

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

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THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic ... James Connally



A
**SOCIALIST
VICTORY**



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ECHOES FROM

-- THE --

BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the "Bottom Dog"—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

VOL. I. NO. 41 20TH JULY, 1918 PRICE 1/2D

TRADE UNIONISM IN BRUFF

As a B.D. I avail of the opportunity to cry bow-wow to the violation of all the principles of trade unionism that it has ever been my lot to meet. Is it not a crying shame that two tradesmen, one a carpenter, the other a mason, should so far forget themselves as to deprive another tradesman of his means of livelihood. In the present instance both these scabs (I may call them so) are working for the Condensed Milk Co. of Ireland. In putting a new roof on a wing of their factory here those men have deprived a stucco-man of close on a month's work by taking the slating off this roof over on their own shoulders. I ask trade unionists to give a wide berth to Mick Finn, carpenter from Kilfinane, and Gerry Sullivan, mason from Bruree, who are the parties guilty of this atrocious conduct. Furthermore I ask the B.D. who are working in this firm to give those parties to understand that they cannot infringe on the principles of trade unionism in such a bare-faced manner. Let them cry bow-wow at these scabs—should they have the audacity to ask them to assist them in this nefarious work in any way. — B.C.

INSANITARY HOUSES trouble some of our Civic Fathers a great deal when they spout at public meetings about the sufferings of the workers. But they conveniently absent themselves from the Town Hall so that a quorum is not present to hold a Corporation meeting to consider proposals to compel slum house-lords to put sanitary accommodation in their houses. We can't very well blame the absentee slum-owners on the Corporation—we blame the workers who elected them. But we certainly must hold blameworthy the Alderman and Councillors who never grow tired of expressing their fealty to Labour but who suddenly forget all this when they have an opportunity of translating their talk into action as they had on Thursday week last. The Labour Party must make a clean sweep of all the Town Hall rubbish very soon.

THE GREAT WAR — The Cunard Co.'s profits for the past year come to £1,360,000.

THE NAVY

Remote from mansion and from mart,
Beyond our outer, furrowed fields—
One with the rock he cleaves apart,
One with the weary pick he wields—
Bowed with his weight of discontent,

Beneath the heavens sagging gray,
His steaming shoulders stark and bent,
He drags his joyless years away.

For dreamy dames with haughty eyes,
And cunning men with soft white hands
Have offered you in sacrifice
Lone outcast of the outcast lands.
For all the furs that keep them warm,
For all the food that keeps them fit,
Through all the years they've wrought you harm
And take a churlish pride in it.

Brutish we've hashed it far and near,
I have shared your woe and dull despair;
We've sung our songs and none to hear,
And told our wrongs and none to care.
Some day—how soon we may not tell—
We'll rend the riven fetters free.
Till then, may Heaven guard you well,
And God be good to you—and me.

P. MacGill.

VOL. I. NO. 42. 26TH JULY, 1918 PRICE 1/2D.

WHO IS MY ENEMY

A fellow wage-slave expressed the same idea to me the other day, but in different language. "My enemy", said he, "is the man who bleeds me. If my own brother is responsible for forcing me out of bed at five in the morning at the behest of an alarm clock and a factory buzzer to pursue my way half-slept and half-fed to the workshop, and to remain there till it's time to flop back into bed again, then my own brother is my immediate enemy. He is the man who bleeds me. He is the man who cheats me out of life". — K.S. in The Call.

AN INSPIRATION

However the battle is ended,
Though proudly the victor comes
With fluttering flags and prancing nags,
And echoing rolls of drums;
Still truth proclaims this motto
In letters of living light, —
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

Though the heel of the strong oppressor
May grind the weak in the dust,
And the voices of fame with one acclaim
May call him great and just;
Let those who applaud take warning,
And keep this motto in sight, —
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

Let those who have failed take courage,
Though the enemy seems to have won,
Though his ranks are strong; if he be in the wrong,
The battle is not yet done;
For sure as the morning follows
The darkest hour of the night
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

O Man bowed down with labour!
O Woman young, yet old!
O heart oppressed in toiler's breast
And crushed by the power of gold,
Keep on your weary battle
Against triumphant might;
No question is ever settled
Until it is settled right.

E.W. Wilcox.

THE FINAL SIEGE

This poem was written in memory of P.J. ("Cushy") Ryan, Parnell Street, Limerick, who died at the City Home Hospital last month.

He had died in the Union word
fighting off the cough
which wracked his body
in the final battle.

He had written a book
on the fourth siege of Limerick
typed by manicured young girls
who took pity on an old man.

He had fought
from the battlements of a handyman's hope
and surrendered to no publisher.
The terms never came
and he wrote on believing
that one day triumph would come.
The siege would be lifted
and he could march home.

He had covered the typewriter
with an oilskin cloth and
wrote occasional poems and letters.
He knew Brendan Behan,
or so he said, and saw
him masturbating on a prison bed.

He spoke to me one night
in a back street pub
"When you get an idea
write it down ..."
and showed me a fag box
all scribbled and torn.

We drank our black pints
made neat, literary cracks,
and when it came his turn to call
he was out in the jacks.

"Be careful what you write,"
He said, "never tell lies
"and for the love of Jeysus,
don't mention people with squint eyes".

He pushed back his old black cap
Rubbed the bald, shiny head,
"Another thing son ...
Never speak ill of the dead".

The Tragedy of THE POET RYAN

Limerick is famous for its "characters". They can be found in every level. From people like "Dunnick" O'Malley of conventional Corbally to "Gurky" McMahon of swampy St. Mary's Park. Generally they are by nature non-conformist and this gives them their curiosity value.

Their popularity is usually determined by their ability to act the part of "a gas man" and so amuse the attentive audience, many of whom appear to have a secret longing to be a "character" and to receive even this fleeting acclamation to compensate for some inner insecurity.

One of Limerick's best known "characters" died over a year ago. He had been a familiar sight on the city's streets. Deep lines on his face, white untidy hair, an aloof bearing, and a general aura of poetic disorder.

Gerard Ryan lived out an existence dictated by the fact that he was a poet. In ill health, he had no constant job. He was careless about his finished poems, and left no manuscripts. Over the years, in many moves from one shabby room to another, his papers and poems had perished. Landladies had burned and dumped his life's literary work when the room rent had remained unpaid. In fact, during his life, he never had a book of poems published. That had to wait until he was a year dead.

However during life, he was a character in "literary" Limerick. The Poet Ryan they called him. He was an old man, and usually hung out in the "White House" bar; that is when he was not

suffering from cold and hunger in his run-down room or coughing his guts up in the City Home. However, between bouts of his pain and suffering he was a character. He provided talk and laughter for the price of a few pints. The "artistic" circle could, at least, give him that much.

After his death it was decided that he should be remembered. Last May, "An April Morning Walk" poems by Gerard Ryan, was launched at a press conference in O'Malley's Roundhouse in High Street. Drink and talk flowed fast. People who had little connection with the unhappy life and times of the Poet Ryan were present and recalled suitable anecdotes to prove what a fine man Ger had been.

It was a sad and strange event. As one "outside" observer remarked: "If all of those had given Ger five bob a week it would have kept him in comfort". So it would. But then "characters" are taken for granted and in the end very few visited the Poet Ryan in the City Home.

One was Desmond O'Grady, who one Christmas in an outburst of seasonal excess, ran wildly through the wards of incurables telling them to cheer up as they had everything to live for ... O'Grady, however, with Peter Donnelly and a few of the more sensitive people who tried to help The Poet, showed a genuine, if far off appreciation of Ryan's poetry. The only note of realism was introduced when a review of the book appeared in the Limerick Weekly Echo. Written by Frank Hamilton, it said:

carefully combed, the new Mayor obviously set out to cut a dashing figure. During the night he was seen in deep conversation with the Leader reporter who covered the event, John O'Shaughnessy, and indeed the published report of the night seemed to launch a new and adventurous Kennedy.

Gone was the cautious tone. Like his maiden speech on Mayoral election night, Kennedy seemed to be going over to an American way of politics. He spoke in stage-Irish terminology, talking about the alluring forms of the colleens and what they would do to the hearts of Irishmen.

Indeed, it seemed that Mayor Kennedy was borrowing some of the "Irish charm" of the famous American Kennedy clan with his talking of "loving all the contestants".

One of the surprising phrases in the Leader report was that Mayor Kennedy was "in romantic and joyous form". This certainly seemed a new departure in local journalism. However, as John O'Shaughnessy combines his talents to cover showbusiness and sporting events in Limerick, it seemed logical to assume that this was the reporter's own racy style.

The new "romantic and joyous" Kennedy was getting his share of publicity, so this might help to explain his sudden change of public image. As an unmarried Mayor he could even have been trying to make a play for the eligible daughters of the city's wealthy families.

Still, the new image was too good to be true. A quick check at the LEADER office revealed a very

Gerard Ryan lived and died in a small provincial place. I remember him. Sitting alone. At an Art Exhibition. While the "trendy young things" talked the cliched jargon of the spiritually jaded.

He wrote nature poems. He was close to the earth. Yet for me one of the most memorable is simple, stark, terrifying ... called "Unit Six St. Camillus".

On the window sill
Beside my bed
In St Camillus
A bowl of dying flowers ...

Other images come like

The nurse leads off
With a trolley of clean clothes
Slowly they move
To the long ward of incurables ...

It is all there. In the end. And as Gerard Ryan would say: "Let me tell you something for nothing ... that is what life is all about ..."

Desmond O'Grady, writing an introduction to the book took a more familiar line. He wrote: "Devoted to the art of good conversation, story telling and high song he spoke only of people and poetry, the human affair and those mad enough to try to record it through art".

It is indeed a sad commentary that Gerard Ryan had to suffer pain, poverty and hunger enduring the "human affair" while people in his pub audiences could return to their safe and secure jobs and homes. But, like the fate of "Gurky" McMahon and many more, that's the way it happened ... the silent tragedy of being a Limerick "character".

The Ambitious Alderman

It was like a child playing with a new toy. The excitement of opening the present was there, so much so that the confused kid ran up the wrong way to get the goodies.

That can be one of the conclusions drawn from Ald. Pat Kennedy's winning of the Mayoralty. For years he worked with that aim in mind. He has carefully cultivated young people, and had different approaches worked out for the working, middle and upper classes in the city.

A sharp political operator, Kennedy will not be satisfied with the Mayoralty of Limerick. He is aiming to be leader of the Fine Gael party in Limerick and eventually to become a city T.D. The election of his fellow teacher and political protege, Denis Broderick, in Ward Three and the manner in which Kennedy's surplus helped to elect a second Fine Gael Councillor, Bobby Byrnes, in Ward Four would appear to have given the new Mayor control of his party on the City Council.

However, contrasting with his political sharpness is a gauche and almost childish immaturity, which on occasions reveals the real Kennedy.

One such case is his recent performance at the function which selected a Limerick Rose for the Tralee competition. Well groomed and with hair

different story. It now appears that reporter O'Shaughnessy had nothing to do with the description of "romantic and joyous form" of the Mayor. In fact the whole story was written by the ambitious Alderman himself ... So much for honesty and integrity in public life ... so much for the new Mayor Kennedy ... so much for the Kerry Roses ...

NO TIT FOR TAT (PAT)

During the course of the evening, the "romantic and joyous" Mayor Kennedy went all out to create a favourable impression on the assembled Roses. The festivities were well under way when the following scene took place between the Mayor and a Rose.

Rose is dancing with the Mayor. The girl has a rose pinned on her low-cut dress just at bosom level. The Mayor, in romantic mood, sees the position of the red rose and tries an opening gambit.

Kennedy, complete with gold chain of office, grins slyly at the girl, "If I plucked your rose would you blush", he asked.

"If I pulled your chain would you flush?" came the girl's quick reply. &

This tit for tat exchange brought the Mayor's gallop to an unscheduled halt. But Kennedy has a full twelve months to go yet. No doubt he will do a lot of pulling in this time ... whatever about plucking ...

"TRUTH" IN THE NEWS

An intriguing behind the scenes row is brewing in the local ranks of the National Union of Journalists. Already an officer of the Limerick branch has resigned and an attempt has been made to force the City Manager to appoint a Public Relations Officer for the Corporation.

The surprising feature of this move is that the Corporation has never even considered appointing a full-time Public Relations Officer. The action of the NUJ in writing to the City Manager therefore calls for some clarification.

The journalists in Limerick wrote to the City Manager on the strength of an unsupported assumption.

The man who first mentioned the "rumour" of the Corporation appointing a full-time PRO was none other than former Leader and "Echo" editor Tom Tobin, who has had a chequered career in Limerick journalism.

Script-writer for former Mayor Mick Lipper, Tobin has been "hustling" desperately for a living since he "resigned" as editor of the "Echo" in June 1971 following a clash with the Board of Directors. He still maintains an air of mystery about why he lost his earlier job as editor of the Limerick Leader. However old clashes* were forgotten when it came to promoting Lipper on the eve of polling for the Local Elections. A front page Limerick Leader article (17 June), written in typical Tobinese, boosted the outgoing Mayor:

"I have been criticised by certain people because I went to the trouble of researching and preparing what I consider to have excellent scripts to represent this important city of Limerick in a fitting manner". The tale of Lipper "researching and preparing" "excellent scripts" is unlikely to fool anyone. But, then, who expected the Labour man to admit that he had been mouthing Tobin's words for the past year?

The Lipper speech went on to refer to candidates sending in scripts which he alleged were never spoken at meetings. "Such meetings were never held and I would like to compliment the Limerick Leader on having the courage to point the finger at this low attempt to fool the electorate in a recent issue of the paper". Was it courageous to publish Lipper's "boost" on the eve of polling? Was it fair to other candidates?

When it comes to any kind of courage the Limerick Leader is, of course, an "also ran". When it comes to hypocrisy, grovelling for advertising, and suppression of the truth, then the Limerick Leader is not much different from other provincial newspapers.

Concluding, Tobin wrote for Lipper: "I would remind the people in my own ward that forces will be used to stifle the voice of Mick Lipper and indeed, to sacrifice me on the altar of Fianna Fáil's ambition to grab a majority of power with the sole aim of gaining the prestige of the Mayoralty for a

Minister of State whose interest in the ordinary man about town may well be questioned".

What may well be questioned here is the "research" going into the "excellent scripts". To describe Des O'Malley as a Minister of State is such an obvious mistake, the wisdom of the Lipper/Tobin combination may well be questioned. And, despite Tobin's curt dismissal from the Leader and all his hard words about its management and journalists, here he was on the eve of the election praising the paper for its "courage". The humiliation process which began with his sacking was now complete as he continued his efforts to crawl back into some of his former power. This public spectacle was not a nice sight.

On the following morning (polling day) Mayor Lipper was forced to lick his own vomit when he met O'Malley face to face outside the polling booth at St. Patrick's School. Challenged aggressively by the former Minister over the Leader script, Lipper backed down and blamed scriptwriter Tobin. "He went too far, I'm sorry, Des", the Mayor said as he continued his profuse apologies to the angry O'Malley.

The ending of Lipper's term and Tobin's "excellent scripts" coincided with the "rumour" of the Corporation appointing a full-time Public Relations Officer. An interesting clue is contained in the same Lipper report: "I hope my successor will realise the greatness of this challenge and take every step that he can to set an example in the best of good public relations ..." But with this kind of putty perhaps Tobin could be forgiven for slipping in this modest plug for himself.

At the moment the Corporation's public relations is handled by Communications Officer, Brid Hayes on a part-time basis. For years the National Union of Journalists have accepted without demur the help of this Officer in writing about various aspects of the Corporation's work.

But the mysterious "rumours" began to fly. If the Corporation did appoint a full-time PRO then the person would have to be an NUJ member. This, of course, would be a "plum" position for

any, hack journalist. Brid Hayes is involved only on a part-time basis but is fully capable of doing the job when local reporters call or phone seeking information.

The monthly meeting of the NUJ sub-branch, covering the city, was held on the first Friday of June and the "rumour" was raised by Tobin. The secretary, Paddy Moroney, of the Limerick Leader, wrote as a result to the City Manager and pointed out that the PRO would have to be a member of the NUJ.

The whole episode is further complicated by the fact that Tobin was recently elected NUJ Branch Secretary for an area covering most of Munster. As a union officer he has some influence although he is in constant conflict with some of his own colleagues in the NUJ.

Already he is in some difficulty with three other journalists. Tony Purcell is the Cork Examiner staffman in Limerick. He is also correspondent for the Irish Press. Tobin has been submitting stories from Limerick to the Press over the past year without reference to Purcell. At least one inaccurate and sensational piece on drugs caused Tony Purcell some distress.

Another journalist who felt the pressure of Tobin is the Echo editor Arthur Quinlan, the Radio Eireann correspondent in Limerick. One night he switched on his radio and heard Tobin reporting on Limerick topics. In his need to earn money Tobin was not too worried about "cutting across" his Union colleague in this work.

Yet another reporter who has been surprised by Tobin is the Irish Independent staffman in Limerick, Noel Smith, who opened his paper one day recently to see a story from Limerick written by Tobin.

Judging from this trend, any Sunday soon Echo reporter, Frank Hamilton, who also writes for the Sunday World, can expect to see Tobin's name popping up among the dolly girls and pub spies.

In short, Tobin is fast becoming thorn in the side of local journalists, who intend to hang on to their profitable "sidelines".

Earlier this month the journalists in Limerick heard that the man who wrote the letter to the City Manager had resigned his union post.

It is not known if there is any direct link with the mysterious "rumour" which Tobin brought to the attention of the original meeting. Many reporters feel however, that the young man who resigned, Paddy Moroney, had been used in an unfair manner.

But the story does not end there. The "rumour" has now been referred to the Branch, of which Tobin is secretary. The outcome should be interesting.

But this drama is an ongoing affair. On Sunday, June 23rd, Tobin, in his dual role of freelance journalist and Mayor's scriptwriter, turned up on the Sunday Press. The story ostensibly concerned Lipper's criticism of R.T.E.'s neglect of Limerick. But once again a familiar old refrain was sounded: Tom Tobin was seeking yet another job. The article ended:

And, to add insult to injury, R.T.E. will not appoint a Limerick journalist as a staffman in this important city. They have a Cork staffman in Cork and they have a Galway staffman in Galway. They have their own studios in Cork and in Galway. What hope have we of getting our own local radio programme in Limerick?

It cannot be said that Tom Tobin is not a trier; but the results of his efforts have all too often been confused with political development in Limerick.

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

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BACK NUMBERS

MANY readers have written in seeking copies of back editions of the LIMERICK SOCIALIST. A limited number of copies of each issue, excluding Vol. 1, No. 4 (April, 1972) and Vol. 2, No. 8 (August, 1973), can be obtained at the rate of 10p per copy (post free) or £1 for 12 copies. Orders for back numbers should be handed in to any newsagent in which the LIMERICK SOCIALIST is sold or sent to the:

LIMERICK SOCIALIST,
33, Greenhill Road,
Garryowen,
Limerick.

On July 3rd the "Limerick Leader", in a front page article titled "Move in the cause of Matt Talbot" reported:

The Archbishop of Dublin has appointed Father Morgan Costelloe as Vice-Postulator of the cause of Matt Talbot, the saintly Dublin labourer and member of the I.T.G.W.U., who died in 1925. Next year will be the 50th anniversary of his death; this coincides with the Holy Year in Rome. It is hoped that Irish pilgrims to Rome will bring to the notice of the world the cause of Matt Talbot. A Novena for the beatification of Matt Talbot has just concluded in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sean McDermott St, Dublin. There the body of the servant of God is venerated by the faithful; also on display are the chains he wore about his body, his books and a new-found photo which has been enlarged. The Novena was preached by the Rev. N. O'Neill, S.J. of The Crescent, Limerick. Bishop Kavanagh of Dublin presided at the opening ceremony ... The church was packed as the lay congregation prayed for the canonization of the first Irish layman.

The Dublin novena is the latest of a number of events designed to further the cause of the canonization of Matt Talbot. On November 5th, 1972 Dr. Dermot Ryan, Archbishop of Dublin unveiled a marble plaque to mark the spot in Granby Street, Dublin, where Talbot died. The following day the Irish Times reported the words of Dr. Ryan during the unveiling ceremony: "The plaque was a clear indication that the memory of Matt Talbot was still alive and many people wished him to be canonised".

Not only the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, but also some of the leading trade unionists in the land, have lavished praise on the austerity and masochism of Matt Talbot. On Sunday, June 20th, 1971, Senator Fintan Kennedy, General President of the biggest trade union in the country, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, led a group of his members and their wives and children to pay homage at Talbot's tomb. In it's edition of June 25th, the Catholic Standard reported Kennedy's speech at the graveside:

Despite all our foibles and weaknesses nothing raises so much deep interest as the story of a really good man. A man who sets his ideals high and lives up to them. He is the type of man we don't often meet. He is sometimes the subject of disbelief, scepticism and even resentment. Matt Talbot's quiet, unsophisticated existence in Dublin between 1856 and 1925 still stands out as a vigorous indictment of current attitudes ... He was not a 'scab' as some early critics who did not know him tried to convey. There is not one whit of evidence to show that he did not reflect the legitimate aspirations of the downtrodden companions on the docks and in the labourers' yard ... Irish workers can look to Matt Talbot for inspiration. Saints are hard to live with; they make us uneasy and sometimes ashamed. But it can do us no harm to peer back over a half-century at the example of this patron of the modern Irish worker.

From this eulogy it will be seen that Dr. Dermot Ryan, had nothing on Senator Fintan Kennedy when it comes to pouring praise on Matt Talbot as the potential patron saint of Irish workers. But let us hear what a fellow Dublin labourer of Talbot's time, Sean O'Casey had to say about him:

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MATT TALBOT: SAINT OR SCAB? PART ONE

Here at this church (the Pro-Cathedral) Matt Talbot, a Dublin labourer, full-up of sanctity, stretched himself flat on the pavement to say preliminary prayers, then crawled up the steps on his belly to the big door closed against him, waiting prone on the stones till it opened to let him join in the first Mass, so that he might go merry to work; dropping dead one day as he hurried to another church in an effort to fulfil the obligation he put upon himself to pray without ceasing. But he hurried too fast this time, for his heart gave out before he got there, and he fell down dead. But he died with harness on his belly. Afterwards, in the mortuary, it was found that he was wearing a cart chain round the middle of his body, with another round one on his legs, while a rope was tied tightly round the other one, and all were spangled with holy medals. A model workman and a model catholic, the courtly knight, Sir Joseph Glynn, calls him, and his life points out the only path to true peace for all who labour, a life of self-discipline lived in perfect agreement with the law of God and His church. Ecce hobo sapiens. Blow, crumpeter, blow! So workers of Dublin, and the world, you know now what you have to do. Follow Matt Talbot up to heaven. You've nothing to lose but the world, and you've the holy chains to gain. Read this Glynn's Life of Matt Talbot, then read Stalin's Life of Lenin; and take your choice. Make the world safe for the bosses. If you do, you're sure to get to heaven when you die.

Think deep on these things, working-men. Why do you waste time demanding a living wage? Think of eternity, and remember there may be none there. Why do you want to bother about the

health and vigour of your children? Pain and woe and disease may help them upwards. Why do you look for a comfortable home, with light and heat and colour in it? You fools! Consider Matt Talbot, and you'll realise that these poor things are but vanity. Worse than vanity - burdens, clogs, stumbling-blocks, impeding your precious way to heaven. Listen, you dockers and labourers of Dublin! When a boat has to be unloaded in quick time so that she may catch a tide, and you get an extra two shillings for the hurried job, don't take them. Refuse this bonus as Matt Talbot did, feeling with him that idle moments waiting for lorries to come to be unloaded should be set against the extra work. That was Matt Talbot, that was! This refusal of extra money, says the knight of Glynn, was due to the high sense of justice this man Talbot possessed. Oh, how far short do we come of this man's high sense of justice! Matt always thought of his poor boss. Look at all the boss had to do with his money - keep a big house going, a carriage and pair, a well-dressed wife, and high education for his little ones. If indifferent workers could but see the truth hidden in time and eternity, they'd refuse any extra reward of wage or bonus. They'd advance through life on white bread and black tea to the glory of God and rich benefit of their own souls, and so allow the bosses to enjoy their chicken and wine in peace. Do these things, workers and you'll all be lifted up to heaven with sparkling cords made out of the gold of the rich men. And the sight entrancing you'll all see there - Matt Talbot and the knight of Glynn shaking hands among the gallant and glittering angels.

- To hell with Matt Talbot!

Matt Talbot was born at 13 Aldboro' Court, or Place, on May 2nd, 1856. Sir Joseph Glynn in the introduction to his book the Life Of Matt Talbot, a work written "for the edification of Matt Talbot's fellow-workers in Dublin", the author describes some of the physical and spiritual conditions of the working class in the mid-nineteen-twenties in tenement rooms, where "the Perpetual Lamp is kept alive somehow, even when there is no bread":

Those who mix amongst the poor of our Capital know that beneath the squalor, and in spite of it, there exists holiness of life and a wonderful charity; holiness which reveals itself in the resignation with which the poor bear the manifold troubles which are their daily lot ... to see real goodness go to a room in a tenement house and look around you. There is the Perpetual Lamp kept alive somehow, even where there is no bread. There are objects of piety - crucifix, pictures, statues and the tiny altar decked in coloured paper and tinsel. There is a patient wife alone with her little ones, for the husband is gone on the never-ending quest for work, or the lonely widow who earns a pittance from a few days charing each week, will meet you with a smile of welcome, and will thank God for the little timely aid you have brought in His name to those his little ones ... These are our people, the God-fearing men and women of our City from whom Matt Talbot sprang ...

So from his lofty financial and moral perch the "courtly knight" set the scene for his book on the life of "the patron of the modern Irish worker".

(To be concluded).

RAIMEIS

BY DERMOT McEVOY

DATELINE: In Partibus Infidelium
(In the country of unbelievers)

So a Socialist candidate has shaken the old Walls of Limerick – and spell Walls with a W. please, or I shall be in as much trouble as Mick Lipper's scriptwriter who thinks that any old "ramais" will do. (See LIMERICK LEADER, June 17th).

In the outgoing Mayor's pre-election statement (it was a foot long) there is an odd passage: "I would remind the people in my own ward that forces will be used to stifle the voice of Mick Lipper ..." (By hand-cuffing his scriptwriter?) Well, I shan't be one of those forces and I feel sure Jim Kemmy does not aspire to be another Saint – Just, Apostle of the Terror. Truly, if Lipper feels any stifle coming along he should try Dyer's Versicant, it's also good for the staggers, so he can pass the medicine to Mr. Desmond O'Malley who cannot be feeling all that encouraged by the people of Corbally and Garryowen.

Seriously, what came over the people? They could have elected a capitalist grocer, a super-marketeer, or a supporter of the arts like, say Charlie Haughey. Yet they picked a socialist bricklayer, I am told, but naturally do not believe, that Mr. Haughey, a solid man if ever there was one, once said: "If I can't take it with me, I'm not going". In that respect, neither the editor of the Limerick Socialist nor I will have a problem ... unless, of course, we win the Sweep – or, equally unlikely, happen to collect a windfall from some distant relative.

One discordant note. A minor rebuke for Seán Bourke for hanging an election banner, Vote No. 1 Kemmy, on Bishop O'Dwyer Bridge. He would not have got away with it in the bishop's day. Indeed, from my understanding of Canon Law a bridge named after a bishop is almost consecrated ground. Retribution may come from on high. (Not that Seán Bourke is likely to be deterred by any celestial edict).

Seán and his friends, however, may not have to bother going boating on the Shannon around Askeaton way in another few years; when the red mud by-product of bauxite oozes up to the top of the estuary they might be able to walk on the waters ... and that's more than any bishop did or can do. Even Bishop O'Dwyer.

At the time of writing this Ráimeis I do not know who is going to be the occupant of the Mayor's Parlour. Somehow, I feel that the new man will not be inviting me in. Mind you, I don't expect tea and biscuits, even Dyer's Versicant, but I trust in his charity that the new man won't set the dog at me! Or talk through his cocked hat.

After all, Ráimeis is intended to be fun, something to take your minds even for a few

minutes from the dreadful facts of life in which a stiff upper lipper is the man to win through – unless he runs into a Jim Kemmy.

I am certain Kemmy has no illusions about the toughness of the struggle for the democratic reforms he has in mind for Limerick. I find on glancing again at Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*:

There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things, because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may well do well under the new".
Up Garryowen!

Some of my readers often get letters saying: "See you at the match on Sunday (D.V.)". "He'll be off the drink soon (D.V.)" etc. etc. and they are puzzled by the D.V. as I told that foolhardy Seán Bourke earlier, I am regarded as the best in the West on CANON LAW (or Canon Scatterry Island for that matter). The D.V. is our old tried

and trusted friend – Dyer's Versicant (at one time we had a certain political advertising the product as "Up Dev", but the people tumbled and tried a new tack.

A word of warning: if you through some Freudian slip reverse the initials, you get an entirely different product. And it won't do you a bit of good blaming me.

Taken from the *New Statesman*: On one occasion the last Sir Thomas Beecham was travelling by the old G.W.R. and carefully entered a first-class non-smoking compartment. He had it himself until, just before the train left, a woman followed him in and promptly opened her handbag and took out a packet of cigarettes. "You won't mind", she said smiling sweetly, "if I smoke?" Beecham replied rather less sweetly: "Of course not, Madam, but you will not, I take it, mind if I am sick?" She immediately grew haughty and said: "Sir, I don't think you can be aware that I am one of the directors' wives. Who but a great conductor with a perfect sense of timing could have managed the reply: "Madam, even if you were the director's only wife, I should still be sick".

"DEMOCRACY" AT LANSDOWNNE

The Lansdowne milk processing factory at Limerick is to be acquired by Golden Vale Co-Operative Limited. While the Golden Vale group has announced that it is committed to maintaining the existing plant at Lansdowne, where 300 workers are employed, the casual workers at this factory are not satisfied that their interests are being adequately protected in the deal. In the following statement sent to the editor of the "Limerick Socialist", the casual workers also protest against the lack of trade union democracy within their Union, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union:

We the casual workers of the Condensed Milk Co. pay 26p per week Union money to the I.T.G.W.U., yet we are not allowed to attend Union meetings, nor allowed to vote on any Union matters.

We the casual workers, consider this a grave injustice, and feel we are classed as second-class citizens. For instance, a casual worker was told he was only paying union money "to pass the gate". That was said by the present Union Chairman, Paddy Grimes.

The Casual workers, formed their own committee to speak for them, and to meet the

Chairman and the Committee. The conditions that were asked for were:

- (1) *That all Casual workers be allowed to attend general meetings if they so wished.*
- (2) *That Casual workers, with three seasons or more with the firm, have a vote.*
- (3) *That a "Casual" worker with five seasons or more be allowed on the Committee.*

We the Casual Workers are also gravely concerned about the take-over by Golden Vale. We are kept in the dark as to what is in store for us. Are we to be treated like the women workers of Cleeve's factory? When Cleeve's was closed down, the women were kept in the dark, until the last moment. Then they had no choice, but to work for the Condensed Milk Co. or get out. But the Men of Cleeves, were guaranteed Key jobs, so the women, although constant workers, were sold out.

We ask are the Casuals to be sold out also, because we are kept ignorant as to what is happening at our place of work? To conclude, a casual worker usually works on average 9 month's of the year, and some Casuals have been doing this for 6 years. Is this fair treatment? We ask: When will these casual workers become fully-fledged trade unionists and regular workers?

the election

When the welcome news went out
that Jim Kemmy had entered the fray
comrades came from near and far
to campaign for the voting day.

The campaign was planned and duly manned
the goal was there for all to see
They would do their best, and never rest
'til on the Council was their candidate, Kemmy.

They were here, they were there,
they were all around the city,
talking, walking, and urging people
"Come out and vote for Kemmy".

Tony Crowley came home from the West,
to help even up the score.
Seán Bourke typed out all the letters
'til they piled up on the floor.

Joe Kemmy handled the posters
and, with Michael B, pasted the town.
Billy, Seán and Jackie went boating
and soon their plan became known.

In the early hours of the morning
a dozen comrades marched to the Shannon

Aloft they carried a strange white object
Looking like a new kind of cannon.

In daylight the mission was clear
and had a message louder than any "machine"
For there in the centre of the river
"Kemmy For The Council" could be seen.

The canvass was thorough each evening
All complaints taken from man and woman.
And there in the front-line ever present,
was the quiet-spoken teacher, Joe Scallan.

The Mayor, Mick Lipper, was shattered,
he couldn't stand the strain,
In the closing hours he retired to bed
and told people he had a pain.

Dessie O'Malley was trying so hard
He gave his address as Dáil Eireann
one night he was caught in the "Ark"
and nearly ended up in William St. Station.

Paddy Kiely, to give him his due,
saw the danger of losing his seat
He ran through the Ward day and night
'til he almost collapsed on his feet.

The barmen from Gussie O'Driscoll's
were out postering in the dead of night,
along came a car out of nowhere
"Vote Kemmy" was their dawning sight.

The final hour came near
outgoing Councillors began to fear
They knew they were in for defeat
Jim Kemmy would certainly win a seat.

On polling day, from nine to nine,
the comrades held the line,
with confidence they struggled on
and knew Kemmy was doing fine.

Dermot and Tony held the fort on King's Island.
John and Joe played their parts at the Dalcassian Hall.
Another John stood firm at St. Patrick's,
And the Quinn's performed well along the Mall.

John Joe Mack manned Ita Street
Mick Mull held the Baptist School
Tom Considine operated the Garryowen beat
And at St. John's Mick Conaghan kept his cool

In tall St. Munchin's House
the dramatic count was begun
and by one o'clock it was known
that Cllr. Jim Kemmy had won.

They toured the Ward in triumph,
grateful to man, woman and family,
Limerick had overwhelmingly ensured
the victory of Socialist Jim Kemmy.

An OPENING SPEECH

Jim Kemmy, speaking at the first meeting of
the Limerick City Council, during the election of a
new Mayor of Limerick, said:

*This evening must be a unique occasion in the
history of mayoral elections in the past ten years.
It is the first time in my recollection that we have
been spared reference to a new Town Hall and a
third bridge over the Shannon. These and other
such projects have been dangled for far too long
before the eyes of the Limerick people. But we
must be grateful for small mercies and I welcome
the small new note of realism now, apparently,
entering the affairs of the City Council.*

*The Limerick Corporation and the City Council
must become more relevant – and be seen to be
relevant – to the lives of the people. Long,
high-sounding yearly orations are a poor substitute
for this position. If local government is to be in
any way democratic we must have consultation,
involvement and participation by the people –
tenants, residents and communities – at all levels*

*of the Corporation's decision-making process.
Anything else is only a mockery and an empty
charade.*

*Under the present system most of the people
see the Corporation as a bureaucratic, impersonal
body, with the Councillors acting as plaintive
go-betweens between the small group of
bureaucrats on the one side and the mass of the
people on the other. This is an accurate but
completely outdated concept and it must be
changed and updated to meet the democratic
demands of the modern age.*

*I support the existing rotation system for the
election of a Mayor. I believe we must examine the
role of Mayor in our city. The Mayor must be
more than an ex-officio public relations officer for
every gommeen man and scheme that comes the
way.*

*But while we are taking part in this mayoral
election this evening amid this pomp and
ceremony, many of the people we were elected to
represent are suffering silently outside. I refer
especially to the people living in bad and
overcrowded housing conditions. I refer to
husbands, wives and children separated in different
houses and different areas. I refer to all the
nerve-racking problems and pressures arising
from the lack of decent houses. I want to call this
evening for the introduction of a special
emergency housing repair programme for St.
Mary's Park. This action would involve the
spending of much more money and the
employment of more building workers. This
programme would also provide for the building of
bathrooms in all the houses in this area.*

*But this Council does not meet this evening in a
vacuum. We meet at a time and in a society where
5% of the people own over 70% of the wealth. I
hope to work on this Council towards a society
where all the wealth of that society will be owned
by all our people.*

Before the vote for Mayor Jim Kemmy said:

*Faced with the unprincipled and unholy
alliance of Fine Gael and Labour this evening the
result of the election is not difficult to forecast.
The triumphant trumpeting of the Coalition
parties is leave no doubt about their position. In
this situation I propose to abstain from voting and
I will leave this exercise to the capitalist parties.*

**Following the election of Alderman Pat
Kennedy (Fine Gael) as Mayor, Jim Kemmy
stated:**

*Since his entry into politics in this city
Alderman Kennedy has shown himself to be a
hard-working and ambitious politician. However,
he would want to keep a very tight grip on his
ambition during his year in office because I, for
one, will use whatever energy and power at my
disposal to ensure that his ambition does not run
away with him.*

*I read in this evening's press that Alderman
Kennedy is going to set out to create social justice
in Limerick. This, of course, is something of a
joke. Under the present capitalist economic system
there will never be social justice. At the end of his
year in office social justice will certainly still be as
far away as ever. It should not be forgotten that
Alderman Kennedy is a member of Fine Gael, the
most staunch party of privilege and power in the
country. Anyone who saw that party's recent
double-take on the Wealth Tax will know how
sincere that party is about social justice – and this
is only one example.*

*As the senior Alderman in the city the new
Mayor is certainly entitled to his term of office.
His year ahead promises to be an interesting one
and, while I don't profess to be a prophet, I
believe we will see some rifts in the Coalition's
closed shop in this period.*

THE VICTORY OF JIM KEMMY

A SOCIALIST VICTORY

In the May edition of the "Limerick Socialist" an article titled "Kemmy for the Council" stated:

The Limerick Socialist Organisation has nominated its chairman, Jim Kemmy, to contest the local elections in Ward Two of Limerick city. Unlike other left-wing groups who merely put forward candidates at election times in order to be seen to be doing something, or to "keep the old flag flying", this Organisation enters the election confident of winning one of the five seats in the Ward.

This article was followed up by a further piece in the June, edition of this paper, titled "A Workers' Councillor":

For the first time in the history of Limerick politics a socialist worker, backed by a politically conscious group, has openly presented himself as a candidate at the local municipal elections. For the first time ever the people of the city have an opportunity of electing a genuine working class councillor to represent them on the Limerick City Council ... The election campaign mounted on behalf of Jim Kemmy has been led by local socialists and trade union activists and has been one of the most determined, best-organised efforts ever seen in a local election in Limerick. The election workers on the campaign team do not need market research consultants to interpret their

WHISTLING IN THE DARK?

I am really surprised at the massive vote he received. Mr. Kemmy worked very hard and was rewarded with tremendous public support. I am sure he will be a most active and co-operative member of the new Council.

(Senator Ted Russell, leader of the Fine Gael Party on the Limerick City Council, "Limerick Leader, 22/6/74).

findings on the canvass. The signs from the people living in Ward Two are definite and unmistakable: the opening of the ballot-boxes on June 19th will not only open the way for the election of a socialist councillor but also for a new era in the political development of the Limerick working class.

That these predictions were not idle speculation has been shown by the election results in Ward Two. Faced with the strongest opposition in the city, including the then current Mayor, three former Mayors, a former State Minister and seven

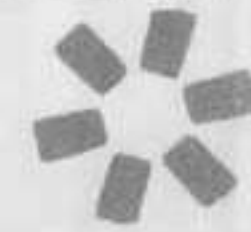
other candidates, Jim Kemmy was elected in second place with 1,275 first preference votes. This vote was 134 votes more than the quota and 270 votes more than Fianna Fail's top man, Des O'Malley, who came in fourth on the seventh count.

Michael Lipper, who topped the poll with 1,739 votes, was just completing his term of office as Mayor of Limerick, a position estimated to be worth around 500 votes to a councillor of even average ability. In this situation, the election of Jim Kemmy can only be regarded as a positive vote of approval for the man and his policies. Interviewed by reporters immediately after his election, Jim Kemmy said:

My election triumph is an endorsement of the maturity and intelligence of the Limerick people — we treated them as rational adults and they responded in a clear and decisive manner. Down through the years the Limerick people were wrongly written off as bigots and fanatics. My election to the City Council has now proved otherwise. It is a victory for the common sense of the people.

The significance of this election is the fact that Kemmy is the first candidate in Southern Ireland to stand for a democratic solution to the Northern Ireland conflict. His platform also included policies for a fundamental reform of society in accordance with socialist principles. At local level, he was the only candidate to call for the introduction of industrial democracy and greater participation by the people in the decision-making process of local government.

Jim Kemmy is the only socialist in the 17-member City Council. It would, therefore, be naive to expect any support from the members of the capitalist parties for his policies and statements. Outside the Council, however, Kemmy's programme has the support of a big and growing number of people. The election of Jim Kemmy can be hailed as a small step along the road to socialism in Ireland.



For the attention of Michael McMahon, Jim Hickey, Danny Powell and Joe McGovern.

Remember the candidate who had his headquarters in a pub. His drinking mates told him he'd top the poll. So when he got 97 votes he wasn't elated. They found him having a quiet pint. "Ah, there's always the next time", they told him. "I've learned two things", he said. "One is that I have 97 friends in the parish ... and the other is that there are two thousand liars coming into this pub".

(Frank Hamilton, "The Limerick Weekly Echo", 18/5/1974).

THE GOD BLESS ALL HERE MAN

I earnestly request the honour of your No. 1 Vote, or if that is not possible, the best preference you can give me, to secure my re-election. God Bless you for doing so, and even if you don't vote for me, well God Bless you anyway.

Sincerely yours,
Con O'Neill.

(Election leaflet of Con O'Neill, the defeated Labour Party candidate in the Kilmallock Electoral Area).

Published by the Limerick Socialist Organisation

