ‘the IRA and Sinn Féin did not dominate the Civil Rights Association.’⁸³¹ Purdie also asserts that ‘the evidence does not bear out Unionist assumptions about the subversive intentions of the movement, that the movement did not conform

⁸²⁴ NA, FCO 87/1582 SF folder

⁸²⁵ NA, FCO 168/5287, NICRA folder

⁸²⁶ NA, FCO 168/5287, NICRA folder

⁸²⁷ Prince, *Mythologising a Movement*, p28-9

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*, p28-9

⁸²⁹ Bew, et al, *The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72*, p133

⁸³⁰ Feeny, *Sinn Féin: A Hundred Turbulent Years*, p236

⁸³¹ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p6

to the model originally proposed by the Republicans and that, in its early stages, Republicans and Communists were not in effective control.’⁸³²

Nevertheless, it is not straightforward to draw the lines of the left organisations or individuals. For example, it was common to change allegiances. Some people had multiple memberships with different organs. It was not unusual for independent republicans helping the IRA/Sinn Féin’s activities while progressive thinkers working with the CPs in Britain and the two Irelands. Although the civil rights movement seems to be gradually moving in the right direction with a large number of local protestant people joining, as the *ID* suggests, there were still many people who were resistant to change.

In any case, the republican movement was in a transition phase. Some left the IRA/Sinn Féin and/or were politicised through left groups such as the CA, while the others were vehemently against the progressive movement. According to Treacy, IRA Chief Ruairí Ó Brádaigh has claimed that ‘Sinn Féin had embarked upon a revision of its social and economic programme in 1962’ and ‘was aware of the kind of thinking that was taking place in the CA, as the *ID* had circulated among the republican prisoners in the Curragh,’ but his attitude was that ‘republicans did not need the advice of the Communists.’⁸³³ There was a clear division amongst politicised republicans. However, the general trend during this time was, as described by O’Leary, the successors to the border campaign were ‘Irish nationalists disguised or mildly refurbished in civil-rights clothing, and remained a fifth column of the Republic’, therefore, the civil rights campaign of 1967-69 was ‘simply a fresh strategic manoeuvre.’⁸³⁴ The politicisers eventually needed to link to politics although that was not the primary intention of the civil rights movement.

The majority of pressure groups generally ‘showed no concern with the border issue as they were non-party by default.’⁸³⁵ Gerry Fitt also claimed that the civil rights movement was not about a united Ireland but about ‘making the British government face up to the facts of discrimination and

⁸³² Purdie, *Was the civil rights movement a republican/communist conspiracy?*, p33

⁸³³ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p40

⁸³⁴ O’Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, p150

⁸³⁵ McAllister, Ian, 1977, *The Northern Ireland Social Democratic & Labour Party: Political Opposition in a Divided Society*, The MacMillan Press, London, p20

honour the rights of nationalists as citizens of the UK.⁸³⁶ Therefore, the NICRA did not challenge partition issue as it focused on ending seven injustices, including council house allocations and the weighted voting system. From the republicans' and nationalists' point of view, however, this was naturally the first step to a united Ireland. 'The pressure to link NICRA with the national question' was very strong, as Johnston has noted, 'even among the vanguard of left-republican politicians.'⁸³⁷ The *ID* clearly reflected this view and appealed to all readers to unite.

The coalition with the people from all walks of life was bound to create issues. Dixon highlights that the civil rights campaign of this period contained 'groups and individuals with very different political agendas and class backgrounds.'⁸³⁸ Johnston recalled that one of the challenges of the civil rights movement was a cultural gap between the socialist and republican traditions in Northern Ireland, or between the left-politicising Belfast IRA and the Protestant radical tradition. As this could be 'destructive in some situations,'⁸³⁹ some of the politicians like Johnston attempted to bridge this gap.⁸⁴⁰ Within the NICRA, confrontation and schism were frequently observed, even though it exhibited the image of a united, cohesive body, 'its leadership was fragmented and its organisation merely a loose collection of local ad hoc committees.'⁸⁴¹ For example, Greaves went to Belfast in April 1967, and met with Sinclair, NICRA's chairperson, in her Trades Council office:

She told me that she discovered that when she (had been) prevented from speaking at Casement Park it was not the fault of the GAA but that the republicans had cold feet at the last minute. How she found this out was that on the way to Murlough last year Sean Steenson drove her up in his car. 'I believe you objected to my speaking last year' she remarked. 'Not a bit of it.' The republicans had told her they would be delighted to have her but they had been threatened that if she spoke they would never get the Park again. Even when she got to Murlough she was left off the agenda and the chairman was closing the meeting after Sean Redmond spoke. But one of the officials ran to the chairman. Betty wondered if a fight would ensue. Then the chairman, a local man, said 'Miss Sinclair wished to say a few words.' Such is the fear of Communism...⁸⁴²

⁸³⁶ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, p616

⁸³⁷ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p236

⁸³⁸ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p70

⁸³⁹ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p252

⁸⁴⁰ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p216

⁸⁴¹ McAllister, *The Northern Ireland Social Democratic & Labour Party*, p21

⁸⁴² Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p215

Sinclair felt ‘they were all very suspicious of Protestants, and that the Protestants feel lost, not knowing what nationality they belong to, or having any history or culture.’⁸⁴³ This is clearly one of the factors that prevented it to function effectively. She had also confided to Johnston in the summer of 1967 that the NICRA ‘had not been able to attract the right kind of people...too much in the way of groups and not consolidated enough to do its job properly.’⁸⁴⁴ As a result, it spent more than one year to organise the first major civil rights march from Coalisland to Dungannon in August 1968. But it passed off ‘peacefully with no provocation, no violence, no media interest, no public sympathy and no movement.’⁸⁴⁵ At this point, Prince claimed that ‘NICRA had failed to interest the Catholic community in the civil rights campaign, let alone the Protestant working class, Westminster, or the world’s media’, and the civil rights campaign was going ‘the same road to obscurity that the Anti-Partition League had taken before.’⁸⁴⁶

Although their first march had no great impact, its effort in creating a broad movement was a step forward. The regime of Stormont was still unwilling to meet the democratic demands of the movement as the *ID*’s bold headline decried ‘Get moving for a United Ireland’ and warned: ‘unless something is done soon to end the injustices which exist in British-occupied Ireland, there is going to be an explosion there.’⁸⁴⁷ And it certainly did. As the civil rights demands were ignored, the *ID*’s coverage of the CA intensified while it further put pressure on the British government. The CA functioned as if it was a NICRA London branch and the *ID* was its mouthpiece, as it contained every detail of the civil rights movement. Simultaneously, the CA in London organised a range of meetings, pickets in front of the Ulster Office in London, petitions and resolutions in order to gain international attention and sympathy, tarnishing the reputation of Stormont.

1968 was a year of global revolt. Assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, then, Robert F. Kennedy occurred in June. Through the widespread television broadcasting, civil rights movements in foreign lands were watched in the British Isles and simultaneously, oppression over

⁸⁴³ Ibid., p216

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid., p218

⁸⁴⁵ Prince, *Mythologising a Movement: Northern Ireland’s ’68*, p29

⁸⁴⁶ Prince, *Northern Ireland’s 68*, p123

⁸⁴⁷ ‘Get moving for a United Ireland,’ *Irish Democrat*, September 1968, p1

Northern Ireland and Irish people were aired across the world. The civil rights movement took off globally. Around this time, the British authorities finally started listening to the marginalised voice, including CA's demands. *ID* headlines also appeared upbeat as if it gathered momentum and the unification of Ireland was imminent, riding the wave of the global trend. The newspaper interpreted various points on why the last phase is nearing: Unionism is bankrupt, the high employment rate in the North decreased working-class support for Unionism, republicans are becoming more constitutionalist, the growing economy in the South, and quite a few British LP MPs were genuinely concerned about discrimination.

The NICRA's second march on 5 October 1968 went ahead through Protestant district in Derry. The participants included left-wingers in the NILP and the republican movement, CPs and 'there was a significant Catholic population.'⁸⁴⁸ This event was a turning point as the British media could not ignore Northern Ireland anymore. According to Dixon, 'the sensitivity of the British state to media portrayals of Northern Ireland suggests a sense of vulnerability to its impact on public opinion and its implications for the real and propaganda wars against the IRA.'⁸⁴⁹ What the British government was really preoccupied with was not local people's grievances. Dixon claims it 'seems to have been more concerned with the impact of the portrayal of republicans on British rather than on Northern Irish opinion.'⁸⁵⁰ The NICRA's march went according to plan: 'stewarding was inadequate, the first rank of marchers was pushed up against the police line, missiles and abuse were hurled at the RUC, police officers hit out', and television cameras and newspapers captured the violent scene.⁸⁵¹ Northern Ireland's Home Secretary William Craig tried to suppress the civil rights movement and commanded to attack unarmed participants, while the Labour government did not intervene. The march was attacked by the RUC and scores of ordinary people were injured. Simon Winchester from the *Guardian* captured the event as he 'witnessed rubber bullets had been fired at protestors' heads and bodies and dozens badly injured.'⁸⁵² The reaction of the British press 'was virtually unanimous in its support for the Catholics' demands for civil rights, since these were seen to accord with what were considered British standards.'⁸⁵³

⁸⁴⁸ Purdie, quoted in Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p81

⁸⁴⁹ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p337

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p337

⁸⁵¹ Prince, *Mythologising a Movement: Northern Ireland's '68*, p29

⁸⁵² O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, p188

⁸⁵³ Kirkaldy, quoted in Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p95

Dixon argues that Unionists viewed the emergence of the civil rights movement as ‘a Communist/republican-inspired campaign to open the border question, rather than a movement genuinely seeking reform,’⁸⁵⁴ consequently unleashing ‘communal violence which divided rather than united Protestants and Catholics.’⁸⁵⁵ Loyalist political violence emerged because they considered the movement as anti-state and ‘an embryonic nationalist insurgency.’⁸⁵⁶ As a result, counter demonstrations turned extremely violent. The marchers were defeated on the streets but they ‘won the propaganda war’ and ‘the violent reaction of the RUC strengthened NICRA and weakened the unionist government.’⁸⁵⁷ On 6 October, the day after the ‘Battle of Derry’, as the *ID* described, the CA, the NICRA amongst others marched to Downing Street, organised a rally in Trafalgar Square and demanded intervention and democracy in Northern Ireland. The speakers at the rally included Sinclair, Fitt, three British Labour MPs, and representatives of the United Ireland Association and *Clann na hÉireann*. After vigorous protest, the British government finally reacted to remedy the situation. On 4 November, O’Neill, Craig and Faulkner were summoned to Downing Street and Prime Minister Wilson next day announced to the House of Commons that he had requested a report on the events in Derry and had pressed O’Neill to introduce reforms.⁸⁵⁸ This rally was mainly due to the CA’s effort as the secretary of MCF appreciated its contribution by saying: ‘most of the credit was due to the work of the CA.’⁸⁵⁹ A front page headline of the *ID* declared: ‘Irish history was made in London.’⁸⁶⁰

Wilson aspired to unite Ireland. He ‘wanted to be the prime minister who solved the Irish question, and that he believed that increased trade by helping to reduce tension between North and South, would promote this.’⁸⁶¹ He had the traditional attitude of the Left and believed Ireland should be united under Dublin.⁸⁶² Nevertheless, reality was far from simple. British politicians would not normally visit Northern Ireland as ‘it would draw his government more deeply into the Irish

⁸⁵⁴ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p14

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p73

⁸⁵⁶ Mulholland, *The Longest War: Northern Ireland’s Troubled History*, p66

⁸⁵⁷ Cochrane, 2021, *Northern Ireland: The Fragile Peace*, p49

⁸⁵⁸ Redmond, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland*

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁰ ‘Great London Civil Rights Procession,’ *Irish Democrat*, November 1968, p1

⁸⁶¹ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p65

⁸⁶² Savage, *The BBC’s Irish Troubles*, p44

quagmire.⁸⁶³ The *ID* remained defiant and continued pressing the government. Undaunted, the *ID* kept pushing and called out: ‘Wilson, come off the fence!’⁸⁶⁴ and ‘Keep up pressure on Unionists.’⁸⁶⁵ With hindsight, there were some aspects that did not go according to plan. Johnson pointed out that one of the miscalculations that Greaves made was that he ‘overestimated the practical possibility of the republican clubs engaging in consultations with the trade unions or the labour movement. The channels did not exist, except very marginally via Sinclair and Derek Peters in the NICRA leadership.’⁸⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the *ID* continued to blame England for Irish people’s poverty and injustice in Northern Ireland and Britain by framing discrimination-related articles and defined their status within the system. Their grievances eventually culminated into a serious investigation. In January 1969, the Northern Ireland government formed a team of researchers which became known as the Cameron Commission in order to investigate the nature of the civil disturbance. They have found seven general causes of the disorders and ‘six of these were Catholic grievances – housing, discrimination, gerrymandering, the B Specials, the SPA, and the failure to get any redress of complaints.’⁸⁶⁷ These points were the precise issues that the paper had been covering since its inception.

Sinn Féin/IRA

Similar to other left groups, a recurring deep schism within the militant republican movement has been the norm. There was a critical division within the IRA, Sinn Féin and the republican movement in the 1960s and the IRA eventually split into the Official and Provisional wings. Bew remarked that the split in the republican movement ‘had some of the aspects of a left-right division.’⁸⁶⁸ The *ID/CA* had a vital position during this process. Treacy claims that Greaves was a key influence on the ‘modernisers’ despite the fact that he never lived in Ireland, nor was he at any time a member of the republican movement, and his ideas, especially on the civil rights strategy, played a key role up to the early 1970s.⁸⁶⁹ Greaves clearly had the sizeable impact on the thinking of politically active youngsters and he was a well-respected figure to some in the republican

⁸⁶³ Ibid., p44

⁸⁶⁴ ‘Great London Civil Rights Procession’, *Irish Democrat*, November 1968, p1

⁸⁶⁵ ‘Keep up pressure on Unionists’, *Irish Democrat*, November 1968, p7

⁸⁶⁶ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p234

⁸⁶⁷ Whyte, *Interpreting Northern Ireland*, p195

⁸⁶⁸ Bew, *The British State and the Ulster Crisis*, p29

⁸⁶⁹ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p73

movement. However, Coughlan denies that Greaves had ‘any responsibility for the subsequent political roles of any former members’ of the CA, although he acted as an adviser to many on an informal basis.⁸⁷⁰ Sheehy claims that Greaves was older than the politically active men and hence ‘acted like a father figure’ within the context of the republican movement in the 1960s, although Coughlan rejects the idea.⁸⁷¹ Attempting to embrace the republican movement, Greaves ultimately had a foot in both camps, probably creating more complications to the already complex structure and adding another layer to the republican movement. Furthermore, changing of allegiance was not uncommon within left organs. Divisions within the republican movement was a recurrent theme in the *ID* as it reported whenever former IRA members joined the CA and welcomed those who became members.

After the border campaign, civil rights activism particularly became more strategic to focus primarily on democracy and uniting Catholic and Protestant workers rather than an Irish unification. The republican movement also embraced a broad alliance. However, ordinary Catholic residents in the North, the most affected population, were generally not benefiting from left-wing activities. Gerry Adams was familiar with the left movement as he worked in a pub, the Duke of York. ‘It was close to the head office of the NILP and a number of trade union offices, as well as the *News Letter*, and there you got a mingling of NILP and CP members, republicans, trade union officials and journalists discussing issues of the day.’⁸⁷² He recalled that members of the Dublin leadership of the republican movement came to Belfast in the late 1960s and gave some lectures. Local people felt that their plan was far removed from reality as they told the visitors in response:

Look, you can talk about all this coming together of Protestant and Catholic working-class but here’s yet another instance where the sectarian card was played and the people who had been united were effectively separated. Your notions just don’t square with reality...If the state would not allow Catholics and Protestants to get a pedestrian crossing built together, it would hardly sit back and watch them organise the revolution together.⁸⁷³

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid., p80

⁸⁷¹ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of Gunmen*, p14

⁸⁷² Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p9

⁸⁷³ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p14-15

The trade unions were considered more politicised as a principal vehicle to pursue politics in Northern Ireland, but Adams's first-hand experience explains otherwise.

I was working as a barman and was sacked for demanding the trade union rate for the Twelfth of July holiday, which was double time and a day off in lieu. I went to the trade union of which I was a member and wanted them to fight it, but they wouldn't. Although there were no sectarian overtones it was characteristic of the fact that apprentices were a dime a dozen and, in this context, even when one tried to look for something very simple through the trade unions they just didn't respond.⁸⁷⁴

Therefore, he concluded that 'the sectarian card could be invoked effectively and that there was little basis for making any progress on the national question through the trade union movement.'⁸⁷⁵

Nevertheless, CA members' effort to advocate and politicise republicans is well-documented. O'Leary notes that the influence of the CA on 'disillusioned republicans' was noteworthy, as they had been transformed into 'more socialist or Marxist-Leninist, than Catholic or nationalist.'⁸⁷⁶ Essentially, the 1960s was the time of 'the reintroduction of radical socialist republicanism into the movement' and many of the new Marxist doctrines similar to the original Republican Congress, were 'produced by Johnston and disseminated by the Sinn Féin's the *United Irishman*.'⁸⁷⁷ Tomás Mac Giolla, leader of the official Sinn Féin declared during the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis: 'The Republican Socialist ideology is the only one which can unite the mass of the Irish people both Catholic and Protestant. If we are to create such unity, we cannot remain in isolation. We must be prepared to ally ourselves with other radical forces.'⁸⁷⁸ The proposal presented by the IRA committee during the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis in June 1965 included 'a formal alliance with the Communist parties and the CA.'⁸⁷⁹ In the 1960s when the civil rights movement was gaining momentum, the IRA membership was also increasing. Some scholars claim that the CA had a closer relationship with the CP as the previous chapter demonstrated, but Smith argues that 'The CA had a more symbiotic relationship with the republican movement in Ireland and the IRA, rather

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., p15-16

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid., p16

⁸⁷⁶ O'Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, p164

⁸⁷⁷ Rumpf, E, and Hepburn, A, 1977, *Nationalism and Socialism in twentieth-century Ireland*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, p159

⁸⁷⁸ Hanley and Miller, *The Lost Revolution*, p70

⁸⁷⁹ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p49-50

than King St⁸⁸⁰, which gave lip service to them in the party press but put much more emphasis on the trade unions.’⁸⁸¹ Some researchers believe that the CA was closer to the republican movement. For example, Sheehy called the CA a ‘left wing republican offshoot.’⁸⁸² It is not straightforward to draw the line but it appears that the CA was taking advantage of the CP as an institution and closely working with republicans on the ground.

The CA’s top priority was to convince republicans to join the labour movement. In this process, Greaves specifically emphasised that ‘teaching the left how to speak the language of national liberation (especially in the North) should have come first and then teaching the republicans the ideas and organisational principles of socialism.’⁸⁸³ The *ID* implies that all left organs and progressive movements during this period contained present and former members of the CA. Milotte asserts that there were close links between the CA and the republican rethinking of the sixties.⁸⁸⁴ Some republicans were quickly politicised - although Coughlan claims ‘attempts to politicise republicanism were misguided, and that the labour movement would have made a more suitable bedfellow.’⁸⁸⁵

Nevertheless, Coughlan explained that the only way to keep republicanism relevant was to go political: ‘Going political in the 1960s did not require Republicans to become socialists or Marxists, even if particular individuals might lean in those directions, nor did it require the republican movement as a whole to advocate socialism or Marxism, even if one could agree on what those terms meant in the context of the time.’⁸⁸⁶ The CA as a broad left organisation played a leading role in this process. Dixon states that the CA was ‘influential on the IRA in raising civil rights issues.’⁸⁸⁷ Gerry Adams is one of them. According to him, he is very familiar with Greaves’s work⁸⁸⁸ and ‘a big admirer of his politics and writings’:

⁸⁸⁰ The London address of the CPGB

⁸⁸¹ Smith, *The Communist Party of Great Britain and the Irish Question*, p1

⁸⁸² Sheehy, *In the Shadow of Gunmen*, p8

⁸⁸³ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p272

⁸⁸⁴ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p265

⁸⁸⁵ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of gunmen*, p15

⁸⁸⁶ Coughlan, ‘*The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?*’ Review

⁸⁸⁷ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p84

⁸⁸⁸ Adams wrote an introduction for Greaves’s biography Liam Mellows.

I first became aware of Greaves when I was a political prisoner in Long Kesh. I was in correspondence with the CA at that time. The CA sent lots of other books into us in the cages of Long Kesh on request. We asked our families not to send us food parcels for a while but to send us money instead. We put this into a book fund and purchased books from the CA and from 1916 veteran Joe Clarke's book bureau in Dublin. We used these as part of our political education processes.⁸⁸⁹

The *ID* and Connolly Publication books were widely read by young republicans. According to Hanley, 'almost all republicans claimed to be followers of James Connolly, who was a Marxist, while Adams and his supporters had digested a range of literature by Marxist writers while in prison.'⁸⁹⁰ The CA did not work with the IRA directly but Greaves's personal connection to Cathal Goulding who took control of the IRA in 1963 and later leader of the OIRA 'fuelled a burgeoning paranoia about Goulding's intentions.'⁸⁹¹ Goulding was Chief of Staff of the IRA from 1962 to 1969, then of the OIRA from 1969 to 1972, involved in the Official Sinn Féin and a close friend of Greaves. In those days, Goulding was quite influential.⁸⁹² Treacy notes Greaves 'appears to have exercised considerable influence' on Goulding.⁸⁹³ During the early 1960s, Treacy claims that what the *ID* was promoting was 'the strategy favoured by Goulding and his allies.'⁸⁹⁴ In effect, it was Greaves who was offering Goulding advice as they often met but it was always 'social occasions, invariably initiated by Goulding rather than by Greaves.'⁸⁹⁵ It was not only Greaves, but also Johnston who 'exercised an enormous influence on Goulding.'⁸⁹⁶ Treacy argues that 'the obvious implication of Goulding's support for close ties with the CA was that republicans in Britain should align themselves with British parties, which, while superficially involving electoral support for Labour, actually entailed a link to the CPGB through the CA.'⁸⁹⁷ Although Gerry Adams agreed with the objectives of Greaves, aligning with the Labour Party as an institution was insupportable, despite the fact that there were some progressive initiatives:

⁸⁸⁹ Gerry Adams email correspondence with the author, May 11, 2022

⁸⁹⁰ Hanley, *The IRA*, p191

⁸⁹¹ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of gunmen*, p13

⁸⁹² Feeney, Brian, 2002, *Sinn Féin: A Hundred Turbulent Years*, p236

⁸⁹³ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p71

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p70

⁸⁹⁵ Sheehy, *In the Shadow of gunmen*, p15

⁸⁹⁶ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p69

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p84

Another main point for Greaves was the imperative of the British working class to be part of the effort to get the London government to end its rule in Ireland. Notwithstanding some high points and considerable efforts by many outstanding people and organisations in Britain, including the CA this goal thus far has eluded us. This is partly because the British Labour movement, or at least the leadership of the Labour Party in government, embraced the politics of Empire, particularly in relation to Ireland. Greaves correctly argued that it should have been in favour of Irish independence. Instead, British Labour governments followed the politics of the ruling class. This is a disaster for Ireland and as Greaves properly argued for the British ruling class also.⁸⁹⁸

Some republicans were aligned with the CA, while the others were vehemently opposed to the CA. For example, Seán Mac Stíofáin, the Provisional IRA Chief was suspicious of the Communist Party and the CA.⁸⁹⁹ During the CA Manchester open-air Sunday afternoon meeting in Platts Fields, ‘Traynor, Sinn Féin activist, made an attack on the CA, and urged his hearers not to buy *ID* with characteristic Republican broadmindedness.’⁹⁰⁰ The *ID* constantly urged to unite republicans: ‘CA asks Sinn Féin – why not cooperate. Work in unity.’⁹⁰¹ The paper repeatedly called for Sinn Féin, CPs and the APL to unite for ‘the common cause’.

When you join with other people in a common cause, you embrace the common cause and that alone – you do not have to subscribe to the views of all your associates. The CA would be prepared to cooperate with Sinn Féin and the APL in the struggle to unite Ireland. But the leaders of these organisations are afraid that they would have to embrace Connolly’s teachings if they agreed – which shows a confusion of mind, for the CA, will cooperate with them and yet has no intention of renouncing Connolly.⁹⁰²

The disagreement escalated during the height of the civil rights movement. Sinn Féin’s newspaper *An Phoblacht* was critical of CA activities.

The Republican cause is being manipulated by social democrats, who are endeavouring to steer it

⁸⁹⁸ Gerry Adams email correspondence with the author, May 11, 2022

⁸⁹⁹ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p75

⁹⁰⁰ Greaves, Desmond, journals volume 12. November 25, 1956

⁹⁰¹ ‘CA asks Sinn Fein,’ *Irish Democrat*, April 1957, p1

⁹⁰² ‘It is time to act,’ *Irish Democrat*, May 1952, p3

along the course compatible to their own goals and not ours. We would suggest that the proteges of the CA, etc, return to the orbit of the British Communist Party, and keep their cotton-picking-fingers out of our business. The Irish revolution can do right well without their ‘contributions’, either to the ‘theory’ or the practice of our struggle.⁹⁰³

They went on endlessly and found no common ground.

Despite the fact that Wilson attempted to unite two Irelands by dealing with the IRA, many in his own government and Northern Ireland Premier Brian Faulkner typically found that ‘most regrettable’ and were not happy.⁹⁰⁴ John Peck, a British ambassador to Dublin wrote on 16 March 1972 to Kelvin White, of the Republic of Ireland Department at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office that Wilson was:

hoping to establish secret contact with certain unnamed persons, through an unnamed intermediary, and it was quite clear that he was referring to the IRA. I did not know whether and to what extent any member of HMG was aware of this, but I made it clear that I could have no part in it and I emphasized the risks he was running and said that I thought that at the very least he should let Mr Lynch know what he was up to. He said his aim was to try to steer the IRA into realistic courses and, above all, to get them to stop intimidating the SDLP and leave the way clear for them to come to the negotiating table. Presumably with this in mind, but in a general context, he questioned me about the distinction that could be drawn between Sinn Féin as a registered political party and the IRA as an illegal organization. I pointed out briefly that for practical purposes it was the same bunch wearing different hats.⁹⁰⁵

Shortly, Wilson had a meeting with the Provisional IRA which was represented by Joe Cahill, Gerry Adams, Myles Shevlin and Ford.⁹⁰⁶ Although his aspiration and effort did no bear any fruit, the *Sunday Press* wrote on 19 March 1972, Wilson is ‘the best informed leading foreign politician in regard to Irish affairs.’⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰³ ‘The Yahoos and An Phoblacht,’ *An Phoblacht*, 8, (November/December 1966), p7

⁹⁰⁴ NA, FCO 87/32

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁶ NA, FCO 87/32

⁹⁰⁷ ‘Why Wilson played the provisional card,’ *the Sunday Press*, 19 March 1972, p25

Clann na hÉireann and Anti Partition League

Around the mid-twentieth century, the *ID* frequently mentioned on other Irish political organisations - the *Clann na hÉireann* and Anti Partition League (APL). The APL was established in Ireland in 1945 to press nationalist demands, and it had at one point 90 branches in Britain. *Clann na hÉireann* was set up in 1964 by the republican movement, as a support group in Britain 'in place of a staid Sinn Féin organisation.'⁹⁰⁸ This republican emigrant organ supported the OIRA and Sinn Féin. The thinking of the left during this period was that 'republicans were advised to work through a broad alliance for the displacement of the Unionist regime and for political democracy in the North, and the defence of independence in the South.'⁹⁰⁹

The CA attempted to collaborate with the Clann but the relationship with them was often strained. Treacy identified that Irish republican groups in Britain were 'hostile to the CA' and Clann continued to 'propagate IRA policy and raise funds, to attract more moderate Irish people through in non-militant image,'⁹¹⁰ while Hanley and Miller claimed 'some Clann members were sympathetic to the CA, though relations between the two bodies could be fraught. Some younger Clann members saw the association as too conservative, while older republicans distrusted it because of its communist links.'⁹¹¹ According to Treacy, the Clann was suspicious of Greaves, because he 'contacted Tadhg Feehan⁹¹² of the Irish Embassy in April 1965 to assure him that he was 'totally opposed to the republican group and that the CA would never do anything that would embarrass the Irish Embassy or the Irish government.'⁹¹³ Coughlan pointed out that Greaves's journal entry for Sunday 25 April 1965 read when there was a Clann meeting in Hyde Park, followed by a march to the Irish Embassy, and the CA waited to hold its own meeting until they were done.⁹¹⁴

There was a good attendance of Embassy officials, and I was talking to Tadhg Feehan. He was upset at the *Clann na hÉireann* desire to march to the Embassy to protest against persecution of Easter Lily

⁹⁰⁸ Hanley and Miller, *The Lost Revolution*, p49

⁹⁰⁹ Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland*, p265

⁹¹⁰ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p83

⁹¹¹ Hanley and Miller, *The Lost Revolution*, p50

⁹¹² He was an official attached to the Irish Embassy in London.

⁹¹³ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p83-84

⁹¹⁴ Coughlan, 'The IRA in the 1960s: Rethinking the Republic?' *Review*

sellers [*in Dublin*]. ‘The CA never did that,’ he said.⁹¹⁵

Treacy added that Greaves’s attitude was ‘less critical of the southern state.’⁹¹⁶ Diaspora politics is complicated and the *ID* frequently covered tense relationships with the Clann. Sean O’Cionnaith, Clann’s organising secretary condemned the CA by writing to the *ID*: ‘*Clann na hÉireann* view, with sorrow and regret the number of exile organisations that have subordinated themselves to British political and cultural interests. While no-one doubts the sincerity (sic) of, or the hopes expressed by these organisations, we believe a United Ireland will never be achieved by supporting British Political Parties, Irish exiles will never make contented Britons.’⁹¹⁷ In reply, the *ID* argued: ‘There is no reason whatsoever why the Irish in Britain should not use their votes for somebody who will give them something in return. By so doing they do not become ‘contented Britons,’ but discontented Irish voters determined to make things more difficult for the partitioners of their country.’⁹¹⁸ The CA replied diplomatically and invited the Clann to discuss ‘the best way of removing all obstacles to the unity in action of all the Irish in Britain.’ Some members of the Clann believed ‘developments in Britain can be directed from Dublin,’⁹¹⁹ while the CA’s focus was on the British government. Treacy argues that the Clann kept resisting encouragement from Dublin to align with the CA: ‘at its 1967 Ard Fheis, held on 19 February, two resolutions were passed rejecting any form of alliance with the CA. But that was negated by another motion, supported by Goulding, which removed the constitutional ban on members of the Association becoming members.’⁹²⁰ Nevertheless, Clann members were quite diverse. Treacy identifies that ‘Many younger Irish activists, including some who were members of the Clann, were in fact more attracted to the various Trotskyist groups.’⁹²¹ Similar to communists, republicans were not homogenous. In 1970, the Clann and the CA’s relationships became worsened as both groups were aware that ‘they were fishing in the same very small pond for members and influence.’⁹²² The Clann was ‘actively competing, and in some cases attempting to hijack or dominate CA

⁹¹⁵ Desmond Greaves diary April 25, 1965

⁹¹⁶ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p75

⁹¹⁷ ‘Yes, we stand for unity,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1966, p2

⁹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p2

⁹¹⁹ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p181

⁹²⁰ Treacy, *The IRA 1956-69*, p84

⁹²¹ *Ibid.* p84

⁹²² Hanley and Miller, *The Lost Revolution*, p217

meetings.⁹²³

The APL was rurally based, traditionally nationalist and deeply Catholic which ‘presented a moderate face emphasising discrimination to the British audience in order to delegitimise partition’, while ‘speaking to nationalists in the language of Irish nationalism.’⁹²⁴ Smylie argued the APL failed because it could not decide which British political party to support and ‘remained divided on Irish party lines at a time when mass emigration was a contentious political issue in Ireland.’⁹²⁵ Some CA members were also APL members, for example, one time *IF/ID* editor Pat Dooley was the London Committee of the APL. The CA also had a conflicting relationship with them. Greaves admitted that ‘it was the greatest mistake of the CA as it held aloof from them when it was established in 1945.’⁹²⁶ He recalled later: ‘if we had gone right into it and put the *Democrat* at its disposal, we might have helped to prevent the betrayal that took place.’⁹²⁷ The CA and the APL continuously had a fraught relationship. Greaves wrote in his diary in August 1964:

Seán went off to Huddersfield while I did shopping. On his return late at night he said he had seen the Liberal agent, and the APL man, whose name maybe Holdsworth but this is uncertain – we found that name in the street directory corresponding to the address. He didn’t like the CA at all, or the *Democrat*, and indeed liked its editor less. After a time, he softened and discussed differences. He was displeased at our orientation towards the working class, insisting that he was a “professional man” himself – probably a teacher – who had been to UCC with Tadhg Feehan [*attached to the Irish Embassy in London*].⁹²⁸

The *ID* lamented the tense relationship they had with the APL accelerated as it expelled CA members. ‘How do these splitters expect to unite Irishmen at home if they divide them abroad?’ Pat Clancy castigated: ‘When Pearse welcomed Connolly to his side in 1916 he did not spend his time attacking Connolly’s socialism. Like all true patriots he extended a fraternal hand of greeting to all Irishmen and women who fight together against British Imperialism.’⁹²⁹ The APL attempted

⁹²³ Johnson, *Century of Endeavour*, p180

⁹²⁴ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p70

⁹²⁵ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p645

⁹²⁶ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p21

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p21

⁹²⁸ Desmond Greaves diary August 31, 1964

⁹²⁹ ‘APL bans CA,’ *Irish Democrat*, June 1951, p5

to expel CA members throughout 1951, and the *ID* tried to prevent this and wrote to stand for an undivided Ireland pull together.⁹³⁰ The paper criticised that the APL expelled Communists first, then Protestants and now CA members. 'It is utterly wrong and shameful that the splitting activities of the leaders of the APL should be allowed to continue.'⁹³¹ The *ID* reported every time when high profile IRA and APL members 'flocked to the CA'. Some high-profile defectors include, Stephen Lally, a hero of the Connaught Rangers mutiny and co-founder of the APL, and Denis O'Donnell, the IRA veteran. The paper assertively reported that it is 'the increasingly widespread acceptance of the correctness of the CA's contention that only from the working class can anything be hoped for Ireland.'⁹³² Nevertheless, the CA and the APL campaigned and marched together when they could. The *ID*'s message remained unchanged: 'the CA would be prepared to co-operate with Sinn Féin and the APL in the struggle to unite Ireland. But the leaders of these organisations are afraid that they would have to embrace Connolly's teachings if they agreed - which shows a confusion of mind.'⁹³³ From an observer's point of view, it was clear that it's all history repeating itself and a reader's letter to the paper advised to focus on the labour movement:

You might get unity with the APL as they are out for the same thing. I doubt very much if you would ever get unity with the Republicans... You would therefore be best to concentrate on winning the Best Labour movement, for the first Irish organisation to do it successfully will have won Irish freedom and will go down in history. Never forget James Connolly. He said the Irish worker had more in common with an English worker than with an Irish boss. Ask the boys who are pulling the cables.⁹³⁴

Bill of Rights

The CA initiated to work with like-minded active Labour politicians for decades. The *ID* asserted that the culmination of the CA's work is the development of a bill of rights which received political support in Britain. In July 1968 when Ulster Unionism was divided between pressure from London for reform and the local civil rights movement, the CA wrote to Wilson, advancing the conception of a Bill of Rights at Westminster.⁹³⁵ The significance of the introduction of the bill was: 'an

⁹³⁰ 'Partition', *Irish Democrat*, January 1952, page 3

⁹³¹ 'Defy the splitters' gag operation, *Irish Democrat*, July 1951, p6

⁹³² 'IRA Veterans Flocking into Connolly Clubs', *Irish Democrat*, July 1952, p2

⁹³³ 'It's time to act,' *Irish Democrat*, May 1952, p3

⁹³⁴ 'Letter,' *Irish Democrat*, October 1965, p2

⁹³⁵ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

important political step in the struggle for justice in the six counties' and 'the Irish question is becoming a political issue between Labour and Tory. The bipartisanship which has been the feature of the past fifty years has begun to break down.'⁹³⁶ In the August 1968 issue, an eye-catching front-page headline was clear, persistent, and authoritative: 'A bill of rights for six counties: We tell Harold Wilson what to do.' The CA, signed by Sean Redmond of Standing Committee, sent a letter to Prime Minister, following upon his statement that the situation in the six counties could not be allowed to continue indefinitely, and the full open letter was published. The message was coherent as the article demanded:

You should introduce into the Westminster Parliament a Bill of Rights, guaranteeing the citizens of Northern Ireland civil rights of no less substance than those enjoyed by residents of England. Such a Bill would amend the Constitution of Northern Ireland, which is the Government of Ireland Act (1920), in such a way as to offer an imperial guarantee that those in favour of a united Ireland would have a fair constitutional opportunity to present their case, as of course the Unionists would retain theirs. The ending of discrimination would remove the poison of sectarianism from social life and make possible the greater unity of the working class and its increasing influence in all spheres of social life.⁹³⁷

According to the November 1968 issue: the CA was ready to propose the Bill of Rights, attempting to persuade some private member of Parliament to introduce it and others to support it, and at the same time organise the widest possible campaign.⁹³⁸ It was Greaves who initiated to draft the proposal for a Bill of Rights⁹³⁹ as he called it 'my little invention to solve the problem of a conflict between immediate and ultimate aims.'⁹⁴⁰ Redmond remarked the Greaves's Bill of Rights was

⁹³⁶ 'Now the declaration,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1971, p8

⁹³⁷ 'A bill of rights for six counties', *Irish Democrat*, August 1968, p1

⁹³⁸ 'Keep up pressure on Unionists', *Irish Democrat*, November 1968, p7

⁹³⁹ Note by Coughlan in Desmond Greave journal, vol.20, May 19, 1968 [The Bill of Rights was envisaged as a Westminster enactment that would introduce civil liberties and electoral reforms in Northern Ireland, while encouraging the Stormont Government and Parliament to develop closer relations with the Republic. It provided a middle way between leaving Stormont unreformed and abolishing it altogether and was envisaged as a counter to the call for the abolition of the Stormont Parliament and 'direct rule' from London. The call for direct rule was first made by the leftist People's Democracy; it was taken up by the Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein following their formation in 1970, was widely supported in the Parliamentary Labour Party and was eventually implemented by Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath in 1972. A Bill of Rights that had been personally drafted by Desmond Greaves and published by HMSO was proposed as a Private Member's Bill in the Houses of Commons and Lords on the same day, 12 May 1971, by Arthur Latham MP in the former House and by Lord Fenner Brockway in the latter; but it was rejected. In September 1971, as a result of the CA's lobbying, the call for a Bill of Rights became the policy of the Trades Union Congress].

⁹⁴⁰ Desmond Greave journal, vol.20, May 19, 1968

‘significant as it was written in suitable parliamentary form, which would normally be the task of a trained parliamentary draftsman.’⁹⁴¹ This was an unprecedented move and Dublin paper the *Sunday Press* covered it in detail.

Greaves ‘spent almost an entire week, day, and night, studying volumes of ancient Acts and constitutional history, and guided occasionally by legal advice, to avoid legal pitfalls, and to discover the formula to crucify British legislators with their own dead nails...Modestly, he offered his Bill as a mere basis for discussion and possible amendment. I fear the only people who would be frantic to amend it would be British Parliamentary draftsmen, and any Unionist, conservative politicians who saw the implicit danger.’⁹⁴²

By amending the Government of Ireland Act and the powers of the Parliament and Government of Northern Ireland, it would ‘give relief to the grievances of religious and political minorities’⁹⁴³ and provide ‘guarantees of a level of democratic rights for all in the six counties.’⁹⁴⁴ Greaves’s thinking was that ‘taking a constitutional initiative as the quickest way to enable nationalists to take advantage of the divisions within unionism, encouraging an alliance in a reformed Stormont between nationalists and liberal unionists, isolating the unionist right and opening up a way in time to peaceful reunification with Dublin.’⁹⁴⁵

In September 1970, the Bill of rights was picked up by various newspapers, including *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The News Letter*, *The Irish Times*, *The Irish Press*, *The Morning Star* amongst others.⁹⁴⁶ Unionist *the News Letter*’s headline decried: ‘C.R. Threat of More ‘Free’ Enclaves.’ This indicates their main concern was the expansion of their territory. It continued: ‘Civil rights leaders would prompt the establishment of ‘free’ areas throughout Ulster, on the same lines as those which existed on the Falls Road and Bogside districts during the troubles of last year, if there was an extreme Unionist take-over.’⁹⁴⁷ The preoccupation of the London *Daily Telegraph* editorial was how its outcome could embarrass the British government.

⁹⁴¹ Redmond, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* pamphlet

⁹⁴² *Sunday Press*, Dublin 31 January 1971

⁹⁴³ Redmond, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* pamphlet

⁹⁴⁴ Greaves, *The Irish Crisis*, p132

⁹⁴⁵ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

⁹⁴⁶ NA, Civil rights/Bill of rights folder CJ 4/14

⁹⁴⁷ ‘C.R. Threat of More ‘Free’ Enclaves,’ *The News Letter*, 14 September 1970

Britain does not veto Ulster's choice of its Prime Minister, but it does insist on the acceptance of British standards in the field of civic rights. If Ulster repudiates its undertakings in this respect, Britain will impose direct rule. This would cause acute embarrassment and discomfort in London, Belfast, and Dublin, but it is a stark fact which Mr. Craig and his grass roots had better recognize.⁹⁴⁸

The *Sunday Press* called the bill a 'real dynamite' because it 'would make an awful lot of things illegal for Stormont. It would deprive them of a wide range of powers, including all the powers of oppression, and suppression.'⁹⁴⁹

The Bill of Rights - which is, in fact, much much more than a mere Bill or Rights - could offer the anti-Unionist opposition some new perspectives in taking the struggle against Stormont's phoney 'constitution' another practical step forward. Who knows what fruits another very legitimate series of immediate political demands might produce when a simple campaign for civil rights produced so much?⁹⁵⁰

The *Sunday Press* added the bill was more than humiliating: 'The Unionists nothing but the fate worse than death. It offers them a new settlement even more humiliating than the actual abolition of Stormont.'⁹⁵¹

The bill was widely supported by politicians, left organs, trade unions, and the two Irish Communist Parties. Just before Brockway was about to introduce it, he received a large number of encouragement letters from various organisations and individuals such as UNs, Amnesty international, universities such as Plater college, Oxford, independent academics, the electoral reform societies, individual republican prisoners, Irish/US organisations, International League for the rights of man in New York, Queen's University groups, amongst others.⁹⁵²

On 12 May 1971, Labour MP Arthur Latham who won the right to introduce a private member's bill introduced the Bill of Rights in the Commons and on the same day Brockway introduced it in the Lords. Latham presented the bill:

⁹⁴⁸ 'Hope for Ulster', *The Daily Telegraph*, September 3, 1970

⁹⁴⁹ *Sunday Press*, Dublin 31 January 1971

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid.

⁹⁵² FEBR.220a, NI correspondence folder

...I speak for the majority of United Kingdom citizens who see British lives lost and at risk, and British taxpayers' money expended, in Northern Ireland to maintain what in one set of language is called law and order and in another is said to uphold the authority of a Government who have fallen far behind the times....As Captain Terence O'Neill, as he then was, said after resigning as Prime Minister, in civil rights Northern Ireland is at least a hundred years behind the rest of the United Kingdom. I want to see the British Parliament pulling Northern Ireland, if not into the 1970s, somewhere towards them.⁹⁵³

W. F. Deeds reached a verdict:

I am not clear in my mind whether the hon. Gentleman's proposal is well-intentioned or simply mischievous. Either way, its consequences would be disastrous. That is why my right hon. and hon. Friends should reject the hon. Gentleman's Motion.⁹⁵⁴

The result was: Ayes 135, Noes 175. Both houses rejected the motion. The *ID* promptly printed all voted in favour of the bill. Regarding the Latham motion, the paper interpreted: 'the Tory Party had prepared an elaborate defence...they intended to maintain partition, and anything that weakened it would be against their policy.'⁹⁵⁵ While 'Lord Brockway's bill was not only accepted for introduction in the Lords but given a first reading. This was the first time in British Parliamentary history that a Bill was introduced on the same day in both Lords and Commons.'⁹⁵⁶ According to the paper, the Bill was presented 'in the form first drafted by the *ID*.' Coughlan claimed that this CA's progressive method in effect 'advocated a legislative straitjacket being imposed by the Westminster parliament on the subordinate Stormont assembly, which would at once outlaw discriminatory practices.' Therefore, it could 'guarantee civil rights and freedoms for the Northern nationalist population and removing the rational basis of the unionism of a lot of unionists – while at the same time permitting, and preferably encouraging, the devolved administration in the north to develop closer relations with the south.'⁹⁵⁷ The *ID* believed that 'the restoration of ordinary democracy would free thousands of potentially patriotic Protestants from

⁹⁵³ Hansard, Commons Debates, vol. 817, cc384-94 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1971/may/12/northern-ireland-bill-of-rights#S5CV0817P0> 19710512 HOC 239

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁵ 'These voted for bill of rights,' *Irish Democrat*, June 1971, p8

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p8

⁹⁵⁷ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

the fear of being odd men out, and create a healthy political society which would be bound to go forward to a united Ireland.’⁹⁵⁸ The bill was designed to achieve this goal.

Conclusion

The *CA/ID* repeatedly reminded MPs that reforms in the North were vital and urgent and proactively brought their attention to the Irish question. In this aspect, there is no doubt that the CA was the most active organ to push LP MPs on this issue and played a crucial part in the civil rights movement. Dixon claims that the CA was influential ‘on the LP in raising civil rights issues.’⁹⁵⁹ As the articles throughout the research period suggest, they constantly wrote letters to politicians - for example, to Northern Ireland Home Minister William Craig⁹⁶⁰ - organised internal meetings and sent CA delegates to discuss, drafted the Bill of Rights, supported local organisations in the North and engaged with LP politicians directly and closely in a diplomatic and constructive way. One of the most successful initiatives was when a deputation from the CA which consisted of Greaves, Eamonn MacLaughlin, Tom Leonard, Coughlan and Hostettler was received by British Labour politician Patrick Gordon-Walker at the House of Commons on June 5, 1961. They successfully made him promise to ‘facilitate a debate in the House on the questions of unemployment and civil liberties in the six counties and undertook to study the relevant sections of the Government of Ireland Act which the deputation had mentioned, providing a memorandum was sent to him.’⁹⁶¹ Prince asserts that this was ‘a significant turnaround in attitudes and it owed a great deal to the work of the CA.’⁹⁶² The full memorandum was always published in the paper after meetings with politicians. The CA was ‘at the centre of the network of connections between the Northern Irish opposition groups and the British Labour movement’.⁹⁶³

The civil rights movement put pressure on British and Irish authorities to reform the system in the North. By framing certain articles, the paper used the civil rights movement to push their own narratives. The CSJ and its allies successfully made Wilson promise that his government would

⁹⁵⁸ ‘A Bill of Rights,’ *Irish Democrat*, October 1968, p8

⁹⁵⁹ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p84

⁹⁶⁰ ‘Resign,’ *Irish Democrat*, April 1967, p2

⁹⁶¹ ‘This Is the Way to Free Ireland,’ *Irish Democrat*, July 1961, p4

⁹⁶² Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68*, p94

⁹⁶³ Prince, *Northern Ireland's '68*, p96

intervene to deal with discrimination, which ‘threw unionism into a panic.’⁹⁶⁴ Moreover, changing political and social climate and the world’s perspective on human rights issues especially through international newspapers and the availability of television that broadcasted the conditions of oppressed people across the globe was becoming increasingly unacceptable. The *Toronto Daily Star* in 1968 had a headline of Northern Ireland, ‘Where Catholics get the Negro treatment.’⁹⁶⁵ These all made the loyalist population further insecure as the *ID* headline in January 1969 read ‘Stormont regime stumbles into chaos.’⁹⁶⁶ Consequently, the IRA exploded. ‘What had started as a campaign for civil rights was developing into the age-old struggle for national rights.’⁹⁶⁷ Due to the ideological diversity - constitutional nationalists, institutional Marxist republicans, and unaligned revolutionary socialists (or ‘New Leftists’), ‘the movement was unable to congeal into a united front and rapidly disintegrated into its component parts in the face of rising sectarian violence.’⁹⁶⁸ Moreover, in the 1960s, although many IRA members and republicans were politicised and evolved to the left as they sought tangible changes, there was clearly some confusion regarding the meaning of the republican movement: ‘did it include Fianna Fail and the IWL, both these bodies aspiring to the all-Ireland Republic?’⁹⁶⁹ Johnston who was one of the chief politicisers recalled that towards the end of the 1960s, everyone was frustrated: ‘It seems we were increasingly up against the rampant theoretical confusion of the West European post-Stalinist Left, which popped up with depressing regularity to frustrate Greaves’s attempts to develop a broad consistent movement for the limited objective of civil rights in Northern Ireland.’⁹⁷⁰ The civil rights movement failed to get support from British people as they were not well informed to grasp the whole situation due to the national media and education system’s indifference and traditional prejudices.

Nevertheless, the civil rights movement paved a way in various aspects which led to the reforms of 1968-73 as the world witnessed abuses by the British authorities. The CA made the Irish question as a political issue, theorised and conceptualised it to a wider audience for solidarity. The

⁹⁶⁴ Dixon, *Northern Ireland: The Politics of War and Peace*, p74

⁹⁶⁵ *Toronto Daily Star*, October 19, 1968

⁹⁶⁶ ‘Stormont regime stumbles into chaos,’ *Irish Democrat*, January 1969, p1

⁹⁶⁷ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p17

⁹⁶⁸ Gagne, Michel Jacques, *The harp, the hammer and plough: The Northern Ireland civil rights movement and the world beyond, 1963–1969*, piii

⁹⁶⁹ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p122

⁹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p310

paper meticulously documented all the grievances, civil rights and labour-related issues as its organisation was putting pressure on the British government to reform and working with law makers and politicians. As the *ID/CA* initiated activities and diligently interpreted events, their footsteps in the civil rights movement were ubiquitous. But how much did this organisation and paper contribute to democratise Britain? Sean Redmond wrote in a pamphlet about the civil rights demands that the CA achieved: The B-Special Police force was abolished in 1969 as were the Special Powers Acts; The Flags and Emblems Act went, as did the Oath of Allegiance for public employment; Anti-discrimination legislation was introduced; A points system for the allocation of housing was put in place; the electoral system was reformed; The Irish question was placed back into British politics; Sympathetic support was won in the British Labour and trade union movement.⁹⁷¹ Moreover, Coughlan claims that the paper should be judged by reference to how successful the paper and the CA were in achieving certain political goals, namely (1) discrediting the majority Unionist regime in Northern Ireland, (2) encouraging opposition to the EEC/EU on democratic and internationalist grounds, and (3) defending the concept of the Nation State as the locus of modern political democracy.⁹⁷² In any case, they helped to clarify policies, contributed to the sense of common purpose and played a vital part in helping to build a labour movement. The *CC/CA* and the *IF/ID* went hand in hand as actions such as demonstrations and marches were announced and documented in the paper. Redmond retrospectively emphasised that ‘the establishment of a power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland and the all-Ireland bodies in 1999 is a vindication of the policy for uniting Ireland advocated by the CA, worked out by Greaves.’⁹⁷³ Coughlan also echoed that his Bill of rights did not bear fruit in his life time but his work ‘prefigured the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.’⁹⁷⁴ Greaves was influential in former president of Sinn Féin Gerry Adams’s thinking, although he did not agree every issue with Greaves:

What I liked and like still is the clarity of Greaves position on partition as a product of imperialism in Ireland. His writings focused me on the Government of Ireland Act and the need to remove this became a central part of my own focus as Sinn Féin developed its peace strategy. I am pleased that

⁹⁷¹ Redmond, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* pamphlet

⁹⁷² Correspondence between the author and Anthony Coughlan, January, 2021

⁹⁷³ Redmond, *Desmond Greaves & the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland* pamphlet

⁹⁷⁴ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p127

we managed to get rid of the Government of Ireland Act during the Good Friday Agreement negotiations.⁹⁷⁵

As it has shown, this section provides a new perspective to the issue of the labour movement through this paper. Compared with numerous Irish diaspora newspapers and political organisations in England in the past, working with the British government directly and strategically was the most unique aspect of this paper and organisation. Although their work to unite Ireland was unachievable, it was unprecedented activism and activist journalism within the context of Northern Irish politics as their efforts disrupted Unionists and eventually culminated to influence the policy of Northern Ireland.

⁹⁷⁵ Gerry Adams email correspondence with the author, May 11, 2022

Chapter Five: Framing Gaelic identity

The British conquest of Ireland had enormous cultural effects. The struggle for independence and yearning for their lost language and culture for extended periods of time undermined Irish people's sense of belonging and identity which had a devastatingly complicated cultural impact on them. For that reason, many newspapers in Ireland began to protest and developed as campaigning papers. Because of the way the English language developed in Ireland, its usage is unique, and deeply intertwined with history of struggles. Although Irish diaspora newspapers in England are typically written in English, they customarily contain a few Irish language articles or Irish-specific cultural pages which are composed of nationalistic poems, ballades, songs, short stories, and Gaelic sports articles. To distinguish its uniqueness from British culture, Irish culture and sports have been an essential component of the Irish diaspora press which helped to contribute to the development of the nationalist movement, as cultural groups such as the GL and the GAA emphasised on restoring the nationalistic spirit. Nationalistic Irish newspapers traditionally dedicated such pages which offered motivation to a cultural nationalist movement that manifested itself in waves. Correspondingly, although it was not always consistent in terms of quantity and quality, the *IF/ID* coverage included regular cultural and sports articles. The paper highlighted the Gaelic Irish dimension of Irish identity and promoted their unique culture in Britain. What role did the paper play in cultural and sports nationalism? This chapter continues with thematic subjects by looking at how the newspaper's coverage framed culture and sports articles.

Keep inventing

As a result of the British government's prohibition of the usage of Irish throughout Ireland, English was forcefully imposed. Irish was widely spoken until the Great Famine in the mid-nineteenth century which was the ultimate turning point of extinction. Apart from the loss of political and economic power, its effects on cultural identity were significant in addition to 'an accompanying psychology of self-doubt and dependency amongst the Irish.'⁹⁷⁶ The term Anglo-Irish implies, according to Norman Vance, 'a residual colonialism' and extreme nationalists believed that the increasing use of English throughout Ireland was 'the most insidious imperialism of all.'⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁷⁶ Kiberd, Declan, 1995, *Inventing Ireland*, Jonathan Cape, London, p6

⁹⁷⁷ Vance, Norman, 1990, *Irish Literature: A Social History*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, p12

Thomas MacDonagh⁹⁷⁸ defines the Irish nation as being based on ‘shared history and heritage rather than on solely civic or ethnic grounds,’⁹⁷⁹ while Ewart Milne eloquently describes that Irish literature is ‘a tree which is Gaelic in its roots and Anglo-Irish in its leaves and branches.’⁹⁸⁰ Roy Foster claims that the Irish ‘had their own psychological identification with Ireland, which was not threatened by an interest and a pride in the evidently ancient origins of Irish settlement and Irish culture.’⁹⁸¹

English is essentially the language of employment and education, therefore, some researchers assert that its economic motivation was more impactful. James Connolly pointed out that ‘the Gaelic Leaguer realises that capitalism did more in one century to destroy the tongue of the Gael than the sword of the Saxon did in six.’⁹⁸² Nevertheless, the impact of losing it and/or missing it became the recurrent theme and impulse for creativity. Various studies have been conducted by scholars namely Benedict Anderson and Declan Kiberd who argue that Ireland is invented. Kiberd suggested that for W. B. Yeats, ‘Ireland would be an imaginary homeland, the sort of place endlessly invented and reinvented by exiles who fear that, if they do not give it a local habitation in words, it may entirely disappear.’⁹⁸³ Connolly also wanted the past back and imagined the country they never had. Therefore, Foster has suggested that Connolly’s socialism is very closely linked to Gaelic Revival as he dreamed of a Gaelic utopia. However, Greaves pointed out that Connolly ‘neglected the Gaelic revival to his movement.’⁹⁸⁴ Olivier Coquelin argues that his ‘progressive revolutionary theories encompassed a reactionary dimension in line with a Marxist tradition to which he belonged.’⁹⁸⁵

Similar to the way the Irish press uses Irish words for headlines and a few sentences, its usage is also significant when speaking. At Irish nationalistic or cultural meetings or events, speakers

⁹⁷⁸ He was one of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic and, as such, was executed along with the other six signatories after the abortive 1916 Easter Rebellion.

⁹⁷⁹ Goek, *The Poetics of Cultural Nationalism: Thomas MacDonagh’s Literature in Ireland*, p22

⁹⁸⁰ ‘The Tapestry,’ *Irish Freedom*, March 1944, p8

⁹⁸¹ Foster, R.F., 1993, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History*, Allen Lane, London, p26

⁹⁸² Connolly, *Labour in Ireland*, p332

⁹⁸³ Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p99

⁹⁸⁴ Greaves, *James Connolly*, p69

⁹⁸⁵ Coquelin, Olivier, ‘A Reactionary Dimension in Progressive Revolutionary Theories? The Case of James Connolly’s Socialism Founded on the Re-Conversion of Ireland to the Celtic System of Common Ownership’ in *Department of Celtic Languages & Literatures publication, Harvard University*, (vol.28, 2008), p26

typically start by saying a few words in Irish before switching to English. The fact is that Irish is not a *lingua franca*, but it still has a great significance and needs to be used continuously. The common rhyming adage: *Is fearr Gaeilge bhriste, ná Béarla clíste* (broken Irish is better than clever English) reflects that although Irish is not used fluently, it is better to use it even just a few words rather than using English only. In order to keep reinventing Ireland, broken Irish is a perfect tool as it gives space for imagination. MacAmhlaigh asserts: ‘there is no doubt but that Irish speakers lose some of their innate dignity when they turn to speaking English.’⁹⁸⁶

Between 1880 and 1930, the Irish language and literary revival occurred throughout British cities⁹⁸⁷ as a broad cultural movement.⁹⁸⁸ Partition and its impact on Irish residents in England further brought a new nationalistic loyalty to Ireland and determination for a United Ireland as the Gaelic revival movement was coined as ‘the Irish-Ireland movement.’⁹⁸⁹ Irish cultural nationalism during the 1930s was also called ‘a polity-shaping movement,’⁹⁹⁰ which was around the time the CC started. Hutchinson claims that cultural nationalism was a distinctive ideological movement.⁹⁹¹ Irish nationalist organisations in England continuously emerged, reflecting British policies and society. Historically, British politics and Irish cultural activities have gone hand in hand. John Hutchinson highlights that cultural nationalism is ‘a transient, and a recurring movement, re-emerging at times of crisis.’⁹⁹² Certain historians tended to characterise cultural nationalism as Anglo-phobic and anti-Protestant. Foster noted ‘to a strong element in the GL, literature in English was Protestant as well as anti-national.’ But in effect, Kiberd contests that nationalism in Ireland was a broad and comprehensive movement, containing progressive as well as conservative elements.⁹⁹³

Newspapers promote nationalism

⁹⁸⁶ MacAmhlaigh, *An Irish Navvy*, p94

⁹⁸⁷ In Ireland, the foundation stone of cultural nationalism was laid by the Young Ireland movement of the 1840s, which sought to revive the country's language and culture.

⁹⁸⁸ Cleary, Joe, ‘Postcolonial Ireland’, in Kenny, Kevin, (ed.), 2004, *Ireland and The British Empire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p257

⁹⁸⁹ Hepburn, *The Conflict of Nationality in Modern Ireland*, p5

⁹⁹⁰ Hutchinson, John, 1987, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*, Allen & Unwin, London, p312

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p196

⁹⁹² *Ibid.*, p40

⁹⁹³ Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p642

The formation of Irish nationalism took many years, if not centuries. Irish and Irish diaspora newspapers traditionally contributed to this formation process. Anderson asserts that ‘the print-languages laid the bases for national consciousnesses and print-capitalism gave a new fixity to language and created languages of power.’⁹⁹⁴ He further argues that ‘nationality and nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind’⁹⁹⁵ and nationalism was invented in print language as ‘a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together’.⁹⁹⁶ Irish nationalism and the press always had a symbiotic relationship. For this reason, the Irish press industry and journalism for the most part developed as a campaigning tool along with the nationalist movement and Irish culture played a vital role in this process. Scholars, such as Legg, identified ‘a powerful and self-reinforcing relationship existed between newspapers and nationalism’ from the mid-nineteenth century on.

The Irish diaspora press typically promoted Irish nationalist interest. For famine immigrants in the US, ‘nationalism became a cornerstone of Irish-American identity’ as it was ‘born in part from a sense of inferiority that was amplified by the isolation and hostility of the immigration experience.’⁹⁹⁷ The Irish diaspora press during the Victorian time in England was ‘intimately involved in promoting all aspects of what has been termed cultural nationalism’ such as the promotion of Irish, Gaelic customs, sports, literature, the creation and celebration of the national story.⁹⁹⁸ At the end of the nineteenth century, the role of the press was to spread the Gaelic revival and to unite people for the Irish cause. The common belief that things were better and great in the past before it was destroyed was mythologised. Legg suggested that it was journalists who used the past ‘to create the ideal of Ireland’s present.’⁹⁹⁹ However, some researchers, such as Vance, argue that ‘English-language Celtic revivalism was an aesthetic diversion rather than a genuine national movement.’¹⁰⁰⁰

In general, immigrant workers in foreign countries are keener to acquire knowledge and

⁹⁹⁴ Anderson, Benedict, 1983, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, p44-5

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid., p4

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid., p36

⁹⁹⁷ Mulcrone, *The Famine Irish and the Irish-American Press*, p51

⁹⁹⁸ McNicholas, *Politics, Religion and the Press*, p342

⁹⁹⁹ Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism*, p207

¹⁰⁰⁰ Vance, *Irish Literature: A Social History*, p11

information. Therefore, their lives tend to be more press-oriented than people who remained in their own countries. This applies to working class Irish people in Ireland. Due to long colonisation and inequality they had experienced, they felt alienated in their own land. Kibert claims that for Irish people speaking English in their own country, their lives conducted through ‘the medium of English became itself a sort of exile.’ Therefore, ‘the revival of the native language was an inevitable protest against such homogenisation.’¹⁰⁰¹ Under these circumstances, a large number of radical newspapers existed in Ireland as a form of protest.

During the *IF* period, articles, and stories with an angle of cultural nationalism appeared sporadically in relation to Irish unification. The *IF* appealed to readers: ‘without the unity of our country there can be no Gaelic revival and without Gaelic culture unity would make Ireland just another English province; for until Ireland is free, we shall never be at peace, and peace is essential to cultural revival.’¹⁰⁰² Although there was a general culture page which mainly contained book reviews in the early 1940s, republican poems and other Gaelic nationalistic articles as a part of the cultural movement were not on the newspaper’s top agenda as the *IF/ID* did not have a clear editorial policy on culture/sports in the early years. After Greaves took the helm, cultural articles started appearing on a regular basis. As Irish journalism evolved through the struggle against imperialism and the press was viewed as a useful vehicle to spread cultural nationalism, the *IF/ID* followed the same pattern. In parallel with the theme of keeping memories alive, every issue of the newspaper printed Irish culture-specific articles by providing a republican dimension of Irish identity through nationalistic poems, songs, and short stories. For example, Tyrants of Ulster by G.J.H. Clarke,¹⁰⁰³ Old Skibbereen poem,¹⁰⁰⁴ Let Erin Remember by Thomas Moore,¹⁰⁰⁵ Poetry and Songs for the Irish People,¹⁰⁰⁶ and Irish Song.¹⁰⁰⁷

Poems have a unique place in Irish history and powerful connotations in Ireland. Since ancient times, the link between literature and politics has been strong. Vincent Buckley has claimed that

¹⁰⁰¹ Kibert, *Inventing Ireland*, p2

¹⁰⁰² ‘Partition and the Gaelic Revival,’ *Irish Freedom*, September 1939, p7

¹⁰⁰³ *Irish Democrat*, October 1952

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Irish Democrat*, July 1954

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Irish Democrat*, September 1958

¹⁰⁰⁶ *Irish Democrat*, January 1961

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Irish Democrat*, October 1965

‘myths of nationality and of struggle live in the Irish psyche which exist in poetry which is the most myth-saturated of all the artistic forms.’¹⁰⁰⁸ Poems in Ireland are considered as more than a form of artistic expression but a powerful medium. According to an ancient literary tradition, the poet, or ancient *file*, had ‘the capacity to curse their enemies and to bless their allies with prosperity.’¹⁰⁰⁹ Regina Chollatáin explains that the *file* had two main functions: he kept a record of laws and told magnificent tales. The main role of the *file* was ‘a public official, a chronicler, a political essayist, a keen and satirical observer of his fellow countrymen.’¹⁰¹⁰ Therefore, ‘Gaelic bards were perceived as a particular obstacle by the colonisers as they were figures of political influence in their own right, second only to the chieftains, to whom they sat next in council.’¹⁰¹¹ Poets have been regarded highly and their role has evolved throughout centuries. Kiberd states that although the link between sedition and literature had been always visible, during the period of the Gaelic revival, ‘it became a version of the connection between violence and poetry.’¹⁰¹²

Grief and nationalistic poems, ballads and songs are all interconnected and a stable feature of the Irish diaspora press, including the *IF/ID*. Jeffrey Richards claims that ‘the songs which stress loss, tears, sorrows, battle and death became an integral part of the nationalist sensibility.’¹⁰¹³ Post-famine emigration songs emerging out of the popular tradition invariably attributed ‘the leaving of Ireland to secular imperatives identified particularly with landlords and oppressive English rule.’¹⁰¹⁴ Patrick Ward notes when Irish people crossed the Atlantic and the Irish Sea, they carried thousands of songs and ballads with them. In Victorian England, most of ballads and poems in the Irish press were intended to ‘keep alive a memory of the homeland, its towns, landscapes, people, customs and history,’¹⁰¹⁵ even though they were not ‘great or even good literature.’¹⁰¹⁶ In effect, those did not need to be eloquent. McNicholas explains that ‘the literature functioned as an intrinsic part of the political project of the nationalist press-engendering and sustaining a shared identity, a

¹⁰⁰⁸ Buckley, Vincent, ‘Poetry and the Avoidance of Nationalism’, in MacDonagh, Oliver, *et al*, (ed.), 1983, *Irish Culture and Nationalism 1750-1950*, The Macmillan Press, Houndmills, p259

¹⁰⁰⁹ Chollatáin, Regina, Uí, Irish Language Revival and ‘Cultural Chaos’: Sources and Scholars in Irish Language Journalism, in *the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, vol. 30 (2010), p277

¹⁰¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p277

¹⁰¹¹ Kiberd, *Irish Literature and Irish History*, p281

¹⁰¹² *Ibid.*, p288

¹⁰¹³ Richards, *Ireland, the Empire and Film*, p29

¹⁰¹⁴ Ward, Patrick, 2002, *Exile, Emigration and Irish Writing*, Irish Academic Press, Dublin, p134

¹⁰¹⁵ McNicholas, *Politics, Religion and the Press*, p198

¹⁰¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p198

sense of worth, celebrating achievement and galvanising the exiles into political involvement.’¹⁰¹⁷ Poetry and serial fiction pages were already stable ingredients of Irish diaspora newspapers of the 1860s¹⁰¹⁸ and it remained a steady feature in the next century as the *IF/ID* shows. McNicholas emphasises that the role of poetry and fiction in cultural nationalism is not limited to recalling past heroes, but to recounting ‘in dramatic form, the struggles of the present.’¹⁰¹⁹

In the case of the *IF/ID*, it interpreted workers’ struggle against capitalist companies, landlords, the unfair system, and ultimately, Britain. Diaspora populations and newspapers utilised songs and poems to keep memories alive and constantly reminded readers that the struggle was on-going. After Greaves became editor, Irish language articles, culture news/stories, poems became an indispensable feature as he supported and believed in the cultural movement. Although the paper primarily promoted democracy, republican poems appeared regularly in order to instil into readers as they were still fighting and there was still much to be done. The literature page was the place for poems, both in English and Irish, rebel ballads, recitations, short plays, essays, and speeches. Most repeated poems were about Kevin Barry, Thomas Moore, George Fox, Thomas Davies, Liam Mellows, Wolfe Tone, and The Irish Rover, Tyrants of Ulster, Old Skibbereen poem, Let Erin Remember, amongst others. The *ID* printed a special song-sheet for Christmas, two-page of Irish songs as a Christmas gift from the *ID*. Songs were the most popular feature amongst male construction workers. Coughlan who sold the paper in pubs and on streets, recalled that workers always asked whether there were songs in the paper and many of them bought it because of the songs.¹⁰²⁰ This indicates that songs and poems had social bonding and entertainment elements amongst the diaspora community, although it could be more symbolic, as songs and poems were second-hand and obtained by a scissors-and-paste quick method. However, not all readers were happy to see rebellious poems and bitter remarks on British imperialism scattered across the pages. A reader complained that they should not be printed:

...like looking at items in the Irish Museum as it keeps festering sores open you will keep bigotry, prejudice, and hatred alive and active. England has always been the scapegoat for Irishmen’s

¹⁰¹⁷ McNicholas, *Politics, Religion and the Press*, p198

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p343

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p346

¹⁰²⁰ Correspondence between the author and Anthony Coughlan, January 2021

incompetence and laziness. If partition ended tomorrow, you would think of something else to belly about. My advice to you is stop stirring up ancient wrongs and old legends and face facts; what the British did in Ireland was a Christmas party compared with what the Germans did to the Jews. Stop perverting young Irishmen's minds with ancient junk and old scrap that should have been buried and forgotten years ago; your paper is a fossil it has no relation whatsoever to the twentieth century. Nationalism is finished; our future is with Britain. We have had enough of civil wars, without your fanatics starting another.¹⁰²¹

The paper acknowledged some dissidents but continued to publish republican poems and songs.

Gaeltacht

The coverage of the Irish language policy of Ireland and issues related to the Gaeltacht frequently appeared throughout the research period. The *ID* was aware that 'reviving a language is not the task of a year or of a decade; a century may be too short.'¹⁰²² The paper interpreted Gaeltacht's significance by constantly reminding readers of it with feature stories about Gaelic Ireland: 'The Irishman who does not know Gaelic is still an Irishman, but he is an Irishman who has been robbed of a priceless possession by British Imperialism.'¹⁰²³ As a supporter of the Irish language movement, the paper offered a place to discuss by printing both sides of the argument. However, from an economic point of view, some critics attacked and questioned its practicability. In August 1943, Brendon Keogh criticised the fact that the propagation of the Gaelic language in the South, claiming that it would isolate Ireland into a Gaelic-speaking glasshouse, while in October 1943, Charles Duff, former lecturer in language teaching, Institute of Education, university of London, wrote that a language was an incalculable power. Articles about the future of Gaeltacht was often discussed in the paper. The *IF/ID*'s position was clear as it continuously encouraged the usage of language through its featured articles on the Gaeltacht, Irish language, and cultural revival. For example, in October 1944, there was an article about Gaelic language revival and its importance, which was an extract from the Editorial in *Irish People*, the official organ of the Irish Labour Party. The *ID* blamed Britain for the poverty in the Gaeltacht, which was a severe issue, and the decline in native speakers due to emigration as one of the biggest factors.

¹⁰²¹ 'Letter,' *Irish Democrat*, September 1963, p4

¹⁰²² 'Attack on Irish language,' *Irish Democrat*, August 1966, p5

¹⁰²³ 'Language and Life,' *Irish Democrat*, October 1962, p3

The *ID* condemned Fine Gael's anti-language policy and the Fine Gael-sponsored attacks on the Irish language and culture which have seriously alarmed the Irish language movement. It argued that the attack on the Irish language was not just on a system of sounds, or an accumulation of culture but it was an attack on the separateness of the Irish nation. 'Even those Irish people who know little Irish and have perhaps neither the ability nor the time to improve it, should want the language preserved, want the Irish nation preserved.' The paper offered an interpretation of the reason why Britain wants Gaelic out of the way.

First because the effort to revive and maintain Gaelic is a rejection of absorption into Britain. British policy is the absorption of Ireland, economically first, then politically. That absorption is meant to benefit big British manufacturers. If Ireland's four million can be added to Lancashire factory can have a longer production run, and its owners make more money. The existence of independent Irish thought is a menace to the British imperial plan of getting long production runs thanks to monopolising the Irish market.¹⁰²⁴

Gerry Adams believes that:

the Irish language is the reconquest of Ireland, and the reconquest of Ireland is the Irish language. A failure to grasp this, apart from a legitimate patriotic desire to restore our own language and maintain a separate Irish cultural identity, means that, as a dustbin of Anglo-American culture, we will be morally, psychologically, intellectually, and materially worse off.¹⁰²⁵

The paper had no power over the language policy in Ireland but hoped the Labour Party would 'take a firm and convincing stand' as it has been given a big opportunity to increase its political support and 'there are many in the language movement who hope Labour will be able to grasp it.'¹⁰²⁶

Gaelic League

¹⁰²⁴ 'Rally to defence of language,' *Irish Democrat*, October 1966, p5

¹⁰²⁵ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p148

¹⁰²⁶ 'Rally to defence of language,' *Irish Democrat*, October 1966, p5

The GL was one of the most vital and ubiquitous organisations to spread the language/cultural movement. The GL of London was founded in October 1896 and helped to reinforce national identity for Irish people living abroad.¹⁰²⁷ They had their own journals such as *Féile na nGaedheal* and *Guth na nGaedheal* but were written in English. Therefore, Foster has argued that the real point of proceedings was ‘to create a sense of national solidarity among Irish immigrants rather than to extend the knowledge and use of the Irish language among the Irish abroad.’¹⁰²⁸ Nevertheless, it had a significant impact on diaspora society. ‘If the emigrant experience could be said to have helped shape the cultural and educational progress of the GL, chief amongst its principal institutions was the London GL.’¹⁰²⁹ Greaves also acknowledged that the London GL played an ‘enormous part in the building up of the national organisation.’¹⁰³⁰ The *ID* grew increasingly convinced of the importance of Irish and Gaelic organisations as it reflected in the paper.

During the height of Irish emigration in the 1950s, there was a Gaelic revival in London and other English cities amongst Irish residents and numerous GL branches sprang up throughout England as various *ID* articles indicate. *IF/ID* advertisements and letters to the Editor suggest that numerous places throughout English cities offered Irish lessons through the GL, and some people eagerly learned it simultaneously, although it is difficult to estimate the extent of proficiency. According to the paper, social functions were vital for all recruiting activities. The GL traditionally functioned as a recruiting medium for the Irish Republican Brotherhood. During the research period, the GL was also used as a recruiting ground for trade unionists and CC/CA members. The GL provided not only language classes but various cultural events and history classes which were constantly advertised in the *IF/ID*. In this process, the GL’s function was mostly a bonding agent as well as being symbolic. There was no conflict for newly arrived immigrants and those who were faithful to Catholic faith when they participated in GL activities, as the Catholic Church supported the GL for the purpose of de-anglicisation. James Joyce noted that many priests were supporting the GL,

¹⁰²⁷ Foster, R.F., 2014, *Vivid Faces: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland 1890-1923*, Penguin Books, London, p53

¹⁰²⁸ *Ibid.*, p54

¹⁰²⁹ Gannon, Darragh, ‘Celticism in Exile: The London Gaelic League, 1917-1921,’ in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, vol. 30 (2010), p83

¹⁰³⁰ Greaves, *Reminiscences of the Connolly Association*, p8

seeing in Irish culture a bulwark against modernism.¹⁰³¹

In addition to GL event notices, GL-related articles appeared regularly in the newspaper. Regular advertisements of language promotion were published and notices of Irish lessons which were typically offered through the GL and other nationalistic and cultural groups which included socials: dance, music and Irish film viewing. Belonging to a Gaelic group and learning the language may have contributed to the cultural nationalist movement in London but it was foremost a practical and social meeting point for Irish workers and residents. Hutchinson stresses that cultural nationalism has ‘a politics which is different from that of the political nationalist in its goals and modes of organisation.’¹⁰³² The *ID* believed cultural nationalism will be beneficial for creating a movement in Britain and constantly appealed to readers to be part of the GL and the GAA.

The cultivation of national games, and of the language and culture of Ireland, helped to give people confidence in Irish nationality, and these organisations were performing a difficult but important task. At the same time, he (Greaves) hoped the Gaelic League and G.A.A would try to interest British sports and cultural organisations in Irish achievements, because by so doing they would help to arouse a respect for Irish nationality among the British people, and also help the friendship of the peoples. They could in this way perform an important missionary service. There were at present five Irish organisations in Britain; as well as the cultural bodies there were the Anti-Partition League, the Sinn Féin and the Connolly Association. It was known there were points of disagreement, but the Connolly Association did not denounce other Irish bodies but concentrated on propagating its own point of view. He still hoped for a basis of co-operation, and he hoped all would unite and ask for the help of progressive people in Britain – the working-class movement in particular.¹⁰³³

The paper identified Irish and Irish cultural activities as essential and attempted to instigate a labour movement amongst Irish workers. The importance of Gaelic revival was re-examined by Tim Enright in the newspaper as he advised:

...A union of the Labour, Republican and Gaelic movements is needed as never before. They have

¹⁰³¹ Kiberd, *Irish Literature and Irish History*, p300

¹⁰³² Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, p15

¹⁰³³ ‘Support the Gaelic League and the G.A.A’, *Irish Democrat*, September 1953, p6

drifted apart, and each is the weaker for it. Combined once again, as in the glorious days of Easter 1916, they would bring a new impetus to Irish politics, scatter the apathy and cynicism, and return to power a progressive government, pledged to abolish partition, end an economic system bankrupt in every direction, and save from extinction the Gaelic language and culture which are the birth-right of all the people of Ireland. As Thomas Davis said: ‘A nation should guard its language more than its territories – ‘tis a surer barrier, and more important frontier, than fortress or river.’¹⁰³⁴

Greaves hoped cultural activities would take place in the trade union movement. He attended a meeting of *Sceim na gCeardcumainn*, a trade-union based Irish language group, in Dublin in July 1964. After returning to Ireland, former CA members, in particular Coughlan actively cultivated initiatives. Greaves attributed the origins and objective of the movement in Ireland to ‘Tony Coughlan, Packy Early and others for introducing the Gaelic language and ‘Irish Irelandism’ into the trade union movement, and a very queer outfit it seemed.’¹⁰³⁵ Early was a IWL member and former CA member. Simultaneously, Coughlan wrote regular articles in the *ID* by asserting the language gives a sense of direction:

traditionally the struggle to revive the language has been part of the general national fight against imperialism. Although Ireland is independent now, without the language, people are confused in political purpose and unsure of the direction of the nation, are sceptical and disquieted when asked to work for the revival of Irish. Why should we stand for the restoration of the Irish language? Principally, because Irish is an important bulwark of our nationality, a mark of our distinctness as a nation and a valuable help to us in preserving our national independence. Also, because it is so intimately bound up with our historical and cultural traditions and is of value from a linguistic and literary viewpoint in its own right.¹⁰³⁶

The *ID* continuously published similar articles which indicate that it was committed to bringing cultural activities to the next level.

¹⁰³⁴ ‘The Gaelic Revival Re-Examined, *Irish Democrat*, June 1958, p5

¹⁰³⁵ Johnston, *Century of Endeavour*, p178

¹⁰³⁶ ‘Irish Language Probe’, *Irish Democrat*, March 1964, p4

Although the GL traditionally banned on politics, its activities were intricately political. When Hungarian émigrés marched through Birmingham in 1956, the *ID* was upbeat as it reported that local GL group was associated with the procession: ‘the Gaelic League is now free to take an active part in political struggles for the ending of partition.’¹⁰³⁷ Although this was not an official confirmation of lifting the ban, it suggests that it is impossible to separate cultural activities from nationalistic activities within the context of Irish history.

The paper promoted the GL and supported all Irish cultural groups by promoting their initiatives in the paper, nevertheless, there was a drawback due to the CA’s reputation. Sean O’Oran, a CA member and Gaelic teacher pleaded in the *ID*.

The fact that the overwhelming number of Irish in London have no knowledge that these classes are held is one reason for the miserable attendance and the possibility of discontinuation...I think it should be the duty of CA members themselves to attend these classes and by learning their language become the complete, as they are the finest type, Irishman. In two years’ attendance at classes I have not met a single member of our Association. The *ID* was unknown to most of my fellow students, and treated with suspicion and distrust by those who knew of it. I am happy to report that 20 per cent of the class plus the teacher are now regular monthly readers.¹⁰³⁸

CA branches initiated to recruit language learners in numerous occasions as it was repeatedly advertised in the paper.¹⁰³⁹

Gaelic revival was not only in England, but also occurred in the North. In the 1960s, in parallel with the civil rights movement, there was a considerable revival in the North. Gerry Adams states that this was ‘the first time it has ever happened within a working-class community.’¹⁰⁴⁰ It was during the time when songs, flags, rituals, monuments, names, languages were banned. The cultural struggle was part of the politics of legitimation and culture was considered one of the arenas of conflict in Northern Ireland and cultural inequality one of its important sources.¹⁰⁴¹ The

¹⁰³⁷ ‘Gaelic League ends ban on politics?’ *Irish Democrat*, December 1956, p1

¹⁰³⁸ ‘A plea for Gaelic,’ *Irish Democrat*, September 1963, p4

¹⁰³⁹ ‘Gaelic,’ *Irish Democrat*, January 1958, p1

¹⁰⁴⁰ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p145

¹⁰⁴¹ Ruane, *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, p202-3

Gaelic revival movement was observed in both republicans and general community. Those who were detained in particular were actively involved with the language movement. According to Adams ‘they are denied the right to receive publications or letters in Irish or to speak Irish during visits; they are forbidden even to wear the Fáinne.’^{1042,1043} Adams recalls that the civil rights struggle in the late 1960s provided ‘a broad enough appeal to bring out a substantial proportion of the anti-imperialist population’ and ‘the activists of the Irish language movement had until then ploughed a lonely furrow but the repression directed against the civil rights struggle, followed by internment, re-awakened a consciousness about our language and culture.’¹⁰⁴⁴ Similar to other subjects, Irish culture is multi-dimensional, within the context of Northern Ireland, which has layers of connotations. Joseph Ruane sums up that ‘culture, essentially identity, values, norms, ethos, world view, sense of place in history and in the world, extends another arena for conflict in the North.’¹⁰⁴⁵

The *IF/ID* resonated with Pádraig Pearse’s quote *Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam*, (A country without a language is a country without a soul) and Martin O’Brennan’s ‘the decline of a nation’s language resulted in the decline of the nation itself.’¹⁰⁴⁶ The *ID* had some Irish language articles although they did not appear on a regular basis and the length of articles were not consistent. Those articles are normally around 200 words and headlines were also simple and short. This is probably connected to the availability of writers. M. D’Andun contributed at the end of the 1940s and early 1950s and T. Maclurachta started writing in his column *Inniu Agus Inne* in 1956 and lasted for a couple of months. Another equally short articles and short headlines sporadically appeared but without bylines: *Pairti Nua*¹⁰⁴⁷ and *Roinn na Gael Tachta*,¹⁰⁴⁸ and *Na fír Ghorma*.¹⁰⁴⁹ Eventually, Irish articles completely disappeared in the 1960s probably due to availability of writers.

Reviews

¹⁰⁴² An Fáinne is a pin badge worn by the people to show fluency in Irish.

¹⁰⁴³ Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, p148

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid., p144

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ruane, *The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, p178

¹⁰⁴⁶ Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism*, p232

¹⁰⁴⁷ ‘*Pairti Nua*’, *Irish Democrat*, August 1958

¹⁰⁴⁸ ‘*Roinn na Gael Tachta*’, *Irish Democrat*, September 1958

¹⁰⁴⁹ ‘*Na fír Ghorma*’, *Irish Democrat*, November 1958

As was the case with Communist and radical newspapers, the book review page was the most stable cultural feature of the *IF/ID* throughout the research period, in order to promote education. The first book review article appeared in February 1939. It was the *Last Quarrel* by Hugh Delargy, published by the Irish APL.¹⁰⁵⁰ Gradually, the newspaper established a whole book review page in page seven, although not always consistently. They received books from various bookshops and most reviewed subjects included Irish history, Irish literature, republicanism, imperialism, fascism, nationalism, socialism, communism, Marxism, poetry, cultural revival, amongst other topics. The *IF/ID* was written from an internationalist perspective and this rhetoric was used in the culture section upon reviewing books and it framed such views. In November 1946, when reviewing T.A. Jackson's *Ireland Her Own* - one of the most popular books amongst left-wing and communist readers in those days - Charles Duff wrote 'A Nazi journalist told me in 1936 or thereabouts that his Fuhrer was a student of the highly important part of history known as the rise of British Imperialism and that the great Hitler had a shelf of specially-made translations relating to Irish history – because he regarded this as the key to the rest.'¹⁰⁵¹ The newspaper also mentioned Irish republican themed films, such as *Odd Man Out*, *I See a Dark Stranger* and *Shake Hands with the Devil*.¹⁰⁵² Photos of Kathleen Ryan, Deborah Kerr with Liam Redmond and other Irish actresses appeared in the front page. The paper framed the Irish immigrants' positive contribution to the film industry in the US by using James Cagney's quote: 'Irish people typically started life the hard way in the US, but Irish actors are found everywhere, in most of the large and famous Irish colony in Hollywood.'¹⁰⁵³

Sports and nationalism

Sports coverage in the media is a relatively new phenomenon. Until the early nineteenth century, sport was very marginal to the news agenda.¹⁰⁵⁴ The Edwardian era saw pressure on daily newspapers to increase their sporting coverage and regular fixture lists within many spectator sports provided a steady flow of stories.¹⁰⁵⁵ In parallel to cultural coverage, sports were also a regular and typical feature of the Irish diaspora press as it was highly political within the Irish

¹⁰⁵⁰ 'Book Reviews,' *Irish Freedom*, February 1939, p6

¹⁰⁵¹ 'An English Marxist Looks at Ireland's 700 years Fight for Freedom,' *Irish Democrat*, November 1946, p7

¹⁰⁵² 'James Cagney has Given Up Socking,' *Irish Freedom*, March 1944, p7

¹⁰⁵³ *Ibid.*, p7

¹⁰⁵⁴ Boyle, *Power Play: Sport, the Media & Popular Culture*, p25

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p27

historical context, deeply related to the struggle for independence. Raymond Boyle outlines its focus on symbols, winning, competition, partisan fans and in team games the necessity of collective struggle, and ‘few other cultural forms lend themselves as easily as sport to being used as an indicator of certain national characteristics and, by extension, of being representative of a national identity.’¹⁰⁵⁶ It serves multiple purposes: it is a ‘symbolic extension of various collective identities’¹⁰⁵⁷; it offers newspapers a constant source of news and gossip¹⁰⁵⁸; it acts as ‘the interface between sporting, political and ideological discourses of identity and meaning’¹⁰⁵⁹; an arena of cultural struggle, in which oppressed groups use it as a form of symbolic resistance.¹⁰⁶⁰

Early *IF* issues had no sports coverage but along with the growing circulation, sports articles gradually started appearing on a regular basis normally on page 7 or 8, which is the last page, in the 1940s and 1950s, although not always consistently and some issues had no sports coverage, which was related to sports writers’ availability. Sport is a great unifier. The first sports article appeared in March 1943.¹⁰⁶¹ From this issue and through the 1950s, a typical issue contained sports coverage and some issues dedicated a whole page to sports news.¹⁰⁶² It was the period when the newspaper circulation was relatively high, and it had a light-hearted tabloid journalism appearance which was accompanied with political satire cartoons and puzzles. In January 1951, two anti-partitionists Finbarr O’Sullivan and Eamon O’Connell joined to cover GAA and sports news. According to the newspaper, its major sports coverage was GAA results and fixtures and boxing. Other short newsflash or news round up appeared sporadically on a small scale which included greyhounds and horse racing, rugby, tennis, table tennis, athletics, sailing, pools, cycling and motor cycling.¹⁰⁶³ However, the newspaper gradually started carrying less sports coverage and eventually, it completely disappeared in the 1960s along with cartoons and puzzles, as the paper became more serious looking in terms of contents. According to Coughlan, the change of outlook did not come from the editorial decision but simply due to the availability of expert writers.¹⁰⁶⁴ Personally,

¹⁰⁵⁶ Boyle, *Power Play: Sport, the Media & Popular Culture*, p143

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p147

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p166

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p144

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p145

¹⁰⁶¹ ‘GAA Results,’ *Irish Freedom*, March 1943, p2

¹⁰⁶² For example, the March 1946 issue dedicated to a sports page on page 6.

¹⁰⁶³ For example, ‘Spotlight on sport,’ *Irish Democrat*, 1948 January, p6

¹⁰⁶⁴ Interview with Coughlan, December 2020

Greaves was not interested in sports at all, but ‘he would have been happy if there was the coverage of sports in the newspaper.’¹⁰⁶⁵

GAA

In Ireland, there are infinite complexities in the relationship between sport and politics, and sport and national identity.¹⁰⁶⁶ Throughout four decades between the 1880s and the 1910s, ‘a diverse movement called the Gaelic Renaissance occurred and the revival of the Gaelic games was a hallmark of this movement and a strong pronouncement of Irish nationalism.’¹⁰⁶⁷ Patrick McDevitt highlights that ‘the spiritual aspects of Gaelic games were considered partial compensation for lack of Irish independence in the present, while the physical benefits were viewed as guarantors of the independence in the future.’¹⁰⁶⁸ Founded in 1884, the GAA promoted Gaelic football and hurling ‘as antidotes to the imputed unmanliness of the Irish male.’¹⁰⁶⁹ Because the GAA was a political organisation and mass movement, it had a couple of newspapers to spread the message to a wider audience. The *Celtic Times* was established in 1887, the *Gael* in 1887, the *Champion* in 1903-4 and the *Gaelic Athlete* from 1912 to 1916, although these titles were all ephemeral. Many GAA players identified themselves as soldiers. In 1916, approximately 350 of the estimated 1,500 rebels who rose during Easter Week were GAA members.¹⁰⁷⁰ After partition, the GAA still had an important role to play as it helped ‘healing Civil War divisions’¹⁰⁷¹ as a cathartic agent in this process, while the GAA in Ulster also evolved as ‘an influential social organisation within the Catholic community but avoided the prominent political role of its southern counterpart.’¹⁰⁷² The London GAA was very active and arranged league matches on a regular basis. In London alone, there were 56 affiliated clubs at one point.¹⁰⁷³ Gaelic or cultural activities always encouraged newly arrived young workers from Ireland to join the movement and ignite enthusiasm. One of the

¹⁰⁶⁵ Interview with Anthony Coughlan, December 2020

¹⁰⁶⁶ Rouse, Paul and O’Carroll, Ross, ‘Sport and War: The 1915 All-Ireland hurling championship’, in Ferriter, Diarmaid and Riordan, Susannah., (ed.) 2015, *Years of Turbulence: The Irish Revolution and Its Aftermath*, University College Dublin Press, Dublin, p64

¹⁰⁶⁷ McDevitt, Patrick, 2004, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p15-16

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid., p23

¹⁰⁶⁹ Kiberd, *Irish Classics*, p390

¹⁰⁷⁰ Rouse and O’Carroll, *Sport and War: The 1915 All-Ireland hurling championship*, p64

¹⁰⁷¹ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, p354

¹⁰⁷² McAllister, *The Northern Ireland Social Democratic & Labour Party*, p75

¹⁰⁷³ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p129

most high-profile migrant workers was Michael Collins. Before becoming a revolutionary leader, he worked for the Royal Mail in West London, joined the London GAA and became involved with the republican movement. After Collins, scores of youngsters followed in his footsteps and became republicans through Gaelic sports in London, as newspaper articles demonstrate. This proves that exile is indeed ‘the nursery of nationalism’, in the words of Lord Acton.¹⁰⁷⁴ A statistical study suggests, according to Foster, ‘a correlation between foreign residence and extremism as between forty and fifty per cent of the future revolutionary leaders had lived in Britain or were of returned emigrant stock namely Connolly and Larkin.’¹⁰⁷⁵

Many scholars acknowledge the GAA’s efficient organisational skills and highly structured functions. Compared to the IRB, the GL, and other nationalist movements, Alan Bairner stresses that the GAA’s ‘symbolic power and the organisational skill were significant,’¹⁰⁷⁶ while Conor Cruise O’Brien stated that it was ‘one of the most successful and original mass movements.’¹⁰⁷⁷ W. F. Mandle outlines the GAA is more than the nationalist tradition but ‘the tradition of Irish nationalism with multiple forms, such as of Catholicism, the secret societies, the language movement, ascribed peasant virtue, and increasing political and social resentment of the English.’¹⁰⁷⁸ As the *IF/ID* coverage proves that the GAA was not just a sporting group but it had overlapping functions as it was part of language and trade union movements. The fact that many GAA members were trade unionists means that the GAA was one of indispensable elements of the trade union movement and functioned as an organ to support the workers’ cause both in Ireland and England. The GAA had been organising games in Ireland in support of the strikers¹⁰⁷⁹ and many GAA members in England were also actively supporting them. Sean O’Casey who ‘threw himself into the workers’ struggle with typically whole-hearted enthusiasm’ wrote the GAA has ‘nobly taken its stand with the workers’.¹⁰⁸⁰ As a highly organised organisation, the GAA had attempted to highlight its purpose as the epitome of solidarity. Along with the GL, the GAA in the early twentieth century was viewed as ‘the transformative power’ which attempted ‘to define a

¹⁰⁷⁴ Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America: The Politics of Exile, 1798-1998*, p3-4

¹⁰⁷⁵ Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p299

¹⁰⁷⁶ Bairner, Alan, ‘Ireland, Sport and Empire’, in Jeffery, Keith, *et al*, (ed.), 1996, *An Irish Empire? Aspects of Ireland and the British Empire*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, p69

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, p102

¹⁰⁷⁸ Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association and Popular Culture, 1884-1924*, p104

¹⁰⁷⁹ Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, p221

¹⁰⁸⁰ Greaves, C, Desmond, 1979, *Sean O’Casey: Politics and Art*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, p67

particular Irish identity.¹⁰⁸¹ Therefore it was paramount for the *IF/ID* to cover GAA fixtures and results, Gaelic games in Mitcham Stadium and other fields. According to the paper, many GAA members were also trade unionists and CA members. GAA matches functioned as the perfect recruiting ground for various organisations and selling newspapers. The *ID* frequently placed GAA advertisements for recruiting players. In 1946, Gaelic football and hurling players were sought in London: St. Paul's, St. Patrick's, Cu-Chullains, St. Mary's, Brian Borus, Bros. Pearse, Wolfe Tones, Fintan Lalors, Young Ireland's, St. Vincent's, Éire Oge, Austin Stacks, Round Towers, Shamrocks, and Tara.¹⁰⁸²

Boxing

One of the oldest sports which was developed from fist-fighting, boxing would not have developed without Irish fighters. Prize fighting was extremely popular in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is considered as an ultimate working-class sport: lower class people fighting, while upper and ruling class people that included royal patronage were watching them fight from a distance. McDevitt explains that boxing differed from other sports for three reasons. Participation in boxing was strictly circumscribed by class and gender; social elites participated in boxing mostly as spectators and gamblers backing and betting on working class boxers; it was ritualised and symbolic in its violence and the appearance of primal aggression and violence lent the sport an air of atavism and authenticity lacking in apparently more artificial or contrived sports.¹⁰⁸³

Throughout the history of boxing, there were always Irish working-class combatants. For example, Andrew Gamble and Jack Langan were popular ring legends in the early nineteenth century and they were sponsored to fight throughout English cities. In the mid twentieth century, there were quite a few popular Irish boxers in England, such as Jack Doyle. According to Con Houlihan, people hungered for heroes during an era of economic depression, 'in this country we had our own heroes on the playing fields, but we needed an icon of international status.'¹⁰⁸⁴ Although boxing is very different from the GAA in terms of background and objective, since 1921, these two sports

¹⁰⁸¹ Rouse and O'Carroll, *Sport and War: The 1915 All-Ireland hurling championship*, p58

¹⁰⁸² 'Players wanted,' *Irish Democrat*, September 1946, p6

¹⁰⁸³ McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, p60

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland*, p428

have served a similar purpose within the context of Irish nationalist movement in England. In many countries, such as Mexico, boxing was also used as a nationalist tool as it ultimately depicted a fighting spirit of man. In order to box, the presence of a crowd was essential and being watched struggling represented ‘the struggle of imperial or national masculinity.’¹⁰⁸⁵ Moreover, boxing witnessed its greatest appeal amongst oppressed minorities as it promised them ‘a rapid escape from poverty and discrimination.’¹⁰⁸⁶ Irish boxers had been well-established not only in England but in other countries with a British connection, such as the US.

When the *IF* began, boxing was extremely popular amongst Irish workers in England. There was a high-profile match between Corkman Paddy Roche and Lefty ‘Satan’ Flynn which attracted a crowd of 7,000 to the National Sporting Club at Earl’s Court on 9 January 1939. In Dublin, the National Stadium opened in March 1939.¹⁰⁸⁷ It was also popular in the North, played by both Catholic and Protestant people. The RUC’s boxing club was founded in 1928 and until the 1960s, it was a leading force in Ulster and Irish boxing.¹⁰⁸⁸ Although it was not completely trouble-free, unlike GAA sports, boxing was considered non-sectarian and as a popular sport for local people from all walks of life.

GAA and Boxing articles were the main sports coverage of the paper, and the length of each article was almost the same, but boxing articles were frequently more eye catching than those on GAA sports and placed at the top slot.¹⁰⁸⁹ It is probably due to the availability of boxing writers, but the newspaper emphasised more on boxing articles. The majority of the readers were male workers, hence the paper clearly considered its masculine domain when producing the page as its generous coverage on boxing was viewed as a fighting spirit, metaphors for life, physical strength or even a weapon. Some issues were accompanied with cartoons and illustrations. A drawing of a boxer hitting a punching bag repeatedly appeared, next to trade union articles or ‘release prisoners’ headlines which made a perfect statement without explanation in words. Boxing coverage was not only about professional matches, but amateurs also. Quite a few construction workers were

¹⁰⁸⁵ McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, p66

¹⁰⁸⁶ Wilcox, Ralph, ‘Irish Americans in Sports, the Nineteenth Century’ in J. J. Lee, (ed.), 2007, *Making the Irish American*, New York University Press, New York, p444

¹⁰⁸⁷ Flynn, Barry, 2015, *The Little Book of Irish Boxing*, History Press, Dublin, p26

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁹ For example, ‘Bert Hyland will win British Title,’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1948, p6

seriously training in their free time. In March 1946, boxers from the Victoria and Albert Hostel, London put on a grand tournament at the Ivanhoe Hostel, WC1.¹⁰⁹⁰ According to the article, a packed house gave a warm welcome to all the contests. In the early 1940s, James Doyle was the main sports correspondent with a column *Boxing Notes*, and he also occasionally covered GAA stories. Gaelic sports were covered by Gael Og and Peadar Macken in the 1940s. Patrick MacDonnell wrote sports in his column *Sports Review* and ‘Claughan’ also wrote GAA-related articles in the 1950s. In 1957, McDonnell was still writing a column *Sports Parade* and a short round up of short sports news.

Athletes, unite!

Apart from the GAA and boxing, the *ID* covered general sporting events in both sides of Ireland and appealed to all athletes to unite. Partition had consequences in the field of sports as it created a complicated structure for athletes in Ireland. The province of Ulster remains unified in all-Ireland sports such as rugby union, GAA, music and dance, while Northern Ireland is not legally a province of either Ireland or Great Britain but it is in Union with Great Britain but it is not part of Great Britain, which refers to England (incorporating Wales) and Scotland.¹⁰⁹¹ The *ID* covered All-Ireland Association sporting-related articles on a regular basis. The paper called for the unification of the National Athletic and Cycling Association and the Amateur Athletic Union as these divided organs were prevented from competing in international competitions. In January 1947, the paper appealed for unity: ‘This disunity has been the greatest drawback to the development of Irish Athletics and it should be recognised by all sports lovers that, if Ireland is to take her place in international competition with any degree of success, then she must have one united Athletic Association.’¹⁰⁹² Simultaneously, the paper attacked ‘an all-white, fully segregated’ South African rugby team and called for a ban on apartheid in South African sport and advocated solidarity with black South Africans. The article emphasised that ‘Ireland was the first country in the world to protest against the execution of three African trade unionists in November 1964.’¹⁰⁹³ The *ID* always linked to their goal from an internationalist perspective.

¹⁰⁹⁰ ‘Hostel Boxers Give Sparkling Display at Ivanhoe,’ *Irish Democrat*, March 1946, p6

¹⁰⁹¹ O’Leary, Brendan, 2019, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, xxxi

¹⁰⁹² ‘Call for Unity,’ *Irish Democrat*, January 1947, P6

¹⁰⁹³ ‘Irish call to ban apartheid in sport,’ *Irish Democrat*, February 1965, p4

Conclusion

Many scholars argue that cultural nationalism was indispensable in the growth of Irish nationalism, but the usage of the Irish language in the nationalist and republican movements had always been contentious amongst leaders and participants. According to Legg's study on provincial papers in Ireland, the newspapers in the 1860s that urged the creation of an independent Ireland depended on the English language, therefore, the Irish language may have played a little role.¹⁰⁹⁴ By 1914, Patrick Pearse also had concluded that 'the GL had become a spent force and wanted an Ireland not Gaelic but free,'¹⁰⁹⁵ although it functioned as a vital recruiting ground and meeting points of republicans and nationalists. For the same reason, it is probably accurate that Irish and cultural coverage in the *IF/ID* as a whole may not have played a pivotal role in building a labour movement or/and a cultural nationalist movement in Britain.

Nevertheless, the newspaper's cultural articles, in particular, sports coverage was indispensable because it had a capacity to influence others through cultural activities as a form of soft power. Firstly, it was a tradition for Irish nationalist newspapers to have cultural nationalism coverage. Secondly, the articles functioned to recruit members and participants of GAA, GL, trade unions, CC/CA and other social events that would lead them to the labour movement or, for some, the republican movement. Thirdly, it was an important tool for solidarity and bonding purposes. Cultural and sports coverage was a vital element for Irish nationalist newspapers, whether it was influential or not. It was a non-violent way to unite people, not only amongst Irish immigrants but also British and other trade unionists. The paper called for people to respect each other through different cultures and as well as their own culture. Although things had significantly improved since the Victorian period, the Irish-related coverage in the mid-twentieth century was still excluded from the mainstream British media. Therefore, the paper functioned as its own community and organiser of its own cultural activities. Lastly, it was symbolic to express collective identity in Britain. Many studies and articles suggest that Irish workers in England became more nationalistic and motivated through joining Gaelic groups, events, and sporting gatherings as they became more aware of their Irishness. Having their own culture, sports, language or becoming a part of Gaelic activities, was essential to retain an Irish identity, because 'if you lose the language

¹⁰⁹⁴ Legg, *Newspapers and Nationalism*, p234

¹⁰⁹⁵ Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, p193

or culture, you become an English man.’ Cultural articles helped immigrants to reconfirm their identity and the paper advocated their unique culture to distinguish it from their British counterpart. The GAA and the GL both emphasised the need to de-Anglicise Ireland. The GAA functioned to operate against British cultural dominance, while the GL was a tool to promote a national language for all people regardless of their denomination. Both played a crucial part to draw youngsters and Irish residents into a certain movement as it gave ‘a sense of direction.’¹⁰⁹⁶

The most visible aspect that was emerging within the Irish diaspora community during the mid-twentieth century was a strong sense of nationalism. Although nationalism had been consistently close to their hearts, they were more resourceful, educated, and organised individuals compared to the previous generations. Considering a large number of Irish residents, it was a natural course that London became the key location for the Irish nationalist movement. Around the year 1939 when the paper was first launched, several turning point events occurred: an IRA bombing campaign in Britain; a raid on Magazine Fort in Phoenix Park; Éire’s declaration of neutrality implemented after the outbreak of war; and the death of Yeats. In England, the principal movement to end partition before the Second World War was organised by the CC and the Irish Self Determination League of Great Britain. Nationalism experienced in foreign countries typically became a linchpin of Irish identity. The Irish were ‘born in part from a sense of inferiority that was amplified by the isolation and hostility of the immigration experience.’¹⁰⁹⁷ And they did so while maintaining their own psychological identification with Ireland, which was not threatened by interest and pride in the ancient origins of Irish settlement and culture.¹⁰⁹⁸ In the case of the US, the *Irish World* would use the Famine experience as a clarion call to mobilise Irish-American support for the struggle for Ireland’s independence,¹⁰⁹⁹ and it also linked the Irish cause with slave emancipation.¹¹⁰⁰ Their cultural identity was exercised and formed in Diaspora newspapers. As cultural nationalism empowered the Irish, the *ID* articulated the vulnerabilities of Irish residents in England and helped transforming their social identity.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Interview with Anthony Coughlan, December 2020

¹⁰⁹⁷ Mulcrone, *The Famine Irish and the Irish-American Press: Strangers in a Hostile Land*, p51

¹⁰⁹⁸ Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p26

¹⁰⁹⁹ Mulcrone, *The Famine Irish and the Irish-American Press: Strangers in a Hostile Land*, p56

¹¹⁰⁰ Walsh, *The News from Ireland*, p18

By offering a collective identity, the newspaper framed cultural coverage to draw Irish residents into the labour movement. The point was not being able to use Irish fluently or play as a member of the GAA, but being part of it and being aware that they had a unique culture on their own in the hostile country. In this process, cultural pages highlighted that they were still fighting against the British. As a protest paper, its mission was to secure a place for Irish workers in the labour movement and in this process, the paper viewed national interests and Gaelic culture as an essential component within the movement.

Nevertheless, culture articles were merely symbolic and not their top priority coverage as they appeared on an *ad hoc* basis, and it probably did not directly influence the labour movement. With limited success, the paper attempted to connect with readers by disseminating it particularly when the circulation was high. In this process, the Irish language, culture, sports coverage functioned as a form of soft power to make them aware that they were a part of a bigger picture. Coincidentally, it helped them reaching the imagined destination and continuously reminded readers of their *raison d'être*.

Conclusion

The struggle of Irish workers as well as newsmakers' endeavour was mirrored in the pages of the *IF/ID*. Greaves reiterated that what they were dealing with was urgent:

The Irish national movement goes in phases: politics, physical force; politics; physical force – like the waves on a seashore. And so, it will be until the question is solved. That is why we tell these British Members of Parliament that now is their chances to settle it peacefully. For next year it may be too late.¹¹⁰¹

In charting the paper and its organisation, this thesis has attempted to locate the impact they made within the British labour movement. As a mouthpiece of working-class struggle, the paper presented some insightful criticisms of the British government. Similar to what the forerunners had gone through, the newspaper laid the groundwork within their time frame by handling extensive assignments. What is unique about this paper is that it was characterised by working-class power, reflecting the mid-twentieth century social patterns. Compared to the previous Irish diaspora groups, the CC/CA was more strategic and internationalist, focusing on working with the British authorities and law makers directly. Democracy rather than freedom, and civil rights for all was their urgent priority. They identified the issues and appealed to what needed to be done in the pages of their newspaper – exposing the schemes to discredit Ulster Unionism. From its inception, the newspaper was meant to function as a campaigning tool to lead the labour movement.

It is worth stressing that Irish history in London is essentially a class struggle - a working class struggle. Irish affairs are indistinguishably linked to the British system and its symbiotic relation has made it difficult to break the union. An added complication is the internal division and conflict. The social class is another factor. Unlike the far away British colonies, the business of decolonisation of Northern Ireland was tenaciously complicated after 800 years of intertwined history. Although their success may be limited, considering the underlying causes of the endless plight, the paper and its organisation operated to the fullest extent within the existing framework of the period. It ambitiously planned to be a catalyst to unite Ireland and their work culminated in

¹¹⁰¹ Coughlan, *Insight, ideas, politics: The table talk of C. Desmond Greaves 1960-1988*, p22

Prime Minister Wilson's attempt as he hoped to be remembered as the politician who solved the Irish question. What this marginalised resourceless diaspora paper and organisation were dealing with was gigantic establishments, Westminster, constitutional changes, abolition or modification of existing laws and system, the Stormont, die-hard Unionists and century-old deep-rooted discrimination. They were in effect tackling the problems of one of the most ancient conflicts. Their steps might be insignificant from a distance, however, the way they paved the way by leading political and public opinion, and setting the agenda should not be underestimated. No Irish organs in Britain had dealt with such enormous tasks in a systematic and strategic way in the past. For the first time, the Irish question was going somewhere via Westminster. They brought the Irish question back on the table and called for economic, security and social reforms and laid the foundation for the future politics in Britain. As this study has demonstrated, when the Northern Ireland state started crumbling in the 1970s, the CC/CA's footsteps were everywhere.

Moreover, their endeavour helped leading the working-class movement, shaping a labour history of immigrants in Britain, and influencing the actions of communists, trade unionists, republicans and general public by conceptualising the Irish question and struggle. When looking at the whole picture, some might argue that this unassuming immigrant paper's contribution to the labour movement could be minuscule. There may be some truth to this sentiment, but it is not simple to measure its success with any degree of precision, as it takes time for seeing the results, such as the amendment of laws. It also depends on the levels of achievement determined by one's perspective and angle.

There is no doubt that they played a vital role in empowering workers by clarifying ideologies and policies, strategically working as a unified voice and planting seeds of the civil rights movement. As this thesis has demonstrated, every Irish civil rights-related event that occurred during the research period involved engagement by the CC/CA, whether indirect or direct. Their campaigns, meetings, demonstrations, educational events that were advertised and covered in the paper helped contributing to changing the perception of working-class people. The paper created a framework, educated Irish and British citizens, produced informative content by framing certain articles and performed an authentic job conveying news of the month.

The organisation functioned autonomously, becoming ‘the largest and most active Irish organ for the interests of Irish working-class immigrants in Britain’¹¹⁰² and ‘a formidable pressure group’ under Greaves’ guidance.¹¹⁰³ Considering that all the previous Irish newspapers in England were ephemeral, its longevity was also one of the major accomplishments. In the words of Coughlan, the *IF/ID* ‘could claim to be the longest established Irish working-class paper.’¹¹⁰⁴ It is certainly due to Greave’s strategy, workable policy, commitment, passion, and influence. He ‘deviated from the orthodox line in his approach to Irish politics.’¹¹⁰⁵ The paper and its organisation were a much more successful enterprise than any of its forerunners.

While almost all editors and writers of the newspaper and leaders of the organisation returned to Ireland after their sojourn in London, for Greaves, England was home. Furthermore, Irish diaspora organisations in England had never in the past attempted to deal with the British government directly. As a Birkenhead-born and bred English man, Greaves readily navigated British politicians because he understood their mindset and the system. This prompts the sentiment of revolutionary Countess Markievicz as she would have been suitable to be part of the treaty negotiating team: ‘I know the English personally better perhaps than the people who went over on the delegation.’ Mastermind Greaves’s ideas influenced larger organs ‘particularly the NCCL, the MCF and the CDU’¹¹⁰⁶ as well as the Communist Parties, Trade Unions, Labour Parties, and republicans, as this thesis has demonstrated. Despite the fact that the paper proved incapable of critically evaluating certain topics as they put too much focus on achieving goals, their activist journalism offered genuinely insightful contributions to the coverage, such as open letters to prime ministers and politicians, meetings with them, exposing abuses, state crime, the status quo in Northern Ireland, large scale civil rights gatherings at Trafalgar Square, amongst others. Aspiring to alter the established political order in Britain, this modest yet bold campaigning paper certainly helps to understand the broader historical context and to assess the current situation within the fields of Irish, journalism, diaspora and labour studies.

¹¹⁰² Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p126

¹¹⁰³ Smylie, *The CPGB, the Connolly Association and Irish communism*, p652

¹¹⁰⁴ Coughlan, *Desmond Greaves, 1913-1988: An Obituary Essay*

¹¹⁰⁵ Prince, *The Global Revolt of 1969 and Northern Ireland*, p858

¹¹⁰⁶ O’Leary, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, p170

Appendix

Front page analysis

This section describes the front-page content of the *IF/ID* from a broad quantitative dimension. In order to understand the newspaper's purpose, there are various factors why the front page needs to be looked at. Ultimately, front page articles are the face of the newspaper. A newspaper's front page is the most important location to find 'society's most critical events,'¹¹⁰⁷ and the way newspapers present information on their front pages serves 'a particularly important function in informing the public.'¹¹⁰⁸ Because the front page explains the newspaper's values and themes, potential buyers can instantly recognise its distinguished characteristics. As the main role of the front page is that it needs to grab attention of readers, editor needs to select articles strategically. The highest priority stories should be 'featured prominently to entice impulsive buyers.'¹¹⁰⁹ When selling the *IF/ID*, there was usually a friendly conversation between sellers and buyers in pubs and on streets, then potential readers decided whether it was worth buying it or not. Coughlan acknowledged the importance of the front page as potential buyers skimmed through the front page.¹¹¹⁰

Methods

Front page articles from January 1939 to December 1969, or a total of 367 front pages were examined. The newspaper typically consisted of eight pages most of the time during the research period, although a few issues printed 12 pages. The newspaper publication was consistent during the research period, except the October 1940 and the July 1941 issues were missing and the October/November 1941 and the November/December 1947 issues were combined. Additional Easter special issues were not counted but if it was printed in lieu of the April issue, it was counted. As newspapers are not digitised to conduct key word search, all articles were looked at manually.

¹¹⁰⁷ Kim, Yung and Chung, Deborah, 'Anatomy of Front Pages: Comparison Between The New York Times and Other U.S. Major Metropolitan Newspapers', *International Journal of Communication*, 11 (2017), p949

¹¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p950

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p949

¹¹¹⁰ Interview with Anthony Coughlan, December 2020

In order to understand how the newspaper selected topics, front page articles have been itemised into different subjects so that results can be generalised. Data have been collected and put into relevant subjects which are divided into eight categories.

1 = NI: status quo in NI, SPA, RUC, Stormont politics/legislation, poverty, unemployment, and prisoners.

2 = The Irish in Britain: status quo in Britain, workers and industry-related issues, conditions, travel regulations, discrimination, arrests, Army-related, conscription, war/army strategies and general stories on workers/trade unionists.

3 = Activities: CC/CA-related activism, new members, fighting fund-related, rallies, demonstrations, release prisoners, LP/CP/TUs support for unification, civil rights movement, Frank Ryan, CC/CA trade unionists' activities and collaboration with other allies and groups.

4 = Ireland: general 26-county affairs, Irish politics Dail-related, decisions, economy, Irish politicians' comments, FF, FG, neutrality and ITUC-related.

5 = Foreign: All things occurred abroad.

6 = Education: History of republicanism, imperialism, fascism, trade unionism, how to-stories, general history, analysis/opinions, and memorials.

7 = Culture: Literature, sports, songs, and GL.

8 = Miscellaneous: general/social affairs that do not belong to the above categories, petty crime, obituary, non-republican arrests, fun stories, and non-political Catholicism.

For example, a story about CA members campaigning for the release of prisoners in Manchester is categorised in 3. Trade unionists campaigning for the SPA abolishment in Birmingham is under 2, but if it is held in Belfast, it is under 1. Frank Ryan-related articles are all put under 3 as the

CC/CA had a Frank Ryan release campaign. Border industry/economy-related articles are 4. The status quo of prisoners in the North is put under 1, but prisoners-related articles but the story angle is about CA members activism, involvement, Mallon and Talbot campaign, Hostettler, release prisoners, are under 3. Similarly, the CA's affiliates the MCF and the NCCL, and other similar organisations, civil rights-related activism are all under 3. Gaelic games ban in England is under 2.

When an article contains a couple of themes and subjects, it is categorised on the basis of the earlier paragraph or dominant subject. The photographs are included within the theme when they are relevant. There were some opinion pieces but there were sometimes no clear distinctions amongst fact-based articles and opinion, analysis or editorial as the articles were often subjective, and more storyline-emphasised and opinion-based news statements. Therefore, those articles are all combined within the thematic category.

It is assumed that the articles were categorised from a writer's point of view, or a specific angle. For example, if the newspaper had eight reporters, these categories could indicate their beats: NI correspondent, diaspora/industry/England correspondent, CC/CA correspondent, Ireland/home affairs correspondent, foreign correspondent, education correspondent, culture/sports correspondent, and general affairs correspondent.



Average % article surface in FP per category / year (rolling average 4 years)

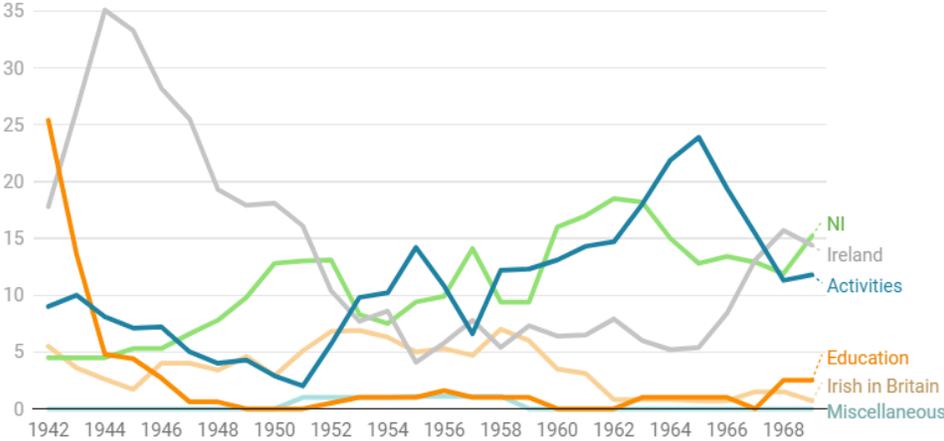


Chart by Pablo Rey-Mazón

Source: Miki Garcia • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

% article surface in FP per category / year

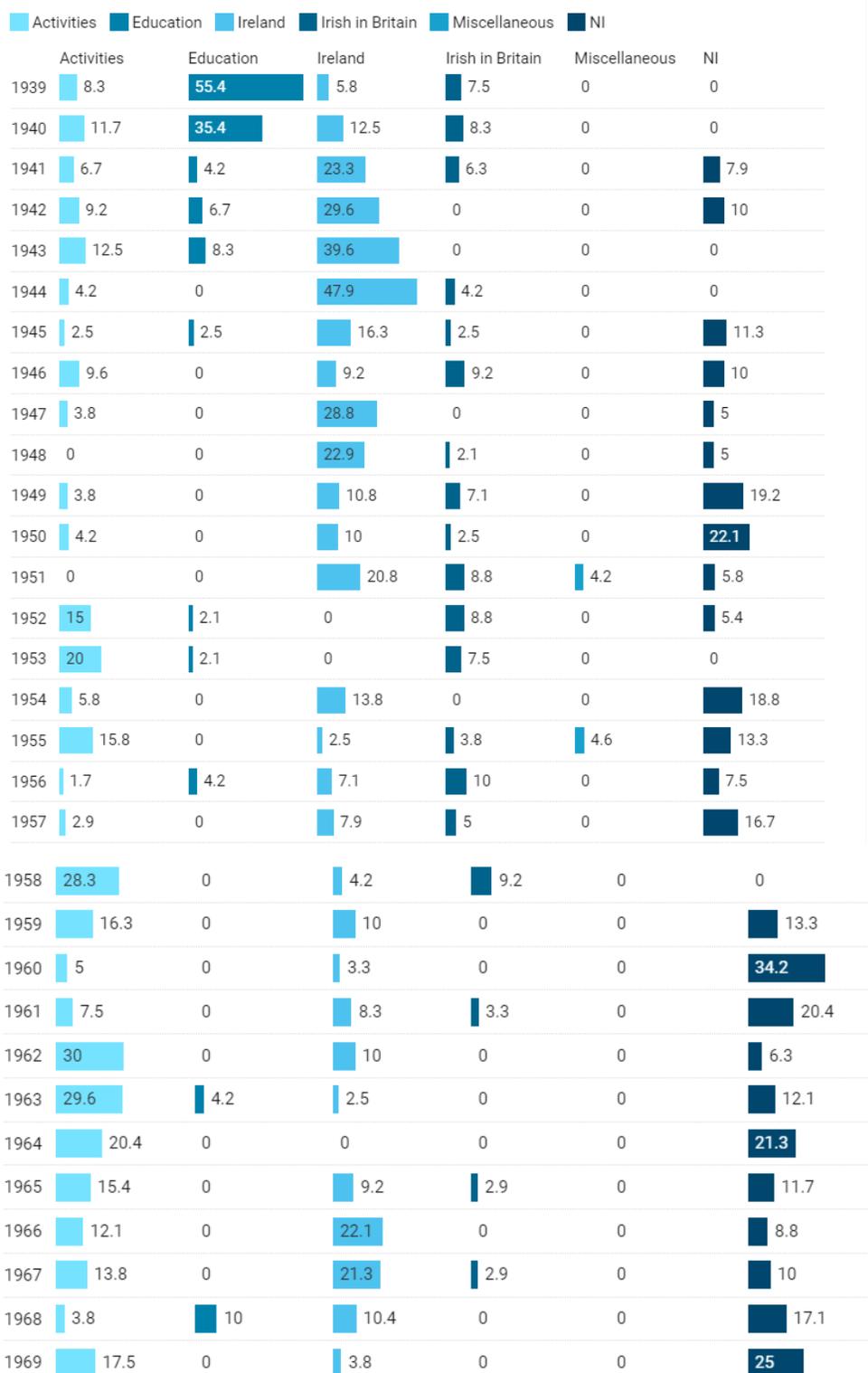


Chart by Pablo Rey-Mazón

Source: Miki Garcia • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

An overview of sample and trends

The articles that were higher on the news agenda in the early years were education and propaganda-style articles. It was during the time when the direction of the newspaper was not clearly set as *ad hoc* editorial staff were making the paper. Thus, the newspaper focused on informing the public about Ireland and its history. The newspaper gradually evolved, and its direction was firmly established by the end of the 1940s, probably because of Pat Dooley's professionalism and Greaves' strategy and commitment to the newspaper production.

The two most consistent categories across the sample period were activities and Northern Ireland-related articles, which is aligned with the organisation's belief and goals. It is straightforward to see the reasons to put those articles on frontpages. There was a gentle but significant overall increase in the frequency of CA activities and Northern Ireland-related articles in the later years, as the paper increased its coverage during the time the civil rights movement gained momentum. Ireland-related issues became increasingly prominent in the news coverage in the late 1940s and the 1950s. In order to put more emphasis on them, those were frequently accompanied with Irish politicians' photographs, as the labour movement was tied to Irish government's involvement and support. Home news was also important to be located on the front page, as it needed to instantly grab attention of the Irish diaspora population. The Irish in Britain and home news-related articles also constantly and steadily appeared throughout the research period. During the mid-years of the chart, the peak period of the newspaper, there was balanced coverage of all subjects. Apart from Ireland-related articles, trade unions-related, obituaries, events notices, photos, and cartoons also became a prominent feature of the front page.

Gradually, education-related articles and stories disappeared from the main feature of the front page, as those articles turned into lengthy features which were saved for spread pages in the middle. Moreover, the Irish in Britain was often covered extensively in the middle pages. Those articles were saved for serious reading and advocacy purposes rather than eye catching easy reading.

Regarding the chart of the number of articles, the *IF* initially started with three columns in January 1939. In March 1941, it became four columns and in November 1955, it became five columns. This meant that the front page was able to contain more articles. The average number of articles

per year during the research period is 67. The number of articles increased momentarily when it became five columns. But the numbers were generally consistent from 1945 to 1969.

During the early years of the 1940s, informing and offering education were the main front-page coverage, while in the late 1950s and the 1960s, the front page gradually evolved into encouraging the public to take action to create and stir the movement. Taking action meant that readers should get involved with trade unions and political activities, as well as being part of the movement or Irish diaspora activities such as GAA, GL, CC/CA socials, rallies, demonstrations, campaigns, walks, signing petitions, branch and Hyde Park meetings, lectures, amongst other things.

Discussion

The newspaper's front page highlights various points as a marginalised voice in Britain. In addition to being a campaigning diaspora newspaper, it also had an element of community centred, watchdog, street, or citizen journalism. In Wenzel's words, watchdog journalism 'focuses exclusively on problems'¹¹¹¹ and community-centred journalism 'builds trust across boundaries of politics, race, and class and prioritise solutions while engaging the full range of local stakeholders.'¹¹¹² The *IF/ID* perfectly fits in this definition, essentially multi-tasking with various responsibilities and tasks.

The paper encouraged political activism and promoted trade unionism, not just through their content but through their actions. In this process, the organisation's activities as catalyst operated in the semi-public sphere. Unlike previous diaspora nationalist newspapers in England that targeted the exile population, the most unique aspect of the *IF/ID* is that it was more open and visible, involving LP MPs as writers, as the paper directly influenced British politicians to make the Irish question a political agenda within the British government and operated along with the British labour movement.

From the front page, it clearly provided a place to voice opinions, and to raise agendas of marginalised people in Britain and to integrate the disadvantaged group into mainstream society

¹¹¹¹ Wenzel, Andrea, 2020, *Community-Centered Journalism*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, p14

¹¹¹² *Ibid.*, p206

and to increase public awareness. Although the *IF/ID* was an Irish diaspora newspaper, it could also be defined as a British paper, managed mostly by a British editor, that attempted to democratise Britain by using workers' power. Its front page demonstrates that it had an element of public and deliberative journalism, contributing to improve British politics in the process of democratisation. Angela Romano highlights that deliberative journalism relies on 'the journalists' ability to imagine how citizens might play a role in setting news agendas and acting upon the information that the media provides', while Jay Rosen points out that 'the citizen is not a victim, spectator, quote machine, ventilator of steam or cute adornment of the news but an informed participant in socio-political processes.'¹¹¹³ The *IF/ID* emerged as a distinctive form of deliberative journalism which results from the interplay of 3 factors. Firstly, its emphasis was to focus on informing and educating Irish and British people about the facts, status quo in the North and history. Second, it attempted to unite workers via trade unions. Lastly, it called all readers to join and participate CC/CA's activism and push the government to reform. Pradip Thomas explains that the definition of public journalism is 'an attitude, a stance, a commitment to using journalism as a vehicle to advance public causes, and thereby contribute to the exercise of substantive democracy.'¹¹¹⁴ In this sense, the front page distinctively shows the newspaper formed their own agendas and platforms for collective discussion and action within and between different communities, helped contributed to the democratisation process of the British government.

Limitations

A few limitations of this research should be considered. Quantitative content analysis allows the manifest content of large samples to be looked at overall, but detailed specific themes cannot be determined. In order to have the general understanding, quantitative analysis needs to be properly conducted in addition to the qualitative study. As *IF/ID* articles are not digitalised nor digitised, sampling was collected manually. Manual human coding is extremely laborious, and errors can occur. Moreover, the layout of the front page was frequently jumbled, and lines were not straight, nor formatted, which makes it difficult to measure the size of an article in a precise manner.

¹¹¹³ Romano, Angela, 'Ongoing Issues for Deliberative Journalism,' in Romano, Angela, (ed), 2010, *International Journalism and Democracy: Civic Engagement Models from Around the World*, Routledge, London, p231

¹¹¹⁴ Thomas, Pradip, 'Traditions of Public Journalism in India', in Romano, Angela, (ed), 2010, *International Journalism and Democracy: Civic Engagement Models from Around the World*, Routledge, London, p206

Due to its advocative nature, some articles contain and mention multiple topics. Also, there is no clear division between writers, readers, and activists in the case of this newspaper. The articles were highly subjective. It is not straightforward to measure its success based on their various campaigns and front-page articles. From front page articles only, it is impossible to see the whole picture on how the coverage of certain articles evolved or improved overtime, just because the subject was not covered on the front page. For the same reason, how front-page articles influenced the public, readers or British and Irish politicians is hard to evaluate.

During the height of circulation, there were more articles on the front page in terms of numbers. However, it is impossible to determine whether an increasing numbers of article or attention-grabbing headlines were the cause of increasing sales figures, as there are no credible sales figures.

Conclusion

The findings in this section correspond to the British labour movement of the research period and general historical events, such as vibrant trade union and civil rights activities. Impactful headlines to attract the diaspora population were crucial, therefore there were always Ireland-related or home news stories on the front page. During the height of the paper, photographs and cartoons were a regular front page feature. Its newspaper identification as a fighting campaigning paper can be easily recognisable, as the paper frequently placed activism stories with striking headlines in the front page. The newspaper effectively framed the issues on the front page that mattered to them most.

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¹¹¹⁵ Page numbers are my own.

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