

4.0 | The seven members of the Provisional Government

4.6 James Connolly

James Connolly, Vice-President of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic. As Commandant General of the Dublin Brigade of the Army of the Irish Republic, he directed the military action.

James Connolly (1868-1916) was born at 107 Cowgate, Edinburgh, the son of Irish Catholic emigrants, John Connolly, a carter, and his wife Mary McGinn. The family lived in extreme poverty. James went to work at the age of eleven and joined the British Army at fourteen, serving in Ireland for seven years. Returning to Edinburgh in 1890 he became actively involved in socialist politics. He was self-taught, reading voraciously in history, politics, economics and socialism. He came to Dublin in 1896 where he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party and published the newspaper The Workers' Republic. He opposed Home Rule as middle class, capitalist, and unlikely to promote social reform.

In 1903 Connolly spent three months in the United States on a lecture tour; the following year he brought his family to live with him in New York, where he was active in Irish nationalist and socialist circles. He was a cofounder of the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World ('the Wobblies') becoming their New York organiser. He also became a national organizer for the Socialist Party of America. In 1907 Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Federation and edited its journal The Harp which he set up in 1908. While in America he wrote some of his best-known works, including Labour in Irish History, which greatly influenced the thinking of Patrick

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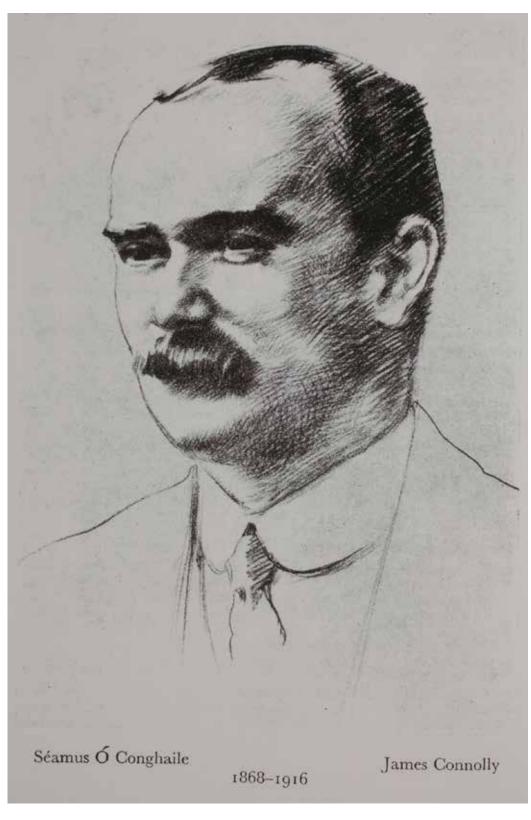
Pearse, and his famous polemic, Labour, Nationality and Religion, both of which were published in Dublin in 1910.

Returning to Ireland in 1910, Connolly worked as Belfast organiser for the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union which had been founded by Jim Larkin. Moving to Dublin, he was second-in-command to Larkin during the 1913 lock-out. When Larkin went to the United States in 1914, Connolly succeeded him as head of the ITGWU and editor of the Irish Worker. He also became commandant of the Irish Citizen Army, which had been formed to protect workers during the 1913 lock-out.

Connolly was appalled at the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 and launched an anti-recruitment drive. He came to regard revolution as the only political option and in January 1916 reached agreement with the leadership of the Irish Republican Brotherhood for a joint insurrection involving the Irish Volunteers and the ICA, whereupon he was co-opted to the IRB Military Council involved with preparations for the Rising. Together with MacDiarmada and Plunkett, he had a leading role in the final preparations. He was also, of course, responsible for providing the ICA contingent of 200-250 men who turned out on the day. He contributed to the content of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic drafted by Pearse, particularly the socialist, feminist and egalitarian elements. He became vice-president of the Provisional Government.

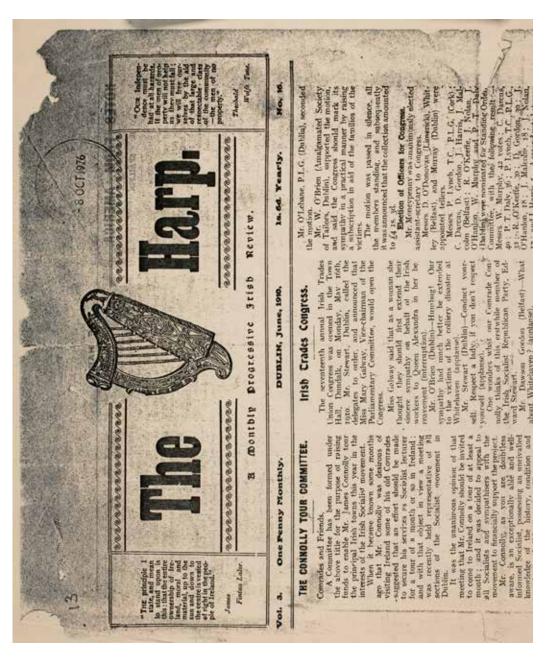
During the Rising Connolly was located in the General Post Office with most of the other members of the Provisional Government. As commandant general of the Dublin division of the army of the Irish Republic, he directed military operations. On the Thursday of Easter Week he suffered a serious wound to his ankle outside the GPO, but remained in charge. Following the surrender, he was tried by court-martial. Although seriously injured he was executed by firing squad in Kilmainham Jail on 12 May, he and Seán MacDiarmada being the last of those to be executed. He was survived by his wife Lillie Reynolds and children, including his son Rory, who served with him in the GPO

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A charcoal portrait of James Connolly by Seán O'Sullivan RHA. (National Museum of Ireland).

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While in New York Connolly edited The Harp which he established in association with the Irish Socialist Federation.

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James Connolly

Che Connolly Cour Committee. Comrades and Friends, the organ of the Irish Socialist Federation of America, and has lately made a very A Committee has been formed under extensive tour of the United States as the above title for the purpose of raising National Organiser of the Socialist Party funds to enable Mr. James Councily tour of America; and the National Secretary the principal Irish towns this year in the of that Party reports that glowing acinterests of the Irish Socialist movement. counts of Mr. Connolly's ability as an When it became known some months eloquent and forcible exponent of Socialism ago that Mr. Connolly was desirous of have been received from all the centres visiting Ireland some of his old Comrades visited by him. suggested that an effort should be made It vill, therefore, be readily seen that to secure his services as Socialist lecturer an immense impetus would be given to for a tour of a month or so in Ireland : the Socialist movement in this country and with that object in view a meeting if Mr. Connolly is enabled to give a number was recently held representative of all of addresses in the principal towns of sections of the Socialist movement in Ireland. Dublin. The estimated cost of the tour is £20, It was the unani nous opinion of that and we confidently appeal to all Socialists meeting that Mr. Connolly should be invited and sympathisers to assist the committee to come to Ireland on a tour of at least a in raising at least that amount. Should month; and it was decided to appeal to more than £20 be subscribed the tour will all Socialists and sympathisers with the be extended for a longer period. movement to financially support the pro-The committee have decided acting on ject. the suggestion of Mr. Convolly, that while Mr. Conrolly, as you are doubtless in Ireland he shall act as National Organiser aware, is an exceptionally able and wellof the Socialist Party of Ireland. informed Socialist, possessing an unrivalled Mr. Connolly will arrive in Dablin in the last week of July. knowledge of the history, condition and problems of this country. He was one

Subscriptions should be sent to me at 43 Belvidere Place, Duplin.

I am, fraternally yours,

WM. O'BRIEN, Sec.

June, 1910.

He is at present editor of "The Harp,"

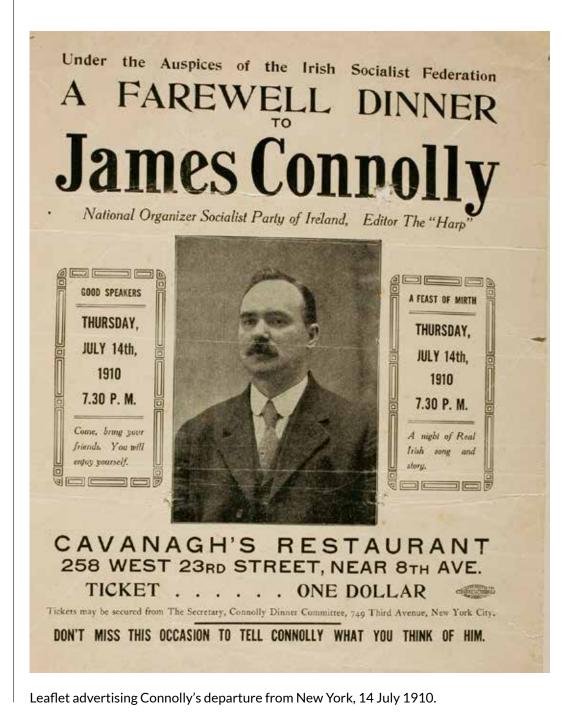
of the founders of the Irish Socialist Re-

publican Party, which existed from 1896 to 1903, and was editor of its official organ.

"The Workers Republic " during its five

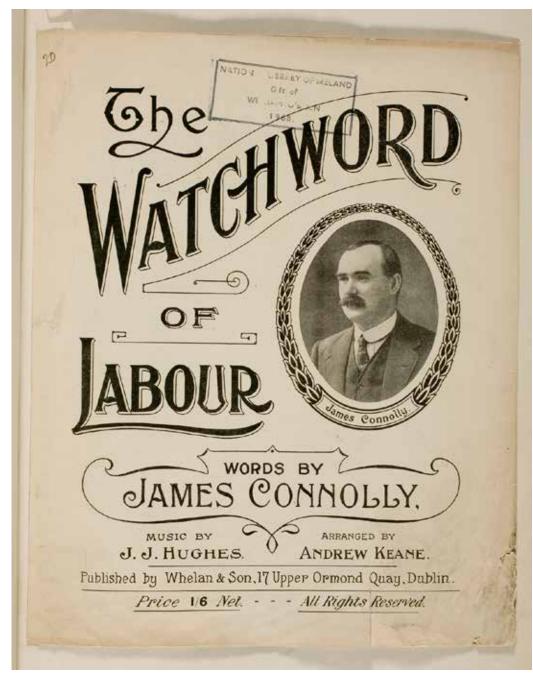
years' existence

Printed circular advertising Connolly's lecture tour of Ireland in 1910. William O'Brien worked for the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and helped Connolly to settle in Ireland. (Ms. 13,919/2)



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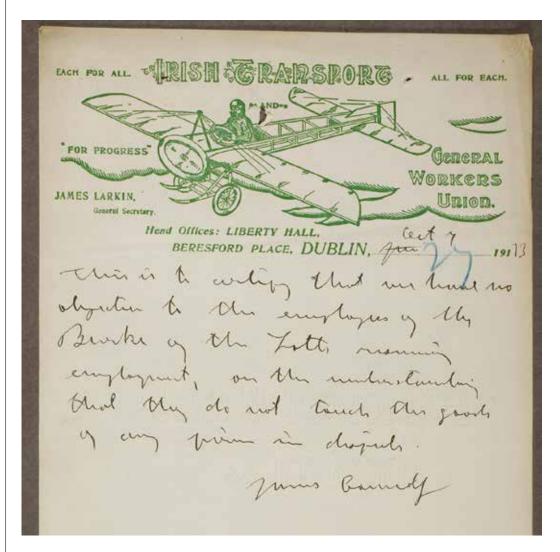




An edition of The Watchword of Labour.

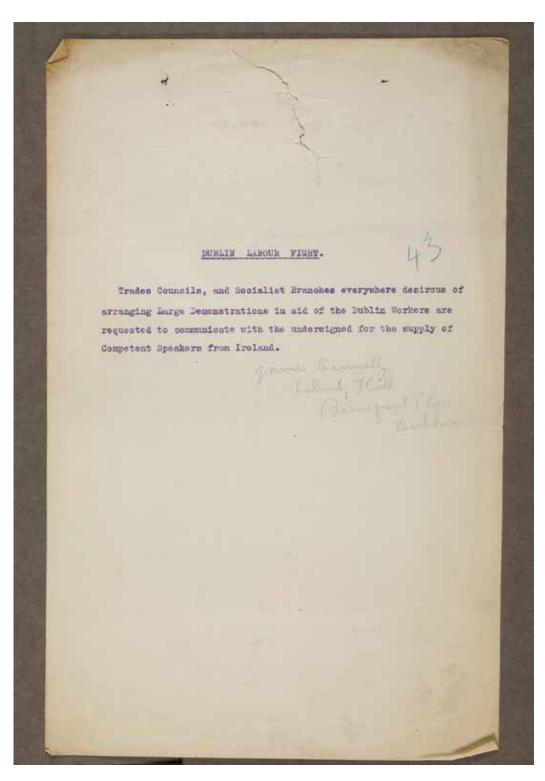
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James Connolly



A routine letter written by Connolly during the lock-out: 7 Oct. 1913. This is to certify that we have no objection to the employees of Mr Burke of the Lotts resuming employment, on the understanding that they do not touch the goods of any union in dispute. James Connolly. (Ms. 13,921).

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Circular written by Connolly during the lock-out. (Ms. 13,921).

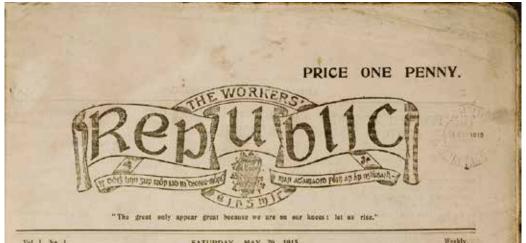
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Members of the Irish Citizen Army on parade outside Liberty Hall, headquarters of the ITGWU. The banner reflects Connolly's attitude towards the war. The ICA were described as featuring 'olive green uniform with black leather equipment and dashing slouch hats turned up at one side in a very jaunty way'. (Keogh 198)



James Connolly



Vol. 1., No. 1.

SATURDAY, MAY 29, 1915.

dr. Connolly side in just: Do you with proof of the value, of spinicities to the Workers, or proof of the spinicities to the destroy as inguastion if its southers are found in the workers, or proof of the spinicities of the out over Units. The negative is all of the out of the out, which shares are found in a consort Units. The negative is all of the out, which is a spinicities of the out, which is a spinicity of very spinicities of the out, which is a spinicities of the out, which is a spinicity of the Units Amylovers southing under the destroyers of a spinicities of the out, which is an advected on a graphic during the spinicities of destroy is or advected on a graphic during the spinicities of the spinocities of the out, which is a spinicities of the spinocities of the out, which is a spinicities of the spinocities of the out of the out, which is an advected on a graphic during the out, which is an advected on a graphic during the out, which is a spinocities of the out, which we obtain the spinose of the out, which we obtain the spinose of the the spinose of the s

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The Dublin Lock-Out and its Sequel. Speech in Cork by James Connolly, Acting General Secretary of The Transport Union. Majority's Governman, while the fight is on? Public Meeting, while the fight is on? Public Meeting, while the fight is on? Meeting? Why, of course the law promate, Public Meeting in Lecture, is another Scray of Paper, and has been t somethy Scray of Paper, and has been t we as to help you in the good work of of the Labour Movement.

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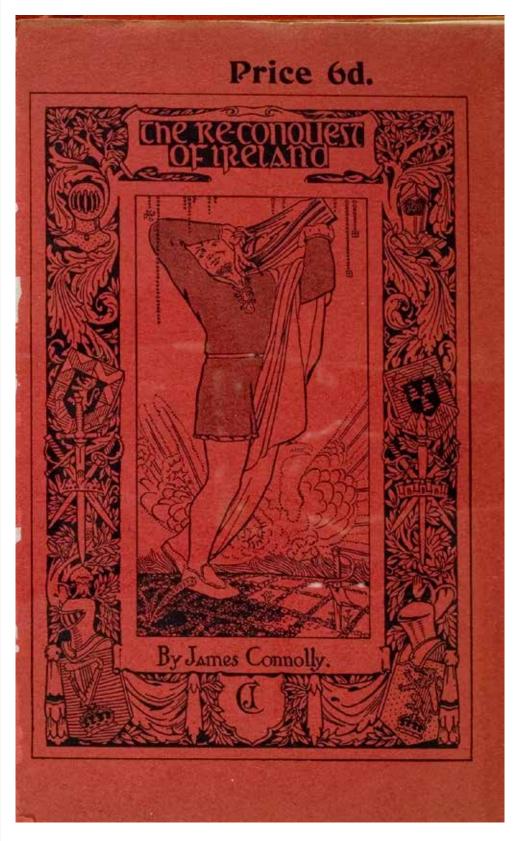
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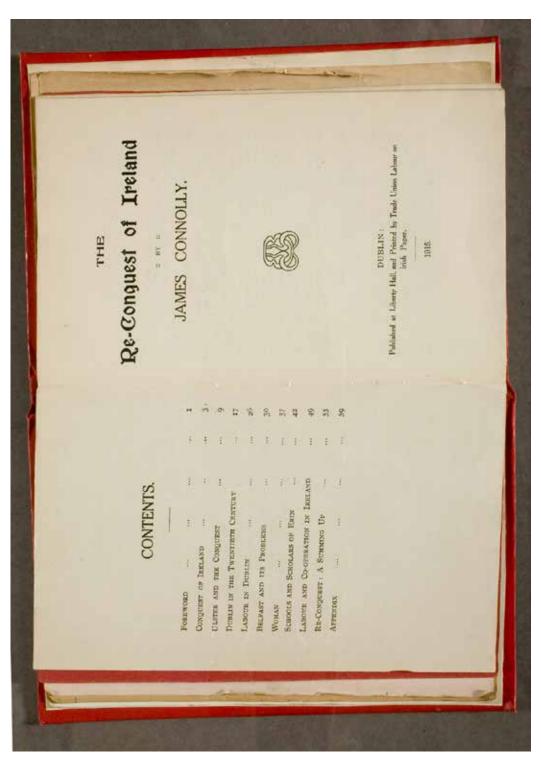
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The Workers' Republic was established by Connolly in 1898 and appeared intermittently until 1903. He revived it in May 1915 following the closure of the Irish Worker.

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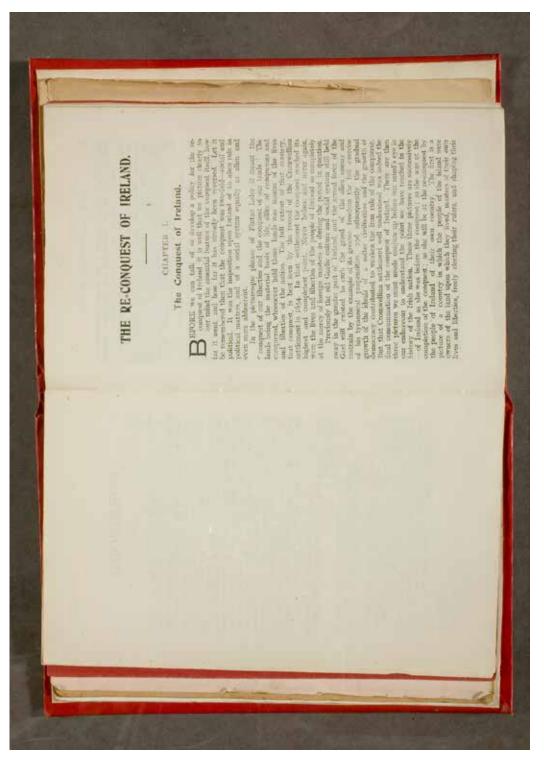
Pages from Connolly's Re-conquest of Ireland (1915), a collection of his speeches.



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