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*Strikes, Syndicalism and Soviets: A Comparative Study of
the Labour Movements in Cork and Derry, 1917-24*

By Luke Mackey Dineen

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University College Cork

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This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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List of Acronyms

AEU – Amalgamated Engineering Union

AFIL – All-for-Ireland League

ASTT – Amalgamated Society of Tailors’ and Tailoresses

ASCJ – Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners

ASLEF – Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen

ASRS – Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants

ASE – Amalgamated Society of Engineers

ASTI – Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland

ATGWU – Amalgamated Transport and General Workers’ Union

CEF – Cork Employers’ Federation

CDTC – Cork District Trades Council

CTC – Cork Trades Council

GNR – Great Northern Railway

GSWR – Great Southern & Western Railway

IAWU – Irish Asylum Workers’ Union

IADAMU – Irish Automobile Drivers’ and Mechanics’ Union

IBOA – Irish Bank Officials Association

ICWU – Irish Clerical Workers’ Union

IDAA – Irish Drapers’ Assistants’ Association

IEIU – Irish Engineering and Industrial Union

IESFTU – Irish Engineering, Shipbuilding and Foundry Trades Union

INPDATU – Irish National Painters’, Decorators’ and Allied Trade Union

INTO – Irish National Teachers’ Organisation

IPP – Irish Parliamentary Party

IPU – Irish Postal Union

IRA – Irish Republican Army

ITGWU – Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union

IUDWC – Irish Union of Distributive Workers & Clerks

IWWU – Irish Women Workers’ Union

LLSR – Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway

MEA – Municipal Employees’ Association

NUDL – National Union of Dock Labourers

NUVB – National Union of Vehicle Builders

NAUL – National Amalgamated Union of Labour

NAUSAWC – National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks

NCC – Northern Counties’ Committee

NUBSO – National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives

NUTGW – National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers

NSFU – National Sailors’ and Firemen’s Union

NUR – National Union of Railwaymen

RCA – Railway Clerks’ Association

RIC – Royal Irish Constabulary

SMF – Shirt Manufacturers’ Federation

UGW – United Garment Workers’ Union

UTLC – Cork United Trades and Labour Council

UULA – Ulster Unionist Labour Association

UTU – Ulster Teachers’ Union

UVF – Ulster Volunteer Force

Introduction

This thesis is a comparative study of the Labour movements in Cork, a poorly industrialised city, and Derry, a semi-industrialised one, during the syndicalist years of the Irish Labour movement: 1917-23.¹ Specifically, it is an investigation of how, and to what extent, syndicalism impacted the third and fourth cities of Ireland. It establishes the internal and external influences on Labour in two urban areas with disparate internal and external dynamics.

The introduction provides a broad synopsis of the history of Irish Labour from 1850 until 1923. By putting it in its socio-economic and political contexts, it explains the nature and ideological influences of the movement, as well as its relationship to British Labour. It thereby demonstrates how the themes of modernisation and decolonisation suffused Irish Labour from the late nineteenth century until the early 1920s, an era in which the contemporary movement was born. Syndicalism is the central concept of scrutiny. The introduction provides a detailed description of the ideology, how it manifested internationally and how Irish syndicalism differed from its international counterparts. It also describes the extant relevant literature and explains how this thesis compliments that body of work.

Section I details the intense class conflict of the era in Cork and Derry individually before conducting a comparative analysis in its last chapter. In so doing, it examines why syndicalism held far greater sway in Cork and whether its workers did better under its influence than in Derry. Section I places class conflict in both places in the broader context of the social upheaval occurring both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, it contextualises class conflict by demonstrating the impact that the political turmoil consuming the island had upon it. The differences in the structure of the Labour movement in Cork and Derry is examined. Accordingly, there will be a strong focus on the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) and its conflict with British unions. It also analyses women's experience of trade unionism and how men perceived the unionisation of women.

Section II examines the relationship between Labour and the Irish revolution. Its structure is like the previous section. First, it outlines and compares how and why Labour participated in the revolution in two nationalist-majority cities. Then, it investigates how Labour was viewed and treated by the Irish revolutionaries and the Ulster Unionist counterrevolutionaries. This is achieved by investigating how employees fared within public authorities that changed hands from constitutional nationalist to republican in Cork, and from

Unionist to nationalist and back again in Derry. Section II's final chapter compares the experiences of workers in both cities amid political revolution and reaction: where they converged, where they diverged and, ultimately, where Labour fared better and why. This social analysis reveals the class nature of republican revolution and Unionist reaction, and how Labour could expect to fare under the partition settlement. Most importantly, however, it illuminates the social dynamics of the Irish revolution.

Overview and Background: Ireland and Irish Labour, 1850-1923

Ireland's economic performance between 1850 and 1914 was unusual by international standards. Huge levels of emigration caused a massive 25 per cent population decline between 1851 and 1911. Traditional historiography claims that the country experienced economic decline in this period because emigration deprived it of some of its most able people – but recent scholarship has shown that this is inconsistent with the evidence.² Even though they were among the first in Europe to experience deindustrialisation, the living standards of the Irish working class rose impressively and wages converged with Britain and the US.³ The driving force behind this growth is the subject of debate among historians. Some highlight emigration's role in pushing Irish wages upwards by reducing under- and unemployment, sapping labour supply and integrating Ireland into global labour market conditions.⁴ Others focus on more foundational measures like economic structural change, capital accumulation and labour productivity.⁵ Cormac Ó Gráda estimates that national income per capita grew faster in Ireland than in Britain (it nearly trebled) between 1850 and 1914, rising from 40 to 57 per cent of British levels.⁶ By 1914, Irish tradesmen's wages were nearly as high as their British peers, though the gap for labourers was still about 25 per cent.⁷ Between 1850 and 1920 Irish retail prices were largely determined in Britain because the export prices of agricultural produce, of which Britain was the chief market, became the ruling wholesale prices in Ireland. From 1874 to 1898, Irish wages grew in tandem with a decline in the cost of living, significantly improving workers' living standards.⁸

But these improvements did little to ameliorate long-standing gap between trade and spade; by the 1880s, British 'new model unions' had obtained wages for Irish tradesmen that were typically double that of their labourers. Established throughout the 1850s and 1860s, new model unions were, unlike their predecessor craft unions, centralised national organisations with full-time general secretaries. They levied high rates of contributions that enabled them to pay generous strike, sick and funeral benefits. They reflected the conservatism of the 'labour

aristocracy' (the mid-nineteenth century craftsman) and were reluctant to strike. They prided themselves on their 'respectability' and manoeuvred tactically by maintaining demand for labour through strict control of apprenticeships and the enforcement of restrictive practices. Prominent new model unions included the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), founded in 1851, and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (ASCJ), founded in 1860, which shortly thereafter began organising in Ireland.⁹ Although new model unionism had a very limited appeal in both Cork and Derry, it re-orientated the values and outlook of Irish Labour towards Britain. This was British Labour's contribution to the Anglicisation of Ireland. From the 1850s, Irish Labour applied the industrial methodology of British trade unionism, methods that were inapplicable in a poorly industrialised economy with high unemployment, a sparse number of tradesmen and a preponderance of unskilled labour. The foundation of the ITGWU in January 1909 was the beginning of the decolonisation of Irish Labour.¹⁰ Larkinism (1907-14) was the second of the three waves of unrest that revolutionised Irish Labour. The first was 'new unionism' (1889-92) and the third was syndicalism (1917-23).

As the American and European economies emerged from recession in 1887, there was a resurgence of trade unionism and violent class conflict. The 'new unions' were distinguished by their militancy and organisation of the neglected unskilled labourer; some even recruited on a general basis. New unions charged low subscription rates and prioritised winning improvements in wages and conditions rather than just providing friendly benefits. New unions improved and defended their members' living standards through strike, or at least the threat of it, and eschewed conciliation and arbitration. Strike tactics often included violence and blacking. New unionism anathematised the hitherto acceptable principle of voluntary participation in trade unionism and insisted on having a closed-shop.¹¹ They recruited by appealing to class consciousness and solidarity. This was a central goal of the movement: the unification of the working class into a politically independent, assertive force. They believed proletarian interests went beyond industrial relations and advocated Labour representation in parliament. The demand for an eight-hour day became an international new unionist rallying cry. Accordingly, many new unionists flirted, however mildly, with socialism.

New unionism had greater support from tradesmen in Ireland than in Britain as unions were much weaker in the former. Mental colonisation manifested itself in Irish Labour's assumption that copying British Labour was the path to progress. Irish new unionism was essentially a reproduction of its British equivalent. It accelerated a process that had been ongoing since the 1830s: the assimilation of Irish Labour into the British movement. The 'amalgamateds', as they were known, had been progressively subsuming local unions but

greatly increased this drive from 1889. Irish new unionism strongly depended on two factors beyond its control: British support and the health of the economy, which was gripped by another deep recession from 1891-94. The poor economy helped employers to crush the movement. New unionism was the first serious attempt to modernise Irish Labour. After its demise, old unionism regained its ascendancy until 1907 with the advent of what Irish employers disparagingly called Larkinism. However, new unionism never truly died and there were ripples of recovery from 1894-5, 1897-8 and 1900-03. A more enduring new unionist idea materialised in 1894 with the creation of the Irish Trade Union Congress (ITUC), even though it embodied old unionist inertia until 1911.¹²

In January 1907, the fortunes of Irish Labour began to change utterly when Big Jim Larkin arrived in Ireland to organise Belfast dockers for the moribund National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL).¹³ Larkin brought with him not only a revitalised union but a philosophy of industrial and class relations. Momentum towards a second wave of new unionism had been gathering across Ireland since 1903. Real wages across the UK had been stagnant since 1896 and rising food prices meant that workers' living standards were diminishing in real terms. Rising unemployment also dragged labour to the left.¹⁴ Irish employers by now accepted craft unions, responsible and respectable as they were deemed to be, but opposed any unionisation of the unskilled. To them, the labourer could not be trusted to behave sensibly with a powerful weapon like trade unionism. Chaos would inevitably ensue from the wild demands that labour unions would make in a poorly industrialised economy that simply could not afford it. Larkin understood that Irish employers would have to be taken on directly via mass sympathetic action. If the NUDL would not commit the necessary resources to this fight then no British union would, in which case an Irish union was needed. In late 1908, the opportunity to breakaway arose when Larkin's union executive expelled him for his militancy. Most of the Irish NUDL went with him and the ITGWU was born. The new union was the driving force of Larkinite agitation.¹⁵ But Larkin's presence was not the only reason for the rebirth of militancy. When the Liberal Party government passed the 1906 Trade Dispute Act to reverse the Taff Vale judgement, it represented a shift from the laissez-faire economic liberalism the party had championed throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁶

Ideologically, Larkinism had much in common with contemporary European syndicalism; while both were products of the same forces, notable differences existed between the two. Unlike syndicalism, Larkinism resulted from the absence of radical alternatives, not from disenchantment with them. However, like syndicalism, Larkinism exalted the 'irrational' aspect of the human condition. In other words, it infused new moral, rather than material, values

into Irish trade unionism. As an agitator, Larkin projected the workers as moral heroes and presented himself as the embodiment of their spiritual resurrection. Larkinism instilled new ethical values of class solidarity into the paradigm of class relations by ennobling methods which made possible the unionisation of the unskilled as part of a morality of struggle. Its ultimate manifestation was the sympathetic strike – its most efficacious weapon in the class war. Its three central characterises were a glorification of the working class, sympathetic action and class solidarity. It was part of the rebirth of militancy taking place across Europe and North America and was Ireland's contribution to the international syndicalist insurgency.¹⁷

Larkinism stimulated a growth in class consciousness, which galvanised women to organise. Until the early twentieth century, union leaders, the vast bulk of whom were men, were heavily influenced by prevailing societal views of gender roles. 'The thought of organising women workers, of whom thousands and thousands worked in slave conditions . . . never crossed their minds.'¹⁸ Nevertheless, between 1870 and 1914 women in Ulster's clothing industries struck several times, sometimes with remarkable success, despite not being organised. The strikes were not spontaneous or predicated on unionisation: the militancy was deeply rooted in the informal networks that existed among working-class women.¹⁹ But the benefits of trade union membership were obvious given women's terrible economic status. Although some unions began accepting female members in the 1890s, most found it difficult to accept the presence of women in the labour market. By 1914, only a tiny percentage of women were organised.²⁰ Labour leaders often insultingly attributed this to female apathy. While apathy may have contributed, it is a simplistic explanation to a complex phenomenon. Some historians have suggested that wages were so low that women could not afford to join a union; others have highlighted long working-hours which, combined with demanding domestic duties, gave women no time to organise.²¹ While it is *sometimes* wrong to view poor unionisation as evidence of an absence of class consciousness or a weak position in the labour market, the lack of labour market leverage was the central reason for pitiable levels of organisation among industrial workers of all kinds, including women.²²

Skill, gender, employer hostility and working-class family structure were also factors. Few of the era's union leaders rejected the view that the man, as the breadwinner, should be able to earn a 'family wage' – enough to keep his wife and children in frugal comfort. Women could then remain in their rightful place, the home, catering for the family. The patriarchal notion of the family wage was all-pervasive in the ITUC. Congress was happy to accept the status quo that men should always be better paid than women in every job. The only reference to equal pay during all these years was a rhetorical flourish from James McCarron, a Derryman.

Even unions representing women did not raise the differential rates of pay between men and women. When the ITUC considered issues of material concern to women, it was often because it wanted to defend the men whose wages were being undercut by unorganised women. In this regard, the ITUC did not differ from its British counterpart, which in 1913 called for a minimum wage for men fifty per cent higher than that for women. Thus, gendered roles in labour movements and markets were common internationally, and Irish Labour must be understood in this context.²³

Irish union leaders also believed that low male wages forced many women to work to raise working-class family income to a 'decent' level. This view was informed by a certain perception of women's unpaid work in the home: that it had no economic value and therefore did not deserve the same respect or consideration of men's work. Many trade unionists assumed that women who worked were forced to it, rather than doing so out of desire. Some did indeed see work as simply an obligatory interregnum between school and marriage. Given the sectarian nature of Ulster life, the situation of Catholics in the province may have differed from Protestants. While Catholic women typically married casual labourers, it was more usual for Protestants to marry craftsmen who could support the family. Therefore, it was more likely that Catholic women would continue to work in the factories after marriage. But by the turn of the century – though the number of working females was declining – many women were choosing to work; at the very least, they were content to be at work. The main reasons for this were social – for the freedom and friendships that it brought: work gave women economic independence from men. However, this freedom may have weakened the impulse for unionisation.²⁴

The outbreak of the First World War in July 1914 brought adversities to the working class that were novel in nature and unprecedented in scale. Chief among them was the mass inflation caused by Germany's devastating U-boat campaign against British merchant ships in the Atlantic.²⁵ Profiteering by unscrupulous employers, shopkeepers and farmers was a major grievance from the start. In a foretaste of things to come, the average retail price of food went up 10 per cent at the war's beginning.²⁶ But inflation was just one reason the war necessitated a move toward a planned economy. Inevitably, the UK economy was geared towards the production of munitions and food, so Irish workers involved in these industries had a relatively 'good' war. The war was very consequential for UK Labour in how it altered the nature of industrial relations and the role played by the state in class conflict. Despite ideological qualms, by early 1915 the British Government had developed an industrial wartime policy built around tackling four key issues: controlling the cost of living, maintaining essential war supplies, addressing labour shortages (arising from recruitment) and maintaining industrial peace. A

content working class was central to this strategy. Therefore, the state adopted Labour-friendly policies. The Committee on Production – on which employers, but not trade unionists, sat – was instituted in February 1915 to regulate wages, output and labour supply in the shipbuilding and engineering industries.²⁷ The Munitions of War Act 1915 extended its terms to include all war industries. Strikes and lockouts were prohibited in these industries and compulsory, binding arbitration introduced. As it allowed this ban to be spread to other industries, the Act's impact was far wider and more consequential than intended. Compulsory arbitration began to apply to industrial disputes across the economy and was not limited to munitions works. Workers benefited as employers were forced to the negotiating table. Previously, employers could grind out a victory by issuing a pre-emptive lockout and wait for strike pay to dry up. Now, they had no choice but to bargain with unions. Workers could issue strike notice and an improvement in pay was practically guaranteed. Conversely, binding arbitration encouraged trade union membership – which facilitated Irish Labour's recovery after the 1913 Dublin lockout – and employers therefore bitterly resented it.²⁸ However, the government was slower to control price increases. A Food Controller was appointed in December 1916 and began to phase in price controls on a selective basis.

From 1907-14, Irish Labour had been both inactive and ineffective when compared to its British equivalent. By 1914, Irish unions had been completely exhausted with few tangible improvements to show for two decades of struggle.²⁹ Labour was poorly placed to deal with the hardships caused by the war. For the Irish working class, it was a war of two halves as food shortages and inflation accentuated latent class tensions from 1914-16. By late 1916, food prices were, on average, 84 per cent above their pre-war level while the best paid workers were getting only 20 per cent above their pre-war wages.³⁰ Southern cities had fewer industries relevant to the war effort than Ulster and their workforces contained much unskilled labour. Workers in the south were therefore less affected by the new atmosphere of class co-operation than Britain and Belfast from 1915 and missed out on the benefits that accrued. They increasingly locked horns with employers who profited from the war but were reluctant to share these profits in the form of wage advances. Employers grudgingly gave 'war bonuses' – a name given to highlight the temporary nature of the payment – to placate workers, but it was not enough. Moreover, Ireland's low levels of military recruitment removed a further hindrance to industrial action.³¹ For these reasons, from 1917 Irish Labour was engulfed by its final, and most intense, wave of agitation: syndicalism.

The essence of syndicalism

More so than any other ideology or movement, syndicalism incorporated a vision of the working class rooted in a belief in its right to self-management and in its capacity to govern its own affairs.

To syndicalists, the working class constituted the force for change, the economic terrain its natural battlefield, direct action its natural weapon, and self-directed labour associations the natural agencies for uniting, marshalling and applying the collective and ultimately revolutionary power of the workers.³²

Though it had radical and moderate wings, it is possible to broadly define syndicalism as 'revolutionary trade unionism'. Not only were unions the agents to overthrow capitalism but they contained the embryo of a new order. A truly democratic and egalitarian society could be governed by unions, not political parties or the state; so could a collectivised, worker-managed economy. Although it was an international phenomenon, syndicalism was far from homogeneous and varied considerably from country to country. While it grew out of socio-economic and political conditions created by international capitalism, it manifested itself in direct relation to each country's distinct material conditions and traditions.³³ However, syndicalism everywhere had core theoretical and practical goals: revolutionary class warfare and direct action; rejection of political parties, parliamentary democracy and the capitalist state; trade unions as the vehicle of revolution; the general strike; workers' control; and anti-militarism and internationalism. Ideologically, it was a synthesis of Marxism, anarchism and revolutionary trade unionism. The national context determined which of these elements exerted the most influence.³⁴

Originating in France in the early 1890s (*syndicat* is the French word for trade union), syndicalism was born out of the perceived failure of the various forms of existing socialist politics and reformist trade unionism. Syndicalists maintained that political parties create an unaccountable elite that will inevitably betray the membership. Parties grouped their members according to their beliefs and not their class: professionals, intellectuals even landlords and capitalists could be members of a socialist party. Trade unions grouped workers according to their class interests irrespective of belief. If the political party was an association of choice, the trade union was an association of necessity.³⁵ Besides, political power simply reflected economic power. Syndicalists sought to use trade unions – which they regarded as the most authentic manifestation of working-class struggle – to replace expressions of industrial

grievances with revolutionary class consciousness. The organisation of all workers into One Big Union was the logical conclusion of this process. The working class could then utilise its most effective weapon, the general strike, to smash capitalism and seize power at the point of production.³⁶

General strikes took place in Belgium in 1893 and 1902, in Sweden in 1902 and 1909, in the Netherlands in 1903, in Italy in 1904 and during the 1905 Russian revolution. It was not until the 1890s, simultaneous to the emergence of syndicalism, that the general strike became a practical possibility. There are two reasons for this. First, the working class had become so numerous that any prolonged strike could seriously destabilise the economy. Second, workers had achieved enough organisation and class consciousness, at least in the essential economic sectors, to make a widespread work stoppage viable. This occurred in most developed capitalist countries between 1870 and 1900.³⁷ The unprecedented urbanisation of the late nineteenth century also aided syndicalism's birth: workers began to live in segregated, homogenous neighbourhoods which often heightened class consciousness and fostered solidarity. It is not a coincidence that syndicalism coincided with the onset of the 'second industrial revolution'. Technological innovation, especially the introduction of new sources of power like electricity and the internal combustion engine, altered the nature of the economy and, consequently, working conditions.³⁸

Syndicalists believed that industrial harmony was illusory because the interests of employers and workers were irreconcilable; therefore, class conflict was unavoidable under capitalism. In the long-term, intense class warfare via direct action should be waged against the bourgeoisie and the capitalist state that buttressed them. With capitalism overthrown, the proletariat, not politicians or bureaucrats, would control society. Not only was syndicalism an ideological doctrine but, more importantly, a mode of action: a practical social movement. Indeed, it began as a philosophy of action that emphasised revolutionary spontaneous struggle rather than preconceived notions of how society should be structured. Despite syndicalism's theoretical thinness, many leading exponents, including James Connolly and Larkin, were self-educated 'worker intellectuals' who became widely respected for their oratorical abilities and knowledge of economics and working-class history.³⁹ Larkin had been a docker and foreman, and Connolly a navvy, builders' labourer and shipyardman; syndicalism in France, Italy, the US and Britain was led by tradesmen and white-collar workers.⁴⁰

Syndicalism strove to create a proletarian counterculture to replace the perceived decadence of bourgeois society; economic revolution would herald a moral transformation.

Syndicalists were critical of Marxism's presentation of itself as a 'value-free', rational science and instead tried to fuse moral and material goals to mass mobilise. Like Larkinism, it did this by appealing to the 'irrational' traits of the human psyche. Myth was central to both ideology and action. It was through myth that socialism could unlock mobilising forces like faith, will, intuition and morality. An almost mythological exaltation of the workers as a virtuous, risen people on the cusp of moral grandeur existed in the syndicalist current. Having captivated both Larkin and Connolly, syndicalism was the most popular form of revolutionary socialism until it lost that honour to communism in 1917 after the Bolshevik Revolution.⁴¹

Irish and international syndicalism

In early twentieth century France, industrialisation lagged Germany, Britain and America, and so the country contained a large artisanal workforce employed in small-scale workshops. When mechanisation, deskilling and absorption into the factory system threatened the control over work, craftsmen turned en masse to the syndicalist CGT (General Confederation of Labour) and the decentralised 'trade socialism' it propounded. Railwaymen and miners were also prominent. The French revolutionary tradition and the legacy of the Paris Commune also spurred on the development of French syndicalism. At its height in 1920, the CGT had 2½ million members.⁴²

Backwardness also provided the basis for syndicalism in Spain and Italy, where (like France to a lesser extent) the anarchist influence was most pronounced (Spain in particular). 'Normal', non-revolutionary trade unionism was impossible in semi-feudal, absolutist Spain with its powerful aristocracy, weak bourgeoisie and fiercely intransigent employers. Thus, landless labourers and Catalan industrial workers were all receptive to the CNT's (Confederación Nacional del Trabajo) brand of anarcho-syndicalism: it had 790,948 members in December 1919. The USI (Unione Sindacale Italiana) was a product of the profound wealth disparity between the country's industrialised north and penurious south. For a brief period, it successfully united farm labourers, building tradesmen and some industrial workers. It peaked in late 1919 with a membership of 305,000.⁴³

In Britain and America, syndicalism was a consequence of the increasing industrial concentration in the hands of a small group of capitalists. In the former (like France), failure to halt managerial control over work also aided syndicalist fervour among metal craftsmen, workers hitherto conservative. But it also found support among miners and construction and

transport workers. British syndicalism was embodied by the Industrial Syndicalist Education League, founded in 1911, and the wartime shop stewards' movement among engineers. American employers were even more aggressive, and many resisted any unionisation of workers. Fierce class warfare was the result. From this milieu emerged the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World or 'Wobblies') in 1905. It was eagerly supported by unorganised migratory labourers, miners, seafarers and industrial workers, and incurred ferocious hostility and violence from the local, state and federal governments.⁴⁴

Like Spain and Italy and Ireland, syndicalism in the US and Canada reflected the countries' regional economic divides and contradictions. In the American and Canadian west, harsh material conditions radicalised workers and drove a wedge between them and the reformist craft unions of the east. In the west, exploitation was more acute, employers more obdurate and the alliance of capital and government more obvious than on the eastern seaboard. Revolutionary unionism in both countries was most popular in the industrial, logging and mining communities of the west, both heavily populated by immigrants.⁴⁵ 'Industrial concentration, the growth of mass production industries, technological changes, and corporate control all developed in largely virgin territory, preceding, superseding, or breaking whatever labour-union traditions had previously existed.'⁴⁶ Canada's One Big Union was established in 1919 and had 40-50,000 members by late 1919/early 1920 before contracting to 5,000 by early 1921. By 1922, it was all but dead outside Winnipeg.⁴⁷

The emergence of vast industrial monopolies in late nineteenth century North America underscored the weakness of a divided working class and made the One Big Union an organisation necessity. Like other countries that industrialised after 1870, the same forces shaped syndicalism in Germany, where revolutionary trade unionism was embodied in dual unionism. Here, the socialist movement was founded before the labour unions, who were strongly associated with social democratic politics from their beginning. After the Great War and the 1918-19 revolution, many dockers and sailors at the North Sea ports, building workers, chemical and shipbuilding workers, and miners and metalworkers in the Ruhr and middle Germany embraced the anarcho-syndicalist FAUD (Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands), whose membership reached 111,675 in late 1919. In contrast to Britain and France, semiskilled workers led German anarcho-syndicalism after 1918.⁴⁸

Dutch revolutionary trade unionism was led by the NAS (Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat). Founded in 1893, it turned to syndicalism during the war when workers raced to join it. Its membership peaked at 51,000 in 1920, with construction workers, transport workers

(especially dockers) and municipal employees particularly prominent. By 1924, however, this figure had shrunk to 13,000. In Sweden, the SAC (Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation) was born out in 1910 of economic depression, social democrat revisionism and employer aggression. Until 1917, it was a militant anarcho-syndicalist organisation. But by 1922, it had accepted an evolutionary path to socialism via increasing workers' control. In the mid-1920s it had over 37,000 workers in its ranks, mainly building and forest workers. In neighbouring Norway and Denmark, syndicalists formed opposition groups in their countries' Labour movements that were powerful from 1917-20. In 1920, the Norwegian opposition took control, but by then syndicalism played a secondary role to Bolshevism. In Portugal (like Spain and Italy), socio-political and economic backwardness ensured that anarcho-syndicalism remained the foremost brand of revolutionary socialism. When the CGT (Confederação Geral do Trabalho) was founded in 1919, capitalism in Portugal was still highly underdeveloped and republican liberal democracy only nine years old. Parliament's inability to deliver for workers drove the union's expansion: it grew to 150,000 members in 1921 (when there were only 170,000 industrial workers in the country) with construction workers playing a leading role.⁴⁹

Syndicalism was not solely a Western phenomenon. From the 1880s to the 1930s, anarcho-syndicalism dominated Labour movements in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Cuba. Syndicalism was also a significant force in Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Ecuador, and visible in Costa Rica, Venezuela, Puerto Rico and Panama.⁵⁰ Beginning in the late nineteenth century, radical South European immigrants helped to spread anarcho-syndicalism to these countries. This globalisation owes much to the IWW and its organisation of sailors. True to its name, it brought syndicalism to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Japan to name but a few.⁵¹ In Chile, it became a powerful union until its suppression by the country's dictatorship in 1927. The Mexican Wobblies had 80,000 members in 1928-29.⁵²

The explicitly anarchist FORA (Federación Obrera Regional Argentina) was founded in 1901 and attracted mass support from disenfranchised immigrants. It spread rapidly and led several general strikes, some of which involved hundreds of thousands of workers. In 1915 it split into anarchist and non-anarchist unions. The former's membership peaked at 10,000 while the latter's reached 100-120,000 by 1919. Both were central to Argentina's 'Tragic Week' in January 1919 when a strike at a Buenos Aires ironworks led to riots and violent clashes with police and far-right terror squads that left over 700 dead and over 2,000 wounded.⁵³ From 1917-19, Brazil was convulsed by general strikes in its major cities when workers took militant action against grinding poverty, long working hours, low wages and inflation. The unrest climaxed in

November 1918 when the anarchists attempted an uprising. At its 1919 height, the syndicalist Brazilian Workers' Confederation had 100-125,000 members in Rio de Janeiro alone. State repression and a swing to reformism helped to kill the revolutionary fervour. Simultaneously, via the Casa del Obrero Mundial, Mexican workers built by far the largest anarcho-syndicalist movement the Americas has ever seen. Founded in 1914 during the Mexican Revolution, the Casa's propagation of governance based on workers' syndicates spearheaded a rapid growth among artisans and labourers alike. By 1916 its ranks had swelled to nearly 150,000 members before an alliance of state and capital crushed it.⁵⁴

Irish syndicalism was more a mentality than a movement. It was a native expression of the international unrest – a reprise of Larkinite militancy in response to unbridled wartime inflation and revolution at home and abroad. Connolly's contribution to syndicalism was his emphasis on class unity, to be realised in industrial unions and, ideally, the OBU (which he learned from the Wobblies). Irish syndicalism was also the product of structural factors. Syndicalism tended to be strongest in backward parts of advanced countries where labourers were neglected by the established unions. As an area heavily reliant on primary production where industrial tactics had to be militant, southern Ireland was a typical centre of syndicalism.⁵⁵

Republican revolution and Ulster Unionist counterrevolution at home also radicalised Irish Labour. The war had destabilised conservative politics, creating the space for radicalism to flourish. The Easter Rising was a consequence of this destabilisation and it began a political re-alignment in the south from constitutional nationalism to Sinn Féin. Ulster Unionism responded by tightening inter-class bonds, quashing radical impetuses in the process. For this reason, among others, syndicalism was largely, though not entirely, a southern phenomenon. From 1919-21, the age of the bourgeois, capitalist state appeared to be over and the fabled 'workers' republic' became something other than a radical pipe dream. The re-emergence of products unavailable in wartime had triggered a boom from 1919-20 that fuelled this possibility. Overproduction led to a capitalist crisis from 1921-24, when political and employer reaction crushed syndicalism.⁵⁶

Methodology and evaluation of primary sources

Until recent times, the concept of class had been the central methodological focus of Labour history. This was a direct result of Marxism's status as the primary method of analysis for Labour historians, with Weberianism also prominent. But this dominance has been recently challenged by scholars who argue that Labour history should be studied in the context of society's gender, ethnic, racial, cultural and religious divisions.⁵⁷ These historians are critical of mono-casual explanations based on class and the chief supposition of traditional Labour historiography: that the working class acts in accordance with its long-term class interests. More so than anything else, gender has established itself as the main methodological rival to class within Labour history. Moreover, some of those who do accept class analysis reject orthodox Marxist theory and view alternative methods as complimenting, and not in conflict with, the centrality of class.⁵⁸ The traditional objects of class analysis have also changed. Labour history has traditionally focussed on occupations and industries as the objects of analysis, most of which has manifested as studies of trade unions, individuals, time periods, workplaces and groups of workers.⁵⁹ Labour and social historians have largely operated on the basis that the working class and its organisations are national entities. Thus, the nation state has been considered the logical unit of analysis. This methodological nationalism began to change from the 1960s when historians became aware of the benefits of international, comparative studies of the working class. Within this comparative history the nation state remained the centre of focus as historians have compared Labour movements or aspects thereof in two or more countries. This method is extremely valuable as an illuminator of national similarities and differences, thereby linking micro- and macro-history. But it is important that the researcher not treat separate units as overly casually independent, the assumption of which is implicit in the comparative methodology.⁶⁰ Although, there has been a major growth of interest in the local and spatial dimensions of Labour history, national borders remain the principal parameters of study.⁶¹

This thesis combines elements of both the 'old' and the 'new' methodologies. Like traditional Marxist historiography, its central focus is class. Accordingly, strikes and lockouts are vigorously examined to analyse the nature of class and the strength of class consciousness (a concept that will also be examined). However, it also employs methodologies of gender, religion and ethnicity when discussing, ethnoreligious and gender-based proletarian divisions. It is an empirical 'history from below' that narrates the experience of rank-and-file workers in a turbulent era; employers and political actors are secondary. Most obviously and significantly,

it is a comparative history.⁶² Utilising national parameters, it demonstrates how the Irish working class was divided by non-material factors; simultaneously, it shows how the spread of syndicalism in the south had a material basis. There are several reasons why Cork and Derry were chosen. There are deep structural, economic political, ethnic, religious and gender differences between the two cities that make a comparative study illuminating. This dissertation facilitates the testing of hypotheses about Irish Labour history (mental colonisation) to explain historical outcomes (conservative revolution, partition). This comparison also reveals the different impact that major external developments (syndicalism, the Bolshevik Revolution) had on Labour in Cork and Derry.

Primary sources reflect the focus on workers rather than unions or officials. Unfortunately, the years covered made this more difficult than a study of a more contemporary period because receiving oral testimony was not possible. In lieu of interviews, local newspapers were the major primary source to chronicle the workers' experience, especially during strikes and lockouts. The upsurge in class conflict was accompanied by a more extensive Labour press and greater coverage of unions in the mainstream media. The *Cork Examiner* and the *Derry Journal* are ubiquitous throughout. There is a simple explanation for this: as nationalist papers, both were more sympathetic to Labour than their Unionist rivals – the *Cork Constitution*, *Londonderry Sentinel* and the *Derry Standard* – and therefore gave it far more column. However, neither were Labour papers and many strikes and lockouts received only fleeting references or no coverage at all. The political tumult inevitably took precedence. This is especially apparent in the Derry papers which mirrored the city's politico-sectarian divisions. Newspapers also gave fuller accounts of the meetings of public bodies covered in this study than their minutes did. This was more valuable for Derry where public institutions usually met monthly rather than weekly, as was the case in Cork. As no records exist for the Cork or Derry trades councils for 1917-25, newspaper reports had to suffice.

Where newspapers failed, British state files filled the gap. Appendices concerning strikes, government arbitration and long-term wage and cost-of-living fluctuations could not have been constructed without the Ministry of Labour's records. Its monthly publication, the *Labour Gazette*, was therefore vital. However, small strikes and lockouts or changes in wages and hours in Ireland often went unnoticed by the recording clerks. Trade-union and employer/business records also aided in the creation of this data. The minute books of trade union executives were quite uninformative. They reflect a disconnect that often existed between headquarters and individual branches, something painfully apparent within British

unions that considered Ireland to be of secondary importance. As they were written for a general audience, union journals and newspapers shine a stronger light on how British trade unionists perceived events in Ireland.

A major difficulty in conducting any comparison of Cork and Derry was the unevenness of archival material: Cork has far more records available than Derry. No trade union records from Derry branch survive from the era. Moreover, as Derry was not a centre of the Irish revolution, few personal papers of locals who participated in it survive. Furthermore, unlike Cork, no Derry paper was a daily; only weekly and tri-papers were produced.

Existing literature and historiography

The shortness of this review reflects the dearth of literature on the topics covered in this thesis. Although the Irish revolution has a voluminous historiography, there remains a dearth of research into Labour during these years. Irish syndicalism remains deeply under-researched, even though 1917-23 is among Irish Labour history's most studied periods. Syndicalism outside of Ireland has received more attention but it too remains under-researched.⁶³ Only Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe have tried to explain why it was such an international phenomenon. They pinpoint five things that had to happen in a country before syndicalism took hold: growth of radicalism among workers, changes labour processes, rejection of the dominant labour strategy, embrace of the general strike, and spatial and geographical influences.⁶⁴ Whilst their input is invaluable, there are limitations. There is no scrutiny of the interdependency of variables or assessment of the extent to which they influenced each other. Both rightly speak of the characteristics of global syndicalism but speak little of syndicalism's different national manifestations. Moreover, there is insufficient international comparison. Factors crucial to syndicalism's birth, like the role of the state, ideological influences (like anarchism) and employer and state repression, are ignored.⁶⁵

Ralph Darlington's *Radical Unionism* (2008) partially fills these lacunae. It is a highly informative book that demonstrates how syndicalism adapted to unique socio-cultural, political and socio-economic contexts. It does this by a comparative study of six countries: the US, Britain, France, Spain, Italy and Ireland. It explains syndicalism's growth by analysing industrial and economic backcloth; political context; trade union framework; anarchism and other ideological influences; level of workers' struggle and political radicalisation; conscious and organised syndicalist intervention; and international cross-fertilisation of syndicalist

movements.⁶⁶ The strength of Darlington's work lies in its comparative nature and enunciation of the complex relationship between syndicalism and communism, and how the latter's growth in popularity aided the former's demise. However, beyond that comparative context nothing new is revealed about Irish syndicalism as the sections dealing with Ireland lack detail.

Despite recent advances, Irish Labour historiography remains sparse. This was commented upon three decades ago by Emmet O'Connor and it remains the case. A prime example of the neglect is Conor Kostick's *Revolution in Ireland* (1996). Though its subject is proletarian militancy during the revolutionary years, it does not discuss syndicalism to any significant degree and therefore contributes little new to working-class history. Furthermore, Kostick's argument of a militant rank-and-file 'betrayed' by a conservative leadership is simplistic and overly influenced by his Trotskyite politics. A better account is provided by O'Connor, whose *Syndicalism in Ireland* (1988) remains the most authoritative study of Irish syndicalism. Essential for any social analysis of the revolutionary years, it is an excellent dissection of the ideological origins and nature of Irish syndicalism, and its impact on Labour. Equally impressive is its discussion of Labour's participation in the national struggle and how the ruling classes perceived the syndicalist insurgency. However, the book's language is unnecessarily dense, making it difficult to understand in parts and unsuitable for a general audience. O'Connor's *A Labour History of Ireland* (1992) is a foundational text for any study of Irish Labour history. However, some of its arguments are dated and others are unclear due to poor quality of writing. An example of the former is its claim that the Irish economy declined from 1850; an example of the latter is its assertion that Irish Labour's growing dependence on Britain is indicative of economic decline.⁶⁷

The historiography's limited nature is especially apparent for Labour in Cork and Derry; the movement in Dublin and Belfast has been more thoroughly researched.⁶⁸ A notable exception Andrew Finlay's PhD thesis on trade unionism and sectarianism in Derry's shirt industry – an excellent work of historical anthropology. It conducts a multifaceted examination that explores the influence of unionisation, politics, sectarianism, craft and gender on the working life of the shirt worker. This is one by the collection of oral testimony from the shirt workers themselves. Finlay's interviews with participants in the 1920 shirt cutters' strike, like Peadar O'Donnell, was especially beneficial to this thesis. His dissertation's greatest strength is its explanation of the role that gender played in influencing the (overwhelmingly male) cutters' behaviour towards their (female) co-workers on the factory floor. Finlay succeeds in

achieving his main goal: debunking what he sees as Connolly's incorrect analysis of northern Labour that exercised an undue influence over subsequent Marxist historiography.⁶⁹

Some of his claims (like the extent to which gender dynamics impacted trade unionism in the shirt industry) are disputed by O'Connor, who also helped to fill the lacuna of Derry Labour history. His two short books on the subject are extensively used and helped to establish a narrative. They skilfully apply his theories of mental colonisation and modernisation of Irish Labour to the Derry context. The first, which covered the years 1889-1906, adeptly reveals the radical and inclusive nature of new unionism in Derry, something Shane McAteer also did.⁷⁰ O'Connor's second book, which covers 1907-23, shows how sectarianism was a major reason for the power of British unions in this nationalist-majority city. The British, he argues, were able to avoid sectarian splits by eschewing the Ulster question thereby keeping nationalists and Unionists in the same unions. Moreover, it shows how northern Connollyites of the era understood the Ulster Protestant working class in a way that revisionist Marxism has not fully appreciated. This thesis supports O'Connor's propositions. However, both books are very short and do not detail the multifaceted dynamics of the revolutionary era and how they impacted Derry Labour. Whilst working-class history is only a minor concern for Robert Gavin, William Kelly and Dolores O'Reilly, they cover the topic at various points in *Atlantic Gateway* (2009). Their history covers all aspects of Derry's port, including a social history of those who worked there. It is thorough and impressively researched, which helped to provide much-needed socio-economic context. However, its slant is conservative, and the authors take an unsympathetic view towards Labour that O'Connor attacks as 'pro-establishment'.⁷¹

Historians have been similarly neglectful of Cork Labour during the Irish Revolution, though this is not true for the nineteenth century. Maura Cronin has added several masterful studies that chronicle several aspects of working-class life in the nineteenth century: trade unionism, Fenianism, leisure, and political and economic context. Especially advantageous was how she exhibited the enormous importance the craftsman applied to his trade and how this inhibited working-class unity in Cork. Her work is complimented by Edward Lahiff's MA thesis.⁷² As one of the only studies of the Cork economy and Labour movement in the twentieth century, Lahiff's work was an important source. It is well-researched and utilises an impressive array of sources, thus allowing a more holistic study of Cork industry and Labour. However, there is no discussion or analysis of syndicalism and there is insufficient detail on the 1917-21 period, years that merit the most attention from Labour historians. Moreover, avoidable factual errors undermine its quality (see Endnote 66).⁷³ Stephen McQuay Reddick's masters thesis

suffers from the opposite problem. Although its analysis is more accurate and conclusions nearer to the mark, it is too dependent on local primary sources and provides an inadequate national and international context.⁷⁴ The broader picture was provided by John Borgonovo, whose strength as a historian is proven by his dexterous ability to put the revolutionary political and military upheavals the city endured in their socio-economic and political contexts. *The Dynamics of War and Revolution* (2013) is a thorough account of Cork life during the early revolutionary period that achieves just that. It was most useful when examining the rise of the amiable relationship between the Labour and republican movements and the crossover that existed between them. Unfortunately, it too contains errors about Cork's Labour movement that negatively affect its quality (see Endnote 68).⁷⁵

The extent to which class antagonisms influenced the nature and outcome of the Irish revolution has received attention from the earliest histories of the revolution. Many historians have detected some class basis to the Treaty split. Pro-Treatyite P.S. O'Hegarty implicitly highlights the 'respectable', middle-class nature of the Treatyites' conservative nationalism. On the other side, Dorothy Macardle's insinuates a natural affinity between republicanism and workers, farm labourers and small farmers. Macardle's view was repeated in the 1960s when the modern historiography of the civil war was born. Republicanism was typically presented as a phenomenon of the land-hungry rural proletariat eager for the redistribution of wealth and power. The Free State's primary backers were the employers, merchants, large farmers, remnants of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, the press and the Catholic Church.⁷⁶ Generalisations like these are problematic. Labour was officially 'neutral' on the Treaty and trade unionists were on both sides of the civil war.⁷⁷

The Irish revolution contains a small but influential Marxist historiography.⁷⁸ Here, the case for class as a determinant of the revolution is made most strongly. Previous generations of Marxists saw British rule as the root cause of Ireland's problems, including partition and northern sectarianism. They agreed that Ireland's status as a colonised country meant that Sinn Féin's 'bourgeois nationalism' could aid the proletarian struggle and have a complimentary relationship to socialism. In his influential biography of Liam Mellows, Charles Desmond Greaves, who embodied this school of thought more than anyone, used dialectical materialism to explain the complex social and class dynamics of the 1916-23 period.⁷⁹ He argued that the petit bourgeoisie, the most numerous bourgeois class, turned to Sinn Féin after the collapse of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Labour having abstained to preserve the unity of the trade union movement. This betrayal of the working class was crucial to the formation of the Irish state. It

left the petit bourgeoisie without allies during the Treaty split, allowing conservative propertied interests to rally to the Free State which thus emerged victorious. Although the Irish's proletariat class consciousness came to the fore during the revolution – as evidenced by the litany of strikes, soviets, land seizures, cattle drives and other forms of unrest – the petit-bourgeoisie's domination of republicanism produced a 'counterrevolutionary' Treaty settlement.⁸⁰

Justifiably, this argument has been heavily revised or dismissed completely by subsequent Marxists. These 'revisionists' offer a class analysis that exposes the strength of the rural bourgeoisie that led Sinn Féin and argue that social revolution was never a possibility. Sinn Féin's revolution was an inherently conservative one because its republicanism was a manifestation of reactionary, bourgeois Catholic nationalism.⁸¹ Ulster Unionism is not simply a pernicious product of British misrule held together by imperial manipulation and deceit, but a movement as complex and internally divided as republicanism. As the British state is much more heavily influenced by a much stronger Labour movement than its Irish equivalent, the British presence in the north is not inherently harmful to working-class interests. Highlighting Unionism's proletarian support and the Ulster Protestant's potential for radicalism are central goals of this agenda.⁸² Austen Morgan, Henry Patterson, Paul Bew and Peter Gibbon are major proponents of this school of thought which is sometimes difficult to distinguish from non-Marxist, Unionist historiography.⁸³ Their work has been attacked by some as academic whitewashing of partition and the history of British rule in Ireland.⁸⁴ Greaves and co. are more positively received by contemporary (northern) Marxists who agree with his 'nationalist' view that British rule and its underwriting of reactionary Ulster Unionism is the source of partition and the persistence of conflict.⁸⁵ They argue that working-class Unionism is due to a deceptive policy of 'labour aristocracy': the deliberate creation of a well-paid, skilled Protestant stratum at the expense of Catholics, most of whom were labourers. The complexities of and intra-class tensions within loyalism render this view too simplistic to be taken seriously.⁸⁶

This dissertation enhances the historiography of the Irish revolution in five ways. Firstly, it describes Labour in Cork and Derry during some of the most eventful years in Irish history more thoroughly than any existing study. Secondly, it is the first historical study that compares Labour in two structurally distinct Irish cities, disparate in terms of their religious, gender, political and demographic compositions. Thirdly, it helps to move Labour historiography away from Dublin and Belfast and raise appreciation of the working-class history of other cities. Fourthly, by comparing a city in the six counties to one in the twenty-

six counties, it improves our understanding of Labour's role in partition. Lastly, it aids our understanding of a period whose historiography is dominated by military studies. By providing local studies of Labour, north and south, this thesis informs the historiography of Labour and the Irish revolution on a national level.

Chapter Notes and References

¹ Throughout, 'Labour' is used to denote the activities of trade unions and related groups. Workers and work are referred to as 'labour'. Supporters of the 1800 Act of Union are referred to as Unionists, so they are not confused with trade unionists. Although the Irish Trades Union Congress changed its name to the Irish Labour Party & Trades Union Congress in 1912, it will be referred to as the ITUC throughout.

² For examples of this school of thought, see David Fitzpatrick, 'The disappearance of the Irish agricultural labourer, 1841-1912', *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 7, 1980, pp. 66-92; and Joseph Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848-1918* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1973).

³ Louis M. Cullen, *An Economic History of Ireland since 1660* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd), p. 137;.

⁴ For examples of this school of thought, see Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'After the Famine: Emigration from Ireland, 1850-1913', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Sept. 1993, pp. 575-600; Kevin O'Rourke, 'Did the Great Irish Famine Matter?', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Mar. 1991, pp. 1-22; Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Migration as disaster relief: Lessons from the Great Irish Famine', *European Review of Economic History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Apr. 1997, pp. 19-21; Kevin O'Rourke, George Boyer & Timothy J. Hatton, 'The impact of emigration on real wages in Ireland, 1850-1914', in Timothy J. Hatton & Jeffrey G. Williamson (eds.) *Migration and the international labour market, 1850-1993* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 221-239; and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'Economic convergence: placing post-famine Ireland in comparative perspective', *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 21, 1994, pp. 5-27.

⁵ For examples of this school of thought, see the following articles by Frank Geary & Tom Stark, 'Examining Ireland's Post-Famine Economic Growth Performance', *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 112, No. 482, Oct. 2002, pp. 919-935; 'Trends in Real Wages during the Industrial Revolution: A View from across the Irish Sea', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 57, No. 2, May 2004, pp. 362-395; and 'Regional GDP in the UK, 1861-1911: new estimates', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 68, 2015, pp. 123-44.

⁶ Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 235-254.

⁷ For a comparative wage table for Irish and British tradesmen and labourers in 1914, see *ibid*, p. 238.

⁸ H.D. Gribbon, 'Economic and social history, 1850-1921', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: VI, Ireland under the Union, II, 1870-1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 317-318, 339-340. The fall in the cost of living was due to the application of mass production methods to consumer goods, improved wholesale and distribution methods, free trade and the development of railway networks and steamship services.

⁹ John W. Boyle, *The Irish Labour Movement in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), pp. 92-95; *Eleventh and final report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the organization and rules of trades unions and other associations; together with an appendix containing a digest of the evidence, correspondence with Her Majesty's missions abroad regarding industrial questions and trades unions, and other papers, 1868-69, XXXI, C.4123*, United Kingdom Parliamentary Papers (UKPP), p. 298. New model unions derive their name from Sidney and Beatrice Webb's characterisation of them in their famous 1894 book *The History of Trade Unionism*.

¹⁰ Emmet O'Connor, 'Labour and politics, 1830-1945: colonisation and mental colonisation', in Donal Ó Drisceoil and Fintan Lane (eds.), *Politics and the Irish Working Class, 1830-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 27-33.

¹¹ Dermot Keogh, *The Rise of the Irish Working Class: The Dublin Trade Union Movement and Labour Leadership* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1982), pp. 90-91; Boyle, *The Irish Labour Movement in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 92-126;

¹² Emmet O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland, 1824-1960* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1992), pp. 46-48; O'Connor, 'colonisation and mental colonisation', pp. 30-33; Emmet O'Connor, 'Problems of Reform in the Irish Trades Union Congress, 1894-1914', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, vol. 23-24, 2007, p. 47.

¹³ Emmet O'Connor, *Big Jim Larkin: Hero or Wrecker?* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2015), pp. 16-19.

¹⁴ T.R. Gourvish, 'The Standard of Living, 1890-1914', in Alan O'Day (ed.), *The Edwardian Age: Conflict and Stability, 1900-1914* (London: Archon Books, 1979), pp. 14-15; Emmet O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland*,

1824-1960 (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1992), p. 67. On prices, see B.R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹⁵ Emmet O'Connor, *Derry Labour in the age of agitation, 1889-1923, 2: Larkinism and syndicalism, 1907-23* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), p. 10.

¹⁶ Chris Cook, *A Short History of the Liberal Party, 1900-1976* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1976), pp. 47-49. The Taff Vale case was the result of a law suit taken against the ASRS by the Taff Vale Railway Company in South Wales after a prolonged strike on the railway. Its judgment meant that trade unions were liable for the loss of profits to employers that were caused by strikes. It effectively killed Labour militancy across the UK.

¹⁷ Emmet O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland, 1917-1923* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1988), pp. 1-13.

¹⁸ Andrew Boyd, *The Rise of the Irish Trade Unions, 1729-1970* (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1972), p. 52.

¹⁹ For an account, see Mats Greiff, 'Marching Through the Streets Singing and Shouting': Industrial Struggle and Trade Unions among Female Linen Workers in Belfast and Lurgan, 1872-1910', *Saothar*, Vol. 22, 1997, pp. 29-44.

²⁰ Penny Holloway and Terry Cradden, 'The Irish Trade Union Congress and Working Women, 1894-1914', *Saothar*, Vol. 23, 1998, pp. 47-48, 56. By 1914, most of Ireland's most powerful still neglected women. Although one-third of the members of Michael O'Lehane's Irish Drapers' Assistants' Association were female, the ITGWU excluded women. This led to the formation of the Irish Women Workers' Union (loosely affiliated to the ITGWU) in 1911 with Larkin's sister Delia as its first secretary. See Mary Jones, *These Obstreperous Lassies': A History of the Irish Women Workers' Union* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988).

²¹ Greiff, 'Marching Through the Streets Singing and Shouting', p. 29; Marilyn Cohen, 'Working conditions and experiences of work. Tullylish, County Down', *Ulster Folklife*, No. 30, 1984, pp. 6-15; Henry Patterson, 'Industrial labour and the labour movement', in Liam Kennedy & Philip Ollerenshaw (eds), *An Economic History of Ulster, 1820-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

²² Holloway and Cradden, 'The Irish Trade Union Congress and Working Women', p. 56; Greiff, 'Marching Through the Streets Singing and Shouting', pp. 29-30, 42.

²³ Holloway and Cradden, 'The Irish Trade Union Congress and Working Women', p. 56.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 47; Greiff, 'Marching Through the Streets Singing and Shouting', p. 29.

²⁵ Liam Kennedy has cited the government's suspension of the gold standard, huge deficit spending and the belated implementation of price control as the reasons for wartime inflation. See Liam Kennedy, 'The Cost of Living in Ireland, 1698-1998', in David Dickson & Cormac Ó Gráda (eds.), *Refiguring Ireland: Essays in Honour of L.M. Cullen* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2003), p. 262.

²⁶ A.L. Bowley, *Prices and Wages in United Kingdom, 1914-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 35-36.

²⁷ Stephen Broadberry & Peter Howlett, 'The United Kingdom during World War One: Business as Usual?', in Stephen Broadberry and Mark Harrison (eds.), *The Economics of World War One* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 213-215, 222-226; Moriarty, 'Work, warfare and wages', pp. 76-77. Though the Committee on Production began on an ad hoc basis, it would go on to prove its worth as a powerful body.

²⁸ Moriarty, 'Work, warfare and wages', p. 77; Niamh Puirseil, 'War, work and labour', in John Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008), p. 188.

²⁹ David Fitzpatrick, 'Strikes in Ireland, 1914-1921', *Saothar*, no. 6, 1980, p. 26; A.E. Malone, 'Irish Labour in War Time', *Studies*, Vol. 7, June 1918, p. 320.

³⁰ Ó Drisceoil & Ó Drisceoil, *The Murphy's Story*, p. 81; Bowley, *Prices and Wages*, pp. 3, 43. By August 1915, retail food prices were 33 per cent above what they were twelve months earlier.

³¹ Fitzpatrick, 'Strikes in Ireland', p. 28.

³² Marcel van der Linden, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism (1890-1940)', in Marcel van der Linden, *Transnational Labour History: Explorations* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003), p. 49.

³³ Ibid; Ralph Darlington, *Radical Unionism: The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism* (Chicago: Haymarket Book, 2008), p. 5.

³⁴ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 21, 74-77.

³⁵ Ibid, pp. 25-27.

³⁶ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p.

³⁷ Van der Linden, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', p. 62.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 53-54.

³⁹ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 124-126.

⁴¹ O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland, 1824-1960*, pp. 67-68; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 6-8

⁴² Barbara Mitchell, 'French Syndicalism: an Experiment in Practical Anarchism', in Marcel van der Linden & Wayne Thorpe (eds.), *Revolutionary Syndicalism: an International Perspective* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990), pp. 25-43; Peter N. Stearns, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labor* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1971); Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 50-52.

- ⁴³ Antonio Bar, 'The CNT: the Glory and Tragedy of Spanish Anarcho-syndicalism', pp. 119-138; Charles L. Bertrand, 'Revolutionary Syndicalism in Italy', pp. 139-153, both found in Van der Linden & Thorpe (eds.), *Revolutionary Syndicalism*. See also Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 52-53.
- ⁴⁴ Bob Holton, *British Syndicalism, 1900-14: Myths and Realities* (London: Pluto Press, 1976); James Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards' Movement* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973); Joseph White, 'Syndicalism in a Mature Industrial Setting: The Case of Britain', *International Syndicalism*, pp. 101-117.
- ⁴⁵ Van der Linden, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', in *Transnational Labour History*, pp. 62-63; Melvyn Dubofsky, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism in the United States', in *Revolutionary Syndicalism*, pp. 203-217; H. A. Logan, 'Rise and Decline of the One Big Union in Canada', *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 36, no. 2, Apr. 1928, pp. 240-279.
- ⁴⁶ Larry Peterson, 'The One Big Union in International Perspective: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, 1900-1925', *Labour/Le Travail*, vol. 7, Spring 1981, p. 48.
- ⁴⁷ David Jay Bercuson, 'Syndicalism Sidetracked: Canada's One Big Union', in Van der Linden & Thorpe (eds.) *Revolutionary Syndicalism*, pp. 221-236.
- ⁴⁸ Peterson, 'The One Big Union in International Perspective', pp. 41, 49, 59, 61, 64; Hans Manfred Bock, 'Anarcho-syndicalism in the German labour movement: a rediscovered minority tradition', in van der Linden & Thorpe (eds.), *Revolutionary Syndicalism*, pp. 59-79; Wayne Thorpe, 'Keeping the Faith: The German Syndicalists in the First World War', *Central European History*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2000, pp. 195-216.
- ⁴⁹ Marcel van der Linden, 'The Many Faces of Dutch Revolutionary Trade Unionism', pp. 45-55; Lennart K. Persson, 'Revolutionary Syndicalism in Sweden Before the Second World War', pp. 81-98; Bernard Bayerlain & Marcel van der Linden, 'Revolutionary Syndicalism in Portugal', pp. 155-165; all contained in *Revolutionary Syndicalism*. In Denmark, the syndicalist FS (Fagoppositionens Sammenslutning, founded in 1910) was prominent in the country's opposition, but its message was lost in the post-1917 enthusiasm for the Bolsheviks. In 1919, Danish syndicalists broke away and created the independent DFS (Dansk Föderalistisk Sammenslutning) but it failed to attract any significant support. In Norway, there were two syndicalist organisations from 1917 – the oppositionist NFO (Norske Fagopposition) and the independent NSF (Norsk Syndikalistisk Federation) – but neither became widely popular.
- ⁵⁰ Steven Hirsch & Lucien van der Walt, 'Rethinking Anarchism and Syndicalism: the colonial and postcolonial experience, 1870–1940', in Steven Hirsch & Lucien van der Walt (eds.), *Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Colonial and Postcolonial World, 1870–1940: The Praxis of National Liberation, Internationalism, and Social Revolution* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. xxxviii-xliii. From the same book, see Steven Hirsch, 'Peruvian Anarcho-Syndicalism: adapting transnational influences and forging counterhegemonic practices, 1905–1930', pp. 227-272; Geoffroy de Laforcade, 'Straddling the Nation and the Working World: anarchism and syndicalism on the docks and rivers of Argentina, 1900–1930', pp. 321-362; and Edilene Toledo and Luigi Biondi, 'Constructing Syndicalism and Anarchism Globally: the transnational making of the syndicalist movement in São Paulo, Brazil, 1895–1935', pp. 363-394.
- ⁵¹ Peter Cole, David Struthers and Kenyon Zimmer, 'Introduction', in Peter Cole, David Struthers and Kenyon Zimmer (eds.), *Wobblies of the World: A Global History of the IWW* (London: Pluto Press, 2017), p. 8. The South African IWW inspired the foundation of the syndicalist Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union in 1919. This union spread to South West Africa in 1920, Southern Rhodesia in 1927 and Northern Rhodesia in 1931.
- ⁵² Van der Linden, 'Second Thought on Revolutionary Syndicalism', *Transnational Labour History*, p. 75; Verity Burgmann, 'Wobblies Down Under: The IWW in Australia', in Cole, Struthers and Zimmer (eds.), *Wobblies of the World*, pp. 168-185; Norman Caulfield, 'Wobblies and the Mexican Workers in Mining and Petroleum, 1905-1924', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 40, 1995, pp. 51-75. For a history of the IWW in Australia, see Frank Cain, *The Wobblies at War: a history of the IWW and the Great War in Australia* (Melbourne: Spectrum Publications, 1993).
- ⁵³ Ruth Thompson, 'Argentine Syndicalism: Reformism before Revolution', in van der Linden & Thorpe (eds.), *Revolutionary Syndicalism*, pp. 167–183; P. Yerrill & L. Rosser, *Revolutionary unionism in Latin America - the FORA in Argentina* (London: ASP, 1987).
- ⁵⁴ Sheldon L. Maram, 'Labor and the Left in Brazil, 1890-1921: A Movement Aborted', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 57, No. 2, May 1977, pp. 254-272; Jeremy Adelman, 'Political Ruptures and Organized Labor: Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, 1916-1922', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 54, Migration, Labor Movements, and the Working Class, Autumn 1998, pp. 103-125; Joel Wolfe, 'Anarchist Ideology, Worker Practice: The 1917 General Strike and the Formation of Sao Paulo's Working Class', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 71, No. 4, Nov. 1991, pp. 809-846; John M. Hart, 'Revolutionary Syndicalism in Mexico', *Revolutionary Syndicalism*, pp. 185-202.
- ⁵⁵ Emmet O'Connor, 'War and Syndicalism, 1914-1923', in Donal Nevin (ed.), *Trade Union Century* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1994), pp. 56-58.
- ⁵⁶ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. xiv-xvi.

- ⁵⁷ See, for example, Eileen Yeo, 'Gender in Labour and Working-Class History', pp. 73-87; John Belchem, 'Ethnicity and Labour History: With Special Reference to Irish Migration', pp. 88-99; Patrick Pasture, 'The Role of Religion in Social and Labour History', pp. 101-132; all found in Lex Heerma van Voss & Marcel van der Linden (eds.), *Class and Other Identities: Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labor History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).
- ⁵⁸ Marcel van der Linden & Lex van Voss, 'Introduction', pp. 17-24; Alice Kessler-Harris, 'Two Labour Histories or One?', in van Voss & van der Linden (eds.), pp. 133-149; both found in van Voss & van der Linden (eds.), *Class and Other Identities*.
- ⁵⁹ Mike Savage, 'Class and Labour History', in van Voss & van der Linden (eds.), *Class and Other Identities*, pp. 66-67.
- ⁶⁰ Marcel van der Linden, 'Globalizing labour Historiography: The IISH Approach', International Institute of Social History, 2002.
- ⁶¹ Savage, 'Class and Labour History', in van Voss & van der Linden (eds.), *Class and Other Identities*, pp. 55-69.
- ⁶² For a thorough analysis of how the comparative methodology can be applied to Labour history, see Marcel van der Linden, 'Doing Comparative Labour History: Some Preliminaries', in Van der Linden, *Transnational Labour History*, pp. 173-196.
- ⁶³ See, for example, the chapters on various national syndicalist movements contained in van der Linden & Thorpe (eds.), *International Syndicalism*.
- ⁶⁴ Van der Linden, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. ; van der Linden, 'Second Thoughts on International Syndicalism', pp. ; Wayne Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves: Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913-1923* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1989).
- ⁶⁵ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 49-50.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 50-93. See also Ralph Darlington, *Syndicalism and the Transition to Communism: An International Comparative Analysis* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2008).
- ⁶⁷ Conor Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland: popular militancy, 1917-1923* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2009); O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland*; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*.
- ⁶⁸ Henry Patterson, *Class conflict and sectarianism: the Protestant working class and the Belfast labour movement, 1868-1920* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1980); Austen Morgan, *Labour and partition; the Belfast working class, 1905-23* (London: Pluto Press, 1991).
- ⁶⁹ Andrew Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism among Derry shirt workers, 1920-1968, with special reference to the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers' (UCL: PhD, 1989).
- ⁷⁰ Emmet O'Connor, *Derry Labour in the age of agitation, 1: New unionism and old, 1889-1906* (Dublin: Four Courts Press); Shane McAteer, 'The 'New Unionism' in Derry, 1889-1892: A Demonstration of its Inclusive Nature' Saothar, Vol. 16, 1991, pp. 11-22.
- ⁷¹ Robert Gavin, William Kelly & Dolores O'Reilly, *Atlantic gateway: the port and city of Londonderry since 1700* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009); O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 46.
- ⁷² Edward Patrick Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork, 1890-1921 (UCC: MA, 1988); Maura Cronin, *Country, Class or Craft? The Politisation of the Skilled Artisan in the Nineteenth-Century Cork* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994); Maura Murphy, 'The Economic and Social Structure of Nineteenth Century Cork', in David Harkness & Mary O'Dowd (eds.), *The Town in Ireland* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1981); Maura Cronin, 'Work and Workers in Cork City and County, 1800-1900,' in Patrick O'Flanagan, Cornelius G. Buttimer (eds.), *Cork: history & society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1993).
- ⁷³ For example, it asserts that the forty-four-hour week had become commonplace by 1921 due to Labour activity. This is incorrect, as this thesis shows. Forty-seven hours was the most common working week by then. This is significant as it may undermine historians' ability to calculate weekly wages based on hourly rates obtained.
- ⁷⁴ Stephen McQuay Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork, 1899-1914' (UCC: MA, 1984).
- ⁷⁵ John Borgonovo, *The Dynamics of War and Revolution: Cork City, 1916-1918* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013). Specifically, a table showing wage trends of Cork Corporation carters claims that they were paid 78s. a week in October 1917, a figure that must be erroneous. It also claims that certain brewery categories of brewery workers were unorganised when in fact they were unionised. These errors are significant because the author claims that the tables he has compiled show the positive effects of unionisation for workers. Moreover, wages peaked in 1920, not 1917, at a much lower level for carters than 78s. Any study of class relations in Cork during the 1917-24 era could be negatively affected by such mistakes.
- ⁷⁶ Gavin M. Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society: Politics, Class, and Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 8-9; P.S O'Hegarty, *The Victory of Sinn Féin: How it Won it and how it Used it* (Dublin: UCD Press, 1924); Dorthy Macardle, *The Irish Republic* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1938); Eoin Neeson, *The Civil War in Ireland, 1922-23* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1966); and Calton Younger, *Ireland's Civil War* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1969).

⁷⁷ Gavin M. Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society*, pp. 9-10.

⁷⁸ In chronological order, here are some examples of this school of thought: Jesse Dunsmore Clarkson, *Labour and Nationalism in Ireland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925); Thomas A. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own: An Outline History of the Irish Struggle for National Freedom and Independence* (London: Cobbett, 1946); Erich Strauss, *Irish Nationalism and British Democracy* (London: Methuen, 1951). See also John M. Regan, *The Irish Counter-Revolution, 1921-1936: Treatyite Politics and Settlement in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2000); Charles Desmond Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1961).

⁷⁹ Charles Desmond Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971). See also Charles Desmond Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union: The Formative Years, 1909-1923* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1982);

⁸⁰ Anthony Coughlan, 'Ireland's Marxist Historians', in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994), pp. 288-305.

⁸¹ See Emmet O'Connor, 'Agrarian Unrest and the Labour Movement in County Waterford, 1917-1923', Vol. 6 1980, pp. 40-58; Paul Bew, 'Sinn Féin, Agrarian Radicalism and the War of Independence, 1919-1921', in David George Boyce (ed.), *The Revolution in Ireland, 1879-1923* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 217-235; Paul Bew, Ellen Hazelkorn & Henry Patterson, *The Dynamics of Irish Politics* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1989); Henry Patterson, *The Politics of Illusion: A Political History of the IRA* (London: Serif, 1997).

⁸² For an overview of the historiography of Irish, and in particular Ulster, Unionism, see Alvin Jackson, 'Irish Unionism', in David George Boyce & Alan O'Day (eds.), *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 120-140.

⁸³ Coughlan, 'Ireland's Marxist Historians', pp. 300-305; Austen Morgan, *James Connolly: a Political Biography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Peter Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: the Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975); Henry Patterson, *Class conflict and sectarianism: the Protestant working class and the Belfast labour movement, 1868-1920* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1980); Austen Morgan, *Labour and partition: the Belfast working class, 1905-23* (London: Pluto Press, 1991); Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon, *The State in Northern Ireland, Political Forces and Social Classes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981). See also the following by Patrick Buckland, *A History of Northern Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1981); *The Factory of Grievances: Devolved Government in Northern Ireland, 1921-39* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979); *Irish Unionism, 1885-1922* (London: London Historical Association, 1973); and *Ulster Unionism and the Origins of Northern Ireland: 1886-1922* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1973).

⁸⁴ For this view, see Coughlan, 'Ireland's Marxist Historians', pp. 300-305. For a critique of Patterson, Bew and Gibbon in particular, see Bob Purdie, 'The Demolition Squad: Bew, Gibbon and Patterson on the Northern Ireland State', pp. 164-176; and Paul Stewart, 'The Jerry-Builders: Bew, Gibbon and Patterson – the Protestant Working Class and the Northern Ireland State', pp. 177-202, both found in Sean Hutton & Paul Stewart (eds.), *Ireland's Histories: Aspects of State, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁸⁵ Coughlan, 'Ireland's Marxist Historians', p. 300. For examples of this See Eamon McCann, *War and an Irish Town* (London: Penguin, 1973); Geoffrey Bell, *The Protestants of Ulster* (London: Pluto, 1976); Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), and *Arming the Protestants: the formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, 1920-7* (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

⁸⁶ J. W. McAuley & P. J. McCormack, 'The Protestant Working Class and the Northern Ireland State: A Problematic Relationship', in Hutton & Stewart (eds.), *Ireland's Histories*, pp. 114-128.

1

Industry and Labour in Cork and Derry, 1850-1917

From 1850 to 1917, working-class life in Cork and Derry changed significantly, albeit in diverse ways. Derry achieved impressive levels of industrialisation. Shipyards and a tramway had sprung up, it acquired the biggest coachworks in the north of Ireland and Watt's distilleries had become world-renowned. Most impressive was the growth of its shirt industry, which had become the biggest in the UK. A 1908 government report could realistically call Derry a 'prosperous town'.¹ In the same report, Cork was described as a 'town which depends chiefly upon its natural situation for its means of sustenance'.² In contrast to Derry, it had significantly deindustrialised over the period, leaving it with an even larger pool of unskilled labour. Dockers, railwaymen and general labourers dominated its male employment structure. The cities' distinct histories were mirrored in their Labour movements. In the nineteenth century, little differentiated the two. However, from the early twentieth century, ethno-sectarian, political and industrial differences put them on separate paths. Irish Labour's syndicalist era crystalized these differences.

Table 1. 1: Populations of Cork and Derry, 1851-1911

Year	Cork		Derry	
	Population	Change	Population	Change
1851	87,758	-	20,135	-
1861	80,121	-8.7%	20,875	+3.68%
1871	78,642	-1.8%	25,242	+20.92%
1881	80,124	+1.9%	29,162	+15.53%
1891	75,345	-6.0%	33,200	+13.85%
1901	76,122	+1.0%	39,892	+20.16%
1911	76,673	+0.7%	40,780	+2.2%

Source: *Cost of Living of the Working Classes*, 1908, Cd. 3864, CVII, UKPP, pp. 573, 583; *Cost of Living of the Working Classes*, 1913, Cd. 6955, LXVI, UKPP, pp. 288, 294.

Cork

Economy and Poverty, 1850-1917

Working life and Labour in Cork had been transformed over the course of the nineteenth century. The advent of factory-based machinery in the latter half of the century did much to undermine the power of the city's traditional crafts. This was compounded by the disintegration of the manufacturing sector caused by the integration of the Irish and British economies, as mandated by the Act of Union. The removal of tariffs devastated many local industries as they were unable to compete with British products that were often cheaper and/or of superior quality. Many trades and industries went into terminal decline.³ Like every other city outside of Ulster, by 1914 Cork had reached an industrial nadir: its industrial base was thinner than what it had been in 1800.⁴

The First World War saw a temporary reversal of fortunes in some industries. Employment at Rushbrooke and Passage dockyard doubled to 800.⁵ Industrial growth also took place at the Cork Spinning and Weaving Company, where 700 women produced aeroplane cloth. The opening of an artillery shell factory in 1916 gave Cork its sole share in the vast growth of the UK's munitions industry.⁶ However, most workers had a less positive experience.⁷ The government diverted raw materials for war production which made them scarce and costly, damaging many industries. The destruction of mercantile shipping created shortages of coal, timber and cement, making raw materials even more expensive. The building trade was hit particularly badly, with its labourers experiencing 'distress' by the summer of 1917.⁸ Government-imposed limitations on the use of barley caused Murphy's brewery to sack half of its coopers in February 1915 and a further one-third of its staff in May 1917. By 1917, short-time hours and enforced holidays without pay were common in the printing trade because of paper shortages.⁹ However, in 1917 Cork's economy received a major boost when Henry Ford opened a manufacturing plant at the Marina. A highly mechanised Fordson tractor factory opened on 1 July 1919 and provided much male employment.¹⁰ Employment structures in Cork were typical for an Irish city: male-dominated and sexually segregated. Women typically worked in the textile, linen, upholstery and tailoring trades (see Table 1. 8).¹¹

Table 1. 2: Employment in Cork, 1919

Industry	Numbers Employed
Coachbuilding	150
Jam & preserves	180
Boot & shoemaking	400
Bacon curing	250
Shirtmaking	250
Engineering	350
Boot & shoemaking	400
Flourmilling	400
Dock work	500
Brewing & distilling	600
Spinning & weaving	1,000
Sawmilling & munitions	1,500
Wool	1,800

Source: D.J. Coakley (ed.), *Cork: Its Trade and Commerce – Official Handbook of the Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce* (Cork: Guy and Co. Ltd, 1919), p. 62.

Deindustrialisation had contributed to abject levels of poverty, which afflicted a quarter of Corkonians in 1914.¹² In 1915, Fr A.M. MacSweeney reported that 35 per cent of residents lived ‘in a chronic state of want’. A further 14 per cent lived a ‘hand-to-mouth’ existence.¹³ In 1917, out of a population of 80,000, Cork had 719 tenements with about twelve people inhabiting each.¹⁴ Public health problems were widespread. In 1915, infant mortality was 132 per 1,000 births while tuberculosis deaths totalled 2.88 per 1,000, producing 283 deaths.¹⁵ In 1913, Cork Corporation estimated that 8,765, almost one-ninth of the population, resided in tenements.¹⁶ Four years later, over 16,000 people inhabited houses considered unfit or barely fit for habitation.¹⁷ Table 1. 3 shows the tragic results of this poverty in a comparative context.

Table 1. 3: Annual Death Rate per 1,000 of the Population, 1922-24

City	1922	1923	1924
Dublin	17.6	15.0	16.7
Cork	18.0	14.0	19.3
Limerick	19.3	17.2	14.5
Waterford	15.3	15.2	16.4

Source: Aodh Quinlivan, *Dissolved: The remarkable story of how Cork lost its Corporation in 1924* (Cork: Cork City Library, 2017), p. 114.

Labour, 1870-1888

Deindustrialisation ensured that class conflict intensified as the nineteenth progressed. The defence of the craftsmen's livelihood fell to the trade unions, but the wide availability of scab labour severely hampered their ability to make gains.¹⁸ In 1870, the tailors' rage boiled over, triggering a strike against low wages, mechanisation and non-union and sweated labour. The employers eventually crushed it and spent the next decade eroding Labour's limited gains.¹⁹ The organisation of labourers into trade unions, which first began in the late 1860s, posed a major challenge to the craftsmen's traditional dominance of the Labour movement. Three labourers' unions emerged in Cork in 1868-9. Two of them, the Cork Working Men's Association – a Fenian front group – and the Labourers' Society were effectively general unions. Republican politics provided a means in which 'trade and spade' could meet as equals. Cork was a stronghold of the Fenians in the 1860s with up to 4,000 local members. Craftsmen constituted 32 per cent of the Fenian leadership, and clerks and shop assistants 14 and 7 per cent respectively.²⁰

The late 1870s and much of the 1880s had been a time of severe economic depression in Ireland. Mass unemployment and emigration militated against the organisation of the working class into a powerful force. Nevertheless, there was a brief upsurge of agitation in 1881 when city labourers answered the call of farm labourers on strike to down tools for a wage rise. But strikes were rare in the 1880s and, when they did occur, were seldom successful. Workers resorted to cruder means of expressing grievances like hunger marches and breaking into grocery stores and bakeries. Twenty-two strikes took place that decade, an increase of seven from the decade prior. The main causes were wage claims and objections to working with non-union labour.²¹ Some lasting gains were made that decade. The Cork United Trades' Association was formed in February 1881 by eleven trades to advance the craftsmen's interests, giving Cork the honour of having Ireland's oldest surviving trades council.²²

New Unionism, 1889-92

By the late 1880s, the economy was reviving. Full employment meant that mass unionisation of unskilled workers was once again possible.²³ Between mid-1889 and early 1891, fourteen strikes took place in different sectors of unskilled or semiskilled labour. New unionism announced its Leaside arrival in 1889 with strikes at the flax mills and at Lunham's pork butchers.²⁴ There were fifty-four recorded strikes in Cork from 1890-1898: twenty-seven by labourers and twenty-seven by tradesmen. In the 1890s, disputes over wages accounted for the greatest number of strikes – twenty. Of this number, fifteen were by labourers, while the trades struck as often over the employment of non-union labour and demarcation as over wages or hours. Twelve strikes affecting more than one firm in a trade occurred in the 1890s – seven by the skilled and five by the unskilled – a sharp rise from the 1880s.²⁵

New unionism in Cork was led in the main by newly formed British-based unions.²⁶ However, local societies also surfaced. Indeed, the most militant union to come from this era was the South of Ireland Labour Union. In 1890, it led a strike of labourers at the Hive Ironworks and Furlong's mills for a wage rise. For this, it incurred the wrath of the tradesmen, in stark contrast to their support for a concurrent strike of pork curers at Lunham's. This hostility did as much to doom the union's fate as the employers' strikebreaking. Craft unionism was exclusive, insular and conservative.²⁷ The tradesman might pay lip-service to proletarian solidarity, but he was ultimately motivated by a suspicion of the labourer that was rooted in craft rather than class identity. This made sense because the tradesmen's livelihoods depended upon the utmost limitation of the available labour force.²⁸

The trades' opposition to the South of Ireland Union was due to the fact that the new union included in its ranks the detested 'handymen', and it feared that the unionization of such men would increase their capacity to undercut and displace skilled labour.²⁹

A distinguishing feature of new unionism was the level of co-ordination between diverse groups of workers. The willingness of workers to strike in support of sacked colleagues or in solidarity with others was novel. New unionism fundamentally changed the dynamic of class relations during its visit to Cork. In 1890, there were no marches of workers through the city centre, no appeals to the powerful for clemency or random attacks on their property. Violence was not directed against the institutions of political power but against scabs and other

non-co-operative components to maximise the impact of a strike.³⁰ New unionism's last major occasion of labourer militancy in Cork took place in late 1890 when dockers and seamen ceased work to force the City of Cork Steam Packet Company to replace non-unionists with union members in need of work. The strike failed and led to the collapse of the NUDL.³¹ The vast pool of scab labour and the hostility of the craftsmen – who dominated the trades council – seriously hampered the labourers. In 1890, only one labourers' strike, that of the bacon curers, was successful.³² The boom in trade which helped to fuel new unionism came to an end in late 1890. Although there had been an equal number of strikes as the previous six years combined, in 1891 there were only four strikes.³³ Employers gained the upper hand in the class war: two-thirds of Irish strikes ended in victory for them in 1891.³⁴ Although stoppages remained common in Cork (five were recorded in 1892), by 1893 the defeat of new unionism was complete and Labour drifted back to its conservative, craft union ways.³⁵

However, Cork Labour achieved much since 1850 and 1900. Irish wages were catching up with Britain and the US, and in Cork the convergence was stronger than in most cities. Between 1850 and 1890, wages expanded by one-half or more for local printers, plumbers and bakers, and less than one-fifth for cabinetmakers and ironfounders. From 1850 to 1900, engineering workers' wages rose by 25 to 42 per cent and shipbuilding wages by 28 to 50 per cent.³⁶ In 1852, the real wages of builders' labourers in Dublin and Cork were 51 per cent of British wages; they were 71 per cent in 1870, 93 per cent in 1904 and 82 per cent in 1913.³⁷ In 1892, the living standards of Cork labourers were better than other in most other Irish centres.³⁸ Local trends thus conform with the broader movement of Irish wages. An examination of the Cork building trade between 1870 and 1930, as demonstrated in Appendix 10, is enlightening here. Periods of growth were often followed by lengthy periods of stagnation, which allowed inflation to erode living standards in the early twentieth century. For example, carpenters' pay grew incrementally between 1870 and 1917 but exploded thereafter. It was similar for the coopers. In 1914, they experienced their raise since 1872. From 1916, however, their wages grew exponentially, as Table 1. 4 demonstrates.

Table 1. 4: Coopers' Wages in Cork, 1872-1936

1872-Mar. 1914	36s.
Apr. 1914	39s.
Aug. 1916	42s.
Sept. 1917	45s.
Nov. 1917	47s.
Mar. 1918	52s.
July 1918	60s.
Apr. 1919	68s.
Sept. 1919	81s. 4d.
May 1920	97s.
Jan. 1924	91s.
Feb. 1924-1936	85s. 3d.

Source: Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 1913-25, U218/A/8, CCCA; *Workmen's Register*, 1912-36, BL/BC/MB/334-335, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA.

Old Unionism, 1893-1907

The return to old unionism signalled a retreat for workers. Unions in the newly organised sectors crumbled in the face of lockouts, strike-breaking, federated employers and the dismantling of legal protections. Strikes that took place were on a smaller scale and mainly occurred in the trades.³⁹ But flickers of new unionism persisted. In 1898, labourers on the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway struck from January to May for recognition of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants (ASRS), ending a protracted period of Labour quiescence. The strike failed and the men were victimised.⁴⁰ Poor levels of organisation of labourers was a chronic problem once more for Labour. By 1900, only 30 per cent of them were unionised whereas 70 per cent of tradesmen were.⁴¹ Few strikes occurred during the opening years of the twentieth century and those that did were largely unsuccessful. The defeat of new unionism, the Taff Vale case and the absence of collective bargaining structures meant that the class war had firmly swung in the employers' favour.⁴² For example, there were unsuccessful strikes at the Cork Spinning and Weaving Company in 1900, and at Lunham's and Crosse and Blackwell's in 1902.⁴³

Politically, Labour and the Left remained on the margins. A tiny branch of Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party existed from 1897 to 1902 but fell victim to public indifference and hostility from the Catholic clergy.⁴⁴ The trades council sponsored a local Labour Party that ran candidates in the 1898 municipal elections, elected Lord Mayors in 1899 and 1900, and secured five Corporation seats in 1905 and six in 1908. In 1911, only one trade unionist won a Corporation seat on a Labour platform, an all-time low for its political representation.⁴⁵

Larkinism by the Lee, 1908-14

In August 1908, James Sexton, general secretary of the NUDL, instructed Larkin to re-organise Cork's defunct NUDL branch. Larkin dispatched Newry-born James Fearon to do so.⁴⁶ Fearon was tremendously successful and the branch scored two major victories for its members, whom it called 'the most neglected body of workers in the city'.⁴⁷ The first was a negotiated improvement of conditions for labourers at the Clyde Shipping Company. The second was won through strike action when the NUDL approached the City of Cork Steam Packet Company and asked for a pay raise. The dockers had not received an increase for nearly twenty years and the plea was the first of its kind for seventeen years.⁴⁸ The union was ignored. On 9 November, 150 labourers struck. They were soon joined by the company's stockmen and hundreds of carters from other firms. In total 600-700 were affected.⁴⁹ It was Cork's first major labour trouble since 1901. After three days, the claims were submitted to arbitration, which yielded substantial concessions in December.⁵⁰ The strike brought Larkin into further conflict with Sexton, who could no longer tolerate his militancy. Accordingly, Larkin was suspended in December 1908. In January 1909, much of the NUDL's Irish section, including Cork, seceded and formed the ITGWU.⁵¹ The ITGWU made little immediate impact in Cork and its creation was not universally welcomed. In April, Fearon and several Transport Union men fought violently with a crowd of anti-ITGWU dockers and their supporters along Patrick's Quay.⁵²

Cork's beleaguered labourers were asserting themselves for the first time in twenty years. In April, the tramwaymen struck for a pay rise; the next month, 300 builders' labourers followed suit. Both disputes ended in compromise.⁵³ In mid-May, the Cork United Trades and Labour Council (UTLC) organised the first Labour Day rally in many years. The regrowth of class consciousness was reflected in the trades council. Between 1903 and 1907 membership quadrupled to 8,000: thirty-five affiliates.⁵⁴ However, Larkinism was not breaking down Cork Labour's internal divisions; moreover, new ones were emerging. Tensions between British and Irish unions and between craft general unionism remained strong. From April 1909, Labour became a conduit for nationalist infighting when Cork City MP William O'Brien broke away from the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) and formed his own party, the All-for-Ireland League (AFIL).⁵⁵ A trades council decision to back Maurice Healy, an independent nationalist, in the 1 May by-election caused much acrimony among several craft unions.⁵⁶ Disaster ensued when the Workers' Union of Britain and Ireland launched a Cork branch of his union to compete with the ITGWU.⁵⁷

On 10 June 1909, porters and storemen at Sutton's coal company – members of the ITGWU and the Carmen and Storemen's Union – struck to protest the employment of members of the Workers' Union, which they regarded as a scab union. Over the coming days, quay labourers, carters, carmen, loaders, dockers and railway porters struck in sympathy. The dockers also struck against the proposed mechanisation of the quays which they feared would displace them. It was Ireland's first example of Larkinism without Larkin. The episode embodied the violence of early twentieth century strikes: scabs were imported and the police issued numerous baton charges. However, the employers had a new weapon – combination. In May, they had formed the Cork Employers' Federation (CEF), the first of its kind in Ireland, under the chairmanship of the acerbic Sir Alfred Dobbin. The CEF immediately locked out anyone who refused to pass pickets or handle 'tainted goods.' Within a week, 6,000 workers were directly or indirectly affected. Despite numerous attempts by Labour, the employers refused to negotiate. After a month, a return to work had begun; after seven weeks, the strike had collapsed.⁵⁸ It was, in the RIC's words, a 'complete victory for the masters.'⁵⁹ Cork's ITGWU branch collapsed and was not revived for four years. Additionally, Dublin Castle prosecuted Larkin, Fearon and two other Cork officials under dubious charges of fraud.⁶⁰ More significant was the rupture that took place in the trades council. In August 1909, fourteen craft unions sick of Larkinism broke away and formed the Cork District Trades Council (DCTC).⁶¹ Political divisions were as destructive for Labour as the strike had been. The new council aligned with Redmond while the UTLC backed the O'Brienites. For the CEF, the 1909 strike confirmed the malignant character of Larkinism. Strike breaking once again replaced mediation.⁶²

The destruction of the ITGWU and two antagonistic trades councils produced another period of Labour passivity. This ended in July 1911 when workers at Anderson's Quay struck for recognition of their union, the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union (NSFU).⁶³ On 18 August 1911, a national and cross-channel rail stoppage was called by the ASRS for better wages and conditions. In the ITGWU's absence, the ASRS now carried the torch for militant trade unionism in Cork. For three days, Irish railwaymen struck in sympathy with their comrades in Britain. The strike ended in a negotiated truce and obtained recognition for the ASRS.⁶⁴ However, events in Ireland took a distinctive turn when Dublin timber merchants locked out their workers because of the disrupted rail service. The men refused to resume work and instead demanded a wage increase, which the merchants refused. In mid-September, ASRS goods porters on the GSWR refused to handle timber from implicated merchants and a week

later the union called an Irish national railway strike. But on 16 September, Cork GSWR goods workers beat their executive to it and went on sympathy strike. They took the opportunity to file their own claims for advances in wages and conditions.⁶⁵ The company utilised scabs who received military and police protection. On 4 October, a national agreement was reached. The workers had lost and were heavily victimised. The strikes brought to prominence local ASRS official John Good who would subsequently become a stalwart in the Labour and republican movements.⁶⁶

Cork Labour was not organised or strong enough to combat employers, leading to a deterioration of working-class living standards. Between 1905 and 1912, rents and retail prices increased by 13 per cent while building artisans' and engineering workers' wages were unchanged. Builders' labourers' and compositors' pay was upped only 6 per cent in that time.⁶⁷ Attempts to re-establish the ITGWU had succeeded by June 1913. By July, it had 900 members, including printers, engineers and masons. The following month, it took over the militant Carmen and Storemen's Union.⁶⁸ Within weeks of renewing itself in Cork, the ITGWU was thrown into the forefront of a titanic struggle: the 1913 Dublin lockout. The union in Cork was active in fund raising and rallying public support for the Dublin workers, as was the UTLC.⁶⁹ The CDTC, on the other hand, opposed the ITGWU during the lockout.⁷⁰ Though the employers emerged victorious, in Cork the ITGWU had done much to raise its own profile. By early 1914, it was the city's largest union. The lockout triggered a sizeable growth in class consciousness. Irish nationalist leaders, both Redmondites and O'Brienite, were increasingly seen as either indifferent or hostile to Labour.⁷¹ Industrial Labour's increasing success inspired political Labour to approach the 1914 municipal elections with unprecedented buoyancy. However, all but one of the Labour candidates were defeated while three trade unionists were returned on the AFIL ticket.⁷²

Cork Labour and the Great War, 1914-17

From July 1914, the escalating cost of living was the primary catalyst for Irish Labour's renaissance after the 1913 lockout. Across Cork, workers were demanding wage increases to deal with inflation. Calls for advances produced Cork's first major strike in three years when builders' labourers downed tools for six weeks from October 1914.⁷³ February 1915 brought a strike of 200 labourers at Victoria Quay. The following month, the farriers struck for an increase, as did GSWR labourers in November.⁷⁴ These disputes ended when employers partially conceded the men's demands. This pattern of class conflict intensified in 1916. In April, labourers on the Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway struck; that summer, coal porters, fillers and carters did the same.⁷⁵ In all cases the men cited the growing cost of living as the source of discontent and accepted modified increases.

In mid-1916, the coopers reported that inflation meant that 'we find it at present very difficult to keep our homes together'.⁷⁶ Throughout 1916, the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), the dominant union on the Irish railways, demanded government intervention to combat inflation. Irish railwaymen struggled to make ends meet on a war bonus of, in optimal situations, 1s. 6d. British railwaymen, on the other hand, were getting a 10s. bonus. On 16 November, Irish railwaymen resolved to call a national strike if their demands were not met. The strike, which was set for 18 December, was called off when the government announced it would take control of the railways and partially meet the railwaymen's claim.⁷⁷ However, developments specific to Cork strengthened the hand of local workers. Foremost was the reunification of the two trades councils in November 1916 as the Cork and District Trade and Labour Council [hereafter called the Cork Trades Council (CTC)], which even the employers welcomed.⁷⁸

Table 1. 5: War Bonuses Granted by the City of Cork Steam Packet Co., 1916-19

Date Granted	Bonus
Nov. 1916	5s.
July 1917	10s.
Mar. 1918	15s.
July 1918	20s.
Feb. 1919	22s. 6d.

Source: City of Cork Steam Packet Co. wage book for storemen, carters and other land-based staff, 1910-22, U370/F/240, CCCA.

Derry

Economy and Poverty, 1850-1924

By 1847, Derry's linen industry – its biggest employer until the 1830s – had been made extinct by free trade and British competition.⁷⁹ However, linen had laid the foundations for a shirt industry that would become the principal seat of the trade in the UK. It grew from humble origins in the 1850s to make Derry one of the world's foremost producers of shirts by 1900. As it developed, a system of 'outwork' was established where thousands of seamstresses in Derry's rural environs assembled shirts at outstations or their homes.⁸⁰ In the late nineteenth century, a spinoff underclothing industry also developed via a combination of factory and outwork labour.⁸¹ Outworkers were among Ireland's most vulnerable group of workers because it was extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to unionise them and enforce state regulation of their working conditions. Consequently, they endured long hours and low wages (9s. a week in 1912) because unscrupulous employers regularly exploited their cheap labour. Trade unionists appears to have made little or no effort to organise outworkers and there is no record of anyone speaking publicly on their behalf.⁸²

But as technology improved work became increasingly centralised in factories and outwork began to decline. In 1871, there were 22,812 outworkers across Derry, Donegal and Tyrone; by 1920, however, there were very few left. The shirt industry continued to grow until the first years of the twentieth century when a depression took hold in the trade.⁸³ By 1902, it employed about 18,000 – more than Derry's other industries combined.⁸⁴ The shirt industry's growth was the driving force behind the city's population explosion, as migrants flooded in from neighbouring counties in search of work.⁸⁵ Over 90 per cent of shirt workers were female, giving the city an employment pattern highly distinctive for an Irish city: 55 per cent of the population was female. Men in factories were primarily cutters, clerks, mechanics and managers.⁸⁶ Their numbers had been growing since 1871 due to increased mechanisation with its need for maintenance of machinery and motive power.⁸⁷

Distilling began to become an industrial force in Derry from 1825 when Andrew Alexander Watt built a distillery to adjoin his Bogside brewery. By 1900, Watt's Tyreconnell was one of the world's most consumed whiskeys.⁸⁸ The First World War was difficult for UK distilleries as large increases in excise duty and the 1915 Immature Spirits Act made circumstances far more tumultuous. Another hefty increase in excise duty in 1919 – by which time there were four distilleries in Derry – culled demand even further. This contributed to the

closure of Watt's in October 1921, a crushing blow to Derry's economy. Approximately 200 men lost their jobs, as did many dockers, carters, railwaymen, shop workers and others employed in the service sector.⁸⁹

Four shipyards existed between 1830 and 1924. In 1839, Kinsale-born William Coppin, bought the city's shipyard from Pitt Skipton – who had opened it in 1830 for the ship repairs – to launch a shipbuilding enterprise. But Coppin soon ran into financial difficulties and in 1870 the yard closed.⁹⁰ The next attempt came in 1882 when W.F. Bigger opened the Foyle shipyard. In 1892, his yard shut down when the Liverpool firm of Henry Iredale & Co., who owned many ships built by Bigger, folded.⁹¹ When the yard re-commenced operations in 1899, it did so under Glasgow-born William de Russett, manager of the Londonderry Shipbuilding and Engineering Company. His initiative was the shortest yet, collapsing in 1904.⁹² The final, and most fruitful, attempt came in 1912 when Trevisa Clarke, J. Weir-Johnston and John Esplin launched the North of Ireland Shipbuilding Company, which they hoped would eventually employ 1,000 men. By 1913, 450 were employed there. It experienced solid growth until the First World War, when it expanded exponentially after obtaining contracts from the Royal Navy. The yard was open twenty-four-hours a day during the war.⁹³ By 1918, it employed approximately 2,000 men, making Derry Ireland's second shipbuilding centre after Belfast. The brief post-war boom was the driving force behind its continued growth until the early 1920s when the workforce peaked at 2,600. By 1922, Derry's shipyard had the third largest output in Ireland, and it was expected that it would eventually employ about 4,000 men. But the industry entered a state of depression that year as the Royal Navy's reversion to a peacetime programme caused a dramatic contraction in demand that made many UK shipyards, including Derry's, unviable. After a period of severe decline, the North of Ireland shipyard closed in 1924. The shipyards and distilleries made a major contribution to the local economy. Their workforces were entirely male and helped to rebalance the local employment structure. Moreover, their need for craft work, especially in shipbuilding, helped to reduce Derry's dependency on cheap labour.⁹⁴

In 1912, working-class housing conditions in Derry's were favourable for an Irish city, with a low residential density of eighteen people per acre. Rents were also among Ireland's lowest. The lack of overcrowding contributed to improved working-class health: Derry's 1905 death rate of 18.1 per 1,000 was lower than either Dublin or Belfast. By the 1920s, however, the picture was different and about one quarter of the population lived in overcrowded conditions.⁹⁵

New Unionism, 1889-92

Establishing unions in the early nineteenth century was a monumentally difficult task. In 1834, George Kerr, a Belfast cabinetmaker, helped local cabinetmakers form a union to combat a wage cut. They were arrested on false charges of administering illegal oaths.⁹⁶ By 1840, trade unionism in Derry had been annihilated.⁹⁷ The emasculation of trade unionism was a factor in the social peace that largely prevailed in Derry until 1888.⁹⁸ Few strikes took place in this period. From 1868, however, there was a renewal in working-class militancy, especially in the shirt industry. Sectarianism invariably coloured Derry Labour, as it did with all aspects of Ulster life. In November 1883, 100 machinists at Tillie's, the vast majority of whom were Catholic and nationalist, struck for three days for the sack of the factory doctor because he had voted against holding a nationalist rally on the property of Derry Corporation.⁹⁹

The revival of militancy announced its arrival in the Maiden City in January 1888 when craftsmen at the Foyle Shipyard struck. That October, carpenters and joiners at Ballintine's and Colhoun Brothers struck for a six-hour cut in their sixty-hour week, the hours worked by shipyard carpenters. It the first major strike of the new unionist era in Derry. Strikes in the building trade were easier to sustain as craftsmen were mobile and could obtain temporary work elsewhere. The strike dragged on until June 1889 when a 56½-hour week from 1 January 1890 was agreed.¹⁰⁰ Little distinguished new unionism in Derry from other Irish cities. The National Amalgamated Sailors' and Firemen's Union was one of the first new unions established in Derry. In February 1889, a strike of its members on Clydeside for higher pay reached the Maiden City. It was the era's first strike of Irish infrastructural workers. Another influential new union to set up in Derry was the ASRS. In early 1890, it prepared to strike on the Great Northern Railway (GNR) which employed many Derrymen. Strike was averted in March 1890 when an agreement was reached.¹⁰¹

In 1890, trade unionism finally secured a foot in the door of the shirt industry when the Londonderry Shirt, Collar and Underclothing Cutters' Union was started.¹⁰² The most exotic of new unionism's importation arrived in August 1889 when the secretive Knights of Labour set up a Derry branch. Alpha Assembly 1601 flourished and became Ireland's most durable branch.¹⁰³ By March 1891, its membership had grown to 800 from an inaugural figure of just fourteen. However, membership had declined to 667 by that August and continued to haemorrhage thereafter. By late 1896, the branch had faded into oblivion.¹⁰⁴ The tailors were at the heart of the most serious strike of 1890. The Amalgamated Society of Tailors set up a Derry branch as part of its campaign against 'sweated' labour. In April 1890, it put forward a demand for an increase as local tailors earned less than their colleagues in Belfast, Dublin,

Glasgow or Manchester. Some firms refused to recognise the union and, in response, were struck. A lengthy battle ensued that was marred by the violence typical of nineteenth century strikes. Scabs, who worked under heavy police protection, were assaulted and several strikers convicted before the courts.¹⁰⁵ Branch secretary James McCarron and two others were found guilty of riot and unlawful assembly.¹⁰⁶ The strike ended inconclusively some months later.¹⁰⁷ McCarron had been instrumental in establishing the Derry Trades Council in 1887. He was Derry's most prominent and formidable trade unionist. As president of the trades council, he was proud that it included both Catholics and Protestants. He was also involved in the formation of the ITUC. A vocal Home Ruler, he insisted that one could be stridently nationalist – or Unionist – and remain strictly apolitical in advancing the cause of Labour. He was a staunch defender of the presence of the 'amalgamateds' in Ireland and opposed calls for separate, Irish trade unions.¹⁰⁸

In January 1891, the National Union of Gas and General Labourers opened its first Derry branch. By June, it had four branches. It was the archetypal new union and quickly became the principal body for the unskilled, organising heretofore neglected workers like builders' labourers.¹⁰⁹ That November, it became the first union to organise shirt operatives when it opened its fifth branch. The union organised an event for which new unionism in Derry is perhaps best remembered: the visit of Eleanor Marx-Aveling, daughter of Karl Marx, to the city in November 1891.¹¹⁰ Her call to the 'factory girls', as they were colloquially known, to join the Gasworkers' Union was heeded. But success was transient, and membership was dwindling by March 1892.¹¹¹

Trade unionism never took off in the shirt industry and no strikes by its female operatives occurred during new unionism. Employer hostility to trade unionism and the decent pay at the Derry factories may explain the women's lack of spirit for unionisation.¹¹² But Patterson has suggested other possibilities:

. . . the great majority of the workforce had tasks which were easily learnt. With a large labour supply, individual workers were thus easily replaceable. It was simple for employers to dispense with workers who were awkward or active in trade unions. Secondly, there was a traditional assumption among men, as well as many women, that women ought to earn less than men. Many saw the women's wages as a supplement to the male breadwinners' and so it is possible that young women had a conception of being factory workers as a temporary part of life before they got married and therefore they did not find it worth the effort to unionise and to contribute economically in a long-term activity. . . there was a high degree of localism in the

workforce, with daughters following their mothers and older sisters into the same employment. Such a tradition served to perpetuate restricted horizons. . . A . . . cultural factor is the different status among the women workers . . . a form of aristocracy. In other words they did not feel any sense of solidarity with other groups of workers. . . An important factor is employer power. . . the use of paternalism as a strategy to discipline the workers. But far more important is the repression of workers who dared to join unions. The final factor is the sectarian division inside the Ulster working class.¹¹³

From early 1891 the economy turned sour and recession took hold, giving impetus to employers to launch a counteroffensive against Labour's gains over the past two years. A turning point came in August 1891 with Derry's first dockers' strike. Like many other port cities, dockers in Derry were the one group of labourers whose unionisation predates 1889. The Saint Columb's Quay Labourers Society operated like a craft union, giving them some control over work which was sporadic and hazardous. Although they earned more in a day than local tradesmen, the irregularity of employment meant that dockers averaged only 11s. a week. In 1889, the Society put forward claims for a 25 per cent increase and a promise that colliers would be discharged by hand rather than the more cost-effective steam-winches.¹¹⁴ In 1891, a crisis was prompted by the installation of two mobile steam-cranes by the Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners, who recruited non-union men to operate them. The men opposed mechanisation for two reasons. Firstly, cranes would cause unemployment. Secondly, and more importantly, the 'nons' would be paid less than the agreed rate and destroy the Society's closed shop.¹¹⁵ On 27 August 1891, the strike began when Society men refused to work with 'nons'.¹¹⁶ It is likely that the Board deliberately provoked the strike to smash the Quay Labourers' Society. If the Society was strong, it could, like a craft union, control the supply of labour and impose restrictive practices to maintain jobs.¹¹⁷ On 26 September, the strike ended in a humiliating defeat for the men, who were forced to accept mechanisation, the retention of scabs and a wage cut.¹¹⁸ However, the Quay Labourers' Society had survived and bucked the trend of waterfront union collapse.¹¹⁹ In November 1891, it became the NUDL's no. 16 branch when that union was disintegrating in many Irish ports.¹²⁰ The employers accepted the NUDL and its virtual closed shop. In return, the merchants got a large pool of placid and competent labour that far exceeded demand, directed by a union that was anxious to avoid another strike.¹²¹

In 1888, Catholic and Protestant craftsmen coalesced to form the Derry United Trades Council, the first of its kind in Derry and a prerequisite to Labour becoming a mass

movement.¹²² By late 1890, it had renamed itself the Derry Trades and Labour Council, symbolic of its newly found inclusivity. One of its greatest achievements in its nascent years was the convening of Derry's first ever Labour Day rally in 1890. Whereas in the past Catholics and Protestants had paraded in mutually hostile marching groups, now both came together under a common banner of Labour. The next two Labour Day processions were even bigger and more lavish: the apogee of new unionism in Derry. The procession went into deep decline in 1892 and 1894 was the last celebration for many years.¹²³ Relative to their numbers, Protestants were over-represented in the craft and clerical sectors, and therefore the trades council. They predominated at all levels at the shipyard, especially among the trades, although the engineering trade was evenly divided along sectarian lines. However, Catholics comprised seventy per cent of skilled foundrymen. Catholic dominance also extended to casual carmen and skilled railwaymen, though Protestants had a majority among the other railway sectors.¹²⁴

The financial strength of the amalgamateds enticed local societies to sacrifice independence for security by merging with their bigger British counterparts.¹²⁵ Building trade unions put up the strongest resistance to the British invasion, with some bricklayers and masons doing so successfully. In 1890, their local body joined the Dublin-based Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers. As a result, there were two masons' unions in Derry, one Irish and one British. The bakers were the only workers who successfully resisted and provided a rare example of new unionism prompting an Irish amalgamation. The Irish National Federal Union of Bakers, formed in 1889, soon absorbed the local bakers' society. The strength of British unions, which had now established a strong local foothold, and the weakness of Irish ones diminished the possibility of workers splitting along political or sectarian lines.¹²⁶ Avoiding these splits remained a constant theme for Derry Labour.

Table 1. 6: Social Class in Derry by Religion, 1901

Social Class	Total Number	Catholic (%)	Protestant (%)
Professional	33	70.3	29.7
Commerce	88	38.4	61.4
Skilled: Non-Manual	179	65	35
Skilled: Manual	567	57.3	42.7
Semi-skilled	278	64.7	35.3
Non-skilled	232	69.4	30.6
Total	1,377	56.3	43.7

Source: Gallagher, 'Edwardian Derry', Table 9C.

Back to old unionism, 1893-1906

New unionism was delivered a decisive blow by the dockers' defeat. As the UK economy sank deeper into recession, the employers' counterattack was increasingly successful. Derry was cushioned from the worst of the slump by the continued expansion of its shirt industry. By 1894, new unionism was over. The Gasworkers' Union, the NAFSU and the Londonderry Shirt, Collar and Underclothing Cutters' Union had all collapsed.¹²⁷ Derry's NUDL branch was one of only two in Ireland to survive, though it remained largely inactive until Jim Larkin visited the city in 1907.¹²⁸ The withering of working-class militancy was reflected in the decline of strikes. Only two were recorded in 1892 and none were recorded between 1893 and 1895. This tranquillity ended in 1896 when coal porters unsuccessfully struck against working conditions, a wage cut and the employment of nons. That year, the NUDL committed itself to pursuing a policy of non-militancy by obeying agreements and lobbying for the enforcement of fair wage contracts and health and safety legislation.¹²⁹

By 1897, the National Union of Amalgamated Labour (NAUL) had established itself as a major force on the local Labour scene. The NAUL was founded in Newcastle in 1888. It soon spread to Ireland, primarily to Ulster, where it organised semiskilled shipyardmen in Belfast.¹³⁰ In June 1898, it led its first strike in Derry when labourers at Ballintine's refused to work with four non-unionists. Work was resumed on the employers' terms.¹³¹ Of the seventeen strikes that were recorded in Derry between 1896 and 1906, eight of them were in the building trade with all but one involving craftsmen. Four were successful, four were unsuccessful and the rest ended in compromise. Only two of the seven stoppages recorded between 1897 and 1899 did not involve building craftsmen: a tailors' strike in 1898 and a demarcation dispute among shipwrights in 1900.¹³²

The biggest strike of these years was also Labour's most crushing defeat. The ASRS was one of the only unions in Derry to retain a fighting spirit and pushed for an improvement on the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway (LLRS). A typical working day for a driver was fourteen hours; up to twenty-one hours was not uncommon.¹³³ Its chairman was the abrasive John McFarland, Derry's leading capitalist. When McFarland refused to negotiate with the ASRS, strike on the LLSR was called in November 1903. The company's first major labour dispute, it lasted until 20 February 1904 when the men accepted defeat and begged for their jobs back. Most were rejected.¹³⁴ McFarland's victory motivated other employers to follow his example. When trade in the shirt industry began to deteriorate from 1903, pay cuts were introduced. The closure of the shipyard in 1904 and a halt in the construction industry due to oversupply deepened the local recession.¹³⁵ Disputes occurred in the shirt factories in February

1904, December 1905, and March, September and November 1906, some of which led to strikes.¹³⁶ The 1904 strike was the industry's first since 1883. Why there was such placidity among Derry's shirt workers is an open question. Emmet O'Connor has rejected sectarianism as the only answer:

An intriguing possibility is that Derry was 'too' integrated, and the shirt factories too religiously balanced for spontaneous solidarity to combust easily. Sectarianism was not an obstacle to a narrow unity on wages and conditions, if the notional lines and unwritten rules were understood, or if one denomination homogenized the force, as with the overwhelmingly Catholic and nationalist dockers.¹³⁷

However, political tensions undoubtedly inhibited unity in the shirt factories. Although factories were predominately nationalist or Unionist depending on geography, several had sizeable minorities of both. Though segregated by grade and department, tensions occasionally flared among the girls.¹³⁸ Sectarian clashes broke out in August of 1877, 1880, 1899, 1900 and 1913 when the Apprentice Boys commemorated the Relief of Derry and the Ancient Order of Hibernians celebrated the Feast of the Assumption.¹³⁹ A lack of unionisation was also an acute problem that prohibited a strike of any significant duration. In August 1906, a local branch of the Textile Operatives' Society of Ireland was launched by its organiser, Mary Galway.¹⁴⁰ Only about one-seventh of the workers joined it and by 1910 it had fizzled out.¹⁴¹ In 1913, the Amalgamated Society of Tailors' and Tailoresses (ASTT) opened its books to operatives. In 1914, the 'City of Derry Textile Workers' Trade Union' merged with the ASTT.¹⁴² But few women joined and by mid-1917 most were still unorganised. Poor pay was the inevitable result. Real wages had been declining since 1890 and by 1906 they were among the lowest in the UK shirt industry. Cutters earned 25-30s. while women earned 9s. 6d.¹⁴³ This deterioration contrasts with the broader movement of wages in the city and indeed across Ireland. Table 10. D depicts this trend for building tradesmen between 1890 and 1930. Though stagnation was common, pay rarely declined and the general trend was upwards.

Larkinism, 1907-14

By 1907, Irish Labour had hit its nadir and the employers were firmly on top in the class war. Derry was a microcosm of the afflictions: poor levels of unionisation of the unskilled was crippling the movement. But workers were about to rise again when Larkin visited Derry for the first time. However, the lynchpins of Larkinism in other Irish cities, the dockers, would remain loyal to Sexton and his non-militancy. Although it became a bastion of anti-Larkinism, Derry was not immune from Larkin's influence.¹⁴⁴

The new wave of agitation began on the quays in May 1907 when forty dockers left work over a reduction in tonnage rates. They were dismissed and easily crushed. It was Derry's only dock strike in the Larkinite era.¹⁴⁵ Larkin's influence in Derry was undeniable. His 5 July address to the NUDL at Saint Columb's Hall led to talk of the branch coming out in sympathy with their beleaguered comrades in Belfast.¹⁴⁶ That September, recently unionised newsvendor boys struck for better conditions. The strike involved the throwing of stones at policemen and vans, for which some of the boys were convicted before the courts. Efforts to arrest them provoked a riot.¹⁴⁷ Militancy continued to grow in the shirt industry. In October 1907, the National Federation of Women Workers brought out machine operators at Tillie's for a month against a reduction which they bargained down by half.¹⁴⁸ Buttonhole-makers at Leinster Brothers' and Staveacre's struck for a week in December.¹⁴⁹ In 1908, Labour failed to spread the fire of proletarian insurrection, partially because Larkin moved his focus to the south. The shirt industry was the scene the year's biggest dispute when over 1,000 workers were locked out in September to enforce a pay cut. The lockout was precipitated by a strike in one department, signifying that, despite the absence of a union, some level of proletarian class consciousness existed.¹⁵⁰ British unions had launched a fresh invasion of Derry from 1906. That March, the Railway Clerks' Association (RCA) started its second Irish branch in Derry with W.P. O'Doherty as chairman, a position he would retain for many years. O'Doherty would later serve on the RCA's Irish Council. In May 1906, the Municipal Employees' Association (MEA) established an outlet to organise Corporation labourers.¹⁵¹

Labour militancy was reignited in 1909. Outside of Ulster, Larkin promoted the ITGWU as an Irish departure from British trade unionism; in the north, he deliberately played down its nationalist rationale. However, Derry's labourers saw no reason to join the ITGWU. On 13 January 1909, the NUDL met to hear Sexton plead with them to stick with 'the old union'. William J. McNulty, the veteran organiser of Derry's dockers and carters, presented the choice as one between NUDL moderation and the chaos of ITGWU militancy. He told the men that 'he deprecated strikes' and that he 'never yet knew of a strike which benefited the

worker'. The meeting unanimously resolved to 'declare our adhesion to the union, and strongly condemn the action of the late organiser and other branch officials in Belfast in their attempts to create a division in the ranks of the union by the formation of an opposite organisation'.¹⁵² It is not clear to what extent Sexton influenced the men's decision but their loyalty to McNulty was crucial. Derry's labourers demonstrated that the establishment an ITGWU branch was not a prerequisite for militancy. In April, carters struck for union recognition and a wage increase.¹⁵³ Two months later, arbitration under the Board of Trade awarded the men a 16s. wage for a fifty-six-hour week but not the freedom to wear trade union badges.¹⁵⁴

Although class conflict dissipated in 1910, it flared again in 1911. That summer, Derry's seamen took part in the NSFU successful national strike to win better wages and conditions as well as union recognition. In a similar vein, Derry's railwaymen featured in the ASRS's UK-wide action from 18-20 August when GNR passenger porters and goods depot workers struck for better pay and hours. However, Derry, like most of Ulster, was not a part of the next Irish railway strike that took place from 15-30 September.¹⁵⁵ The defeat of the railwaymen severely checked proletarian militancy for the next two years. Only the docks saw labour disturbances in 1912.¹⁵⁶ The following year, however, was one of proletarian action. February brought 1913's biggest local industrial dispute: the strike of 1,200 workers at Tillie's against a wage reduction. Like 1908, a strike in one department was met with a general lockout.¹⁵⁷ The building trade produced the year's most protracted dispute. Beginning in August, the strike dragged on until October because the men were able to find work in Glasgow. Modified increases were given.¹⁵⁸

Derry Labour's solidarity with the ITGWU during the 1913 Dublin lockout was tepid.¹⁵⁹ The NUDL demonstrated the lengths to which it would go to undermine Larkin by colluding with the employers when a cargo of Guinness blacked by the Transport Union in Sligo was diverted to Derry for unloading.¹⁶⁰ On 25 November 1913, Larkinism was roundly attacked at an NUDL branch meeting by its Irish organiser, James O'Connor-Kessack, for which he received hearty rounds of applause. O'Connor-Kessack urged Derrymen to 'rid themselves of the baneful influence of Larkinism, his methods and his folly'. Larkin, 'was not only a fool but a knave . . . The greatest obstacle to the uplifting of the working classes . . . was Larkin and men like him'. He concluded by proclaiming that 'workers . . . should never let themselves be cut adrift from their fellow-workers across the Channel'.¹⁶¹ That such a speech and such applause could come from the NUDL, a union known for its militancy in Britain, is indicative of Derry Labour's inertia.

The NUDL was at the heart of the most vicious strike Derry witnessed in the Larkinite era: a five-day strike of carters in February 1914 for a 22s. wage and a fifty-five-hour week. The men secured 20s. rate for a 56½-hour week.¹⁶² Rumours that Larkin was on his way to Derry were met with a hostile response from the carters.¹⁶³ The other major dispute of 1914 took place at the shipyard. From 25 April to 15 May, labourers, stagers and platers' helpers struck from 25 April to 15 May when their demand for wage parity with Belfast was turned down.¹⁶⁴ The men accepted a lesser advance.¹⁶⁵ The labourers had been represented by the NAUL, which had re-established itself in Derry in 1912. It would fast become the city's biggest union. In 1918, it received a major scalp when William Logue – Derry's most prominent trade unionist – joined as a fulltime organiser from the Typographical Association. Logue was a compositor with the *Journal*, a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and a nationalist councillor.

By mid-1914, Derry Labour did not have much to show for seven years of renewed struggle. Nevertheless, the future looked bright. The creation of an Irish shirtmaking trade board promised to consolidate trade unionism's tenuous presence in the staple industry.¹⁶⁶ Emboldened, in 1913 employers founded the Londonderry Shirt and Collar Manufacturers' Association, which became a branch of the Shirt Manufacturers Federation (SMF). In June 1914, the Irish shirtmaking trade board fixed an hourly minimum of 3½d, the same as existed in Britain, for a fifty-hour week.¹⁶⁷ Irish employers appealed the decision and pleaded for a wage reduction, arguing that they needed to offset the cost of transporting garments to the British market. They succeeded. Women's hourly pay was cut by ¼d. in June 1915 and by another ¼d. thereafter. Male pay was cut by 1d. per hour. These differentials with British rates became chronic grievances for the next five years.¹⁶⁸

Derry Labour and the Great War

World War One was a mixed blessing for Derry. The shirt factories were in a fine position to benefit by contributing flannel and army uniform shirts to the war effort. In August 1914, shirt operatives' hours were lengthened to cope with the demand of War Office contracts. However, the war damaged other economic sectors. By April 1915, general employment had dropped over the last twelve months and twenty-three per cent of workers were on short time.¹⁶⁹ For the unskilled labourer, enlisting was largely due to economic necessity, not political allegiance. Army pay was exceptionally good, far more than what most workers earned, especially for a man with a wife and children who could avail of extra allowances and benefits. Employers often encouraged men to enrol in the army and promised recruits their jobs back on

demobilisation. In June 1919, Archibald Ball, a tonnage docker who had who left for the Western Front in 1916, sued his former employers for £50 when they declined to take him back. The proceedings reveal the snobbery experienced by working-class people from the corridors of power:

- Ball: If the defendants had no boat, he could take up employment elsewhere. The Dockers' Union specified that a certain squad could be employed at a boat.
- His Honour: Do you call that free labour, because I don't.
- Counsel for Morrison: That is one of the difficulties the masters have to contend with.
- His Honour: Yes, and it is destroying the country, and the labourers are the first that will suffer.
- Counsel for Ball: if men like this had not gone to war what would have happened to the country?
- His Honour: Probably there would have been better men to go. There is very little credit in that.
- Counsel for Ball: Very little credit for a labourer who went to the war?
- His Honour: Yes.¹⁷⁰

The case was dismissed.¹⁷¹

Demands for wage increases were always because of rocketing inflation. In February 1915, both the NUR and the Unionist-controlled Derry Corporation called on the government to regulate the cost of living.¹⁷² War bonuses were generally half, and often less than half, of the men's original claims. But these modest concessions were insufficient to dampen the Labour resurgence. In August 1915, shirt workers mobilised as they were still not in receipt of any bonus. Hence, cutters at Tillie's went out for a month in November for a 3s. bonus. Cutters earned between 10s. and 24s., with 26s. paid in a small number of instances. They were vividly aware of their status as their industry's male elites and were, like other craft unions, highly protective of their trade. For example, In March 1916 another cutters' strike occurred at McIntyre, Hogg, Marsh and Co. when female labour was brought into the cutting department which, the cutters feared, the employers would use to dilute skill and undermine pay.¹⁷³ Their independent union had merged with the Shirt and Collar Cutters' Union of Ireland in 1915.¹⁷⁴ In September and October 1915, LLSR workers and local dockers at the Belfast Steam Packet Company withdrew their labour for increases.¹⁷⁵ As the cost of living continued its escalation in 1916, so too did the class conflict that accompanied it. That May, Derry's dockers won an

increase after a strike. On 15 September, 300 carters struck after their plea for a 6s. increase on their 24s. wage was refused.¹⁷⁶

While inflation affected all workers, the conflict created additional gripes for some. In May 1915, workers in the distillery, the city's third largest industry, gathered to protest the proposed doubling of the excise duty on liquor by David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was feared that this would cause job losses and wage cuts. On 24 July 1916, an illegal eleven-day strike of apprentice platers and an apprentice angle-smith in an industry covered by the Munitions of War Act took place. The men were tried, convicted and fined before a munitions' tribunal in January 1917.¹⁷⁷ The NAUL, which had organised the distillery and shipyardmen since 1913, was continuing its ascent to becoming Derry's premier union. If loyalty to the NUDL distinguished Derry from the south before 1914, then the NAUL's popularity was symbolic of the subsequent divergence. Across Ulster, but in the north-west especially, the Tyneside union recruited sectors that in the south were the sole preserve of the ITGWU, like agricultural labourers.¹⁷⁸

July 1916 brought the eruption of a prolonged dispute on the LLSR when gangers, milesmen and surfacemen on the Derry to Carndonagh section, who earned only 14s. and 17s. respectively, ceased work for a 3s. advance. The strike lasted nearly twelve weeks. The railways were notorious for their low pay. Paltry though the LLSR's wages were, they were the highest rates for any similar narrow-gauge line in Ireland.¹⁷⁹ Derry's NUR branch was part of the union's national movement in late 1916 for state control of the Irish railways. It supported the national executive's plan to strike and regarded the outcome of the affair as a tremendous victory.¹⁸⁰ Railwaymen across Ireland agreed. The NUR's Irish membership skyrocketed from 3,676 in December 1916 to over 17,000 in July 1917 – a 400 per cent increase – inclusive of 275 Derry men. The NUR also instituted an Irish Council in 1917 to manage Irish affairs, the first of its kind for a British union in Ireland.¹⁸¹ When the RCA, the ASLEF and craft unions in the workshops are included, 80 per cent of Irish railway workers were unionised by late 1917. The proportion in Derry was probably even higher than that. Inter-union sectionalism and discrepancies in grade were grievances, as a local ditty pointed out:

Oh, a foreman's life in Derry,
Is more than usually merry,
With its chances of an extra special trip,
But the prospects of a Fireman,

Are enough to raise one's ire, man,
 Or, as the vulgar say, give anyone the pip,
 He may sit for his exam,
 But no one gives a damn,
 As to whether for a driver he is fit,
 But if the firemen got together,
 They would quickly find out whether,
 The righting of their wrongs passed human wit.¹⁸²

Firemen and drivers wanted the Board of Trade to issue certificates of competency to protect them during investigations of accidents. The lower grades looked coldly upon the idea of implementing specific legislation for the elite footplate men. A motion supporting certificates was put forward at the ITUC's 1919 annual conference by the Irish Stationary Engine Drivers, Cranemen, Firemen and Motormen's Trade Union and met strong opposition from the NUR; Congress overwhelming rejected it.¹⁸³

Table 1. 7: War Bonuses Given in Derry, 1915-17

Workers	Date Given	Bonus
Carters ¹⁸⁴	Mar. 1915	2s.
Corporation employees	July 1915	2s.
Engineers	Mar. 1916	4s.
Bakers	Sept. 1916	3s.
Typographers	Oct. 1916	3s.
Iron moulders	Jan. 1917	3s.

Source: LG, 1915-18; DJ, 1915-18.¹⁸⁵

Cork and Derry: the structural differences

By 1917, both Cork and Derry Labour were on the precipice of unprecedented power and success – but this is where the similarities ended. Having been equally affected by new unionism, Cork's embrace of Larkinism and the ITGWU put it on a different trajectory to Derry, which remained loyal to the amalgamateds. As explained in Chapter 6, the structural differences between Cork and Derry were major reasons for this divergence. Tables 1. 8-12 reveal the fundamental socio-economic disparities between the two cities. Firstly, there were notable gender-based differences. Though the nature of female employment was similar in both (domestic service, clothing manufacture and general labour), Derry had a much higher percentage of women in its workforce. In both, the overwhelming majority of those whom the 1911 census considered 'non-productive' were women. There were also strong ethnoreligious

differences and inequalities in the pattern of employment. Cork was 88 per cent Catholic in 1911 whereas Derry was 56 per cent. The former had little of the latter's sectarian division of labour as Catholics dominated nearly every sector. Only in the printing and engine and machine making trades did Protestants make up 25 per cent or more of the workforce. In Derry, sectarian divisions were far more common and consequential. While Catholics had large majorities in some better-paid building trades, they were overrepresented in low-paid commercial labour; Protestants, on the other hand, were overrepresented in the best-paid craft work (like engineering and printing) and as clerks. Many occupations were more mixed (see Table 1. 10). It was worse for Derry's women, who had to contend with a gender-based, as well as religious, division of labour. Catholics dominated factory work while three-quarters of clerks were Protestant. In Cork, Protestant women were significant minorities in the white-collar world of teaching and clerical work.

As in the rest of Ireland, Labour's remobilisation in Cork and Derry put workers in a better position to contend with the upheavals of the First World War. But Labour could never have predicted how enormous these upheavals would be. From 1917, the growing divergence of northern and southern Labour was reflected by the proliferation of syndicalism in Cork and its absence in Derry. Nevertheless, both movements experienced unparalleled success over the next three years.

Table 1. 8: Principal Female Occupations in Cork and Derry by Religion, 1911

Occupation	Cork	Catholic (%)	Derry	Catholic (%)
Teachers	264	63.5	184	40
Domestic servant	3,018	96.5	987	68
Charwoman	171	97.5	69	88
Washing & Bathing Service	512	96	803	65
Commercial Clerk	274	74	200	24
Bookbinder	52	84.5	4	0
Linen (including employers & dealers)	178	89	83	36
Flax worker	415	99.8	5	80
Milliner, Dressmaker, Staymaker	1,025	96	412	49
Shirtmaker, Seamstress	390	99	2,722	67
Tailoress	159	99	22	50
Factory Labourer (undefined)	208	99.5	632	80
Machinist, Machine Worker (undefined)	43	93	276	70
Indefinite/non-productive	30,304	89	15,045	54

Source: 1911 Census.

Table 1. 9: Principal Occupations in Cork and Derry (including employers), 1905

Cork (Men)		Cork (Women)		Derry (Men)		Derry (Women)	
Occupation	No.	Occupation	No.	Occupation	No.	Occupation	No.
On railways	515	Domestic indoor servants (not inns or hotels)	3,756	On railways	206	Domestic indoor servants (not inns or hotels)	1,273
Carmen, carters, carriers, draymen	594	Flax linen (spinning)	213	Carmen, carters, carriers, draymen	333	Factory hands (textile) undefined	109
Seamen (merchant)	333	Flax linen (weaving)	84	Seamen (merchant)	295	Tailoresses	51
Harbour, dock, wharf, lighthouse service	660	Flax linen (undefined)	50	Harbour, dock, wharf, lighthouse service	252	Shirtmakers, seamstresses	2,967
Printers, lithographers, lithographic printers, bookbinders	236	Tailoresses	162	Printers, lithographers, lithographic printers, bookbinders	146	Factory labourers (undefined)	428
Machines (construction)	281	Milliners, dressmakers, staymakers	1,410	Machines (construction)	160	Milliners, dressmakers, staymakers	531
House building	1,770	Shirtmaking, seamstresses	594	House building	1,056	Machinists, machine workers (undefined)	453
Cabinetmakers, French polishers, upholsters	153	Total	6,269	Cabinetmakers, French polishers, upholsters	105	Total	5,812
Coachbuilders	179			Ships & boats (construction)	164		
Maltsters, distillers, brewers	116			Tailors	309		
Tailors	425			Shirtmakers	328		
Shoe, boot (makers, dealers)	415			Blacksmiths	84		
Coopers	275			General labourers	1,914		
Blacksmiths	147			Total	5,352		
General labourers	3,553						
Total	9,652						

Source: *Cost of Living of the Working Classes*, 1908, Cd. 3864, cvii, UKPP, p. 572; O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, pp. 11, 13.

Table 1. 10: Principal Male Occupations in Derry & Cork by Religion, 1911

Occupation	Derry	Catholic (%)	Cork	Catholic (%)
General Labourer	1,890	71	4,107	98.5
Carpenter & Joiner	317	42	521	97
Bricklayer	84	75	42	100
Stonemason	112	69	156	99
Slater/Tiler	19	95	27	100
Plasterer	49	73	134	99
Plumber	34	29	157	88
Painter	148	57	352	92
Building tradesmen	845	56	1,389	96
Cabinetmaker	69	41	97	92
Coachbuilder	45	49	176	93
Baker	205	47	229	96.5
Tailor	249	70	463	81.5
Shirtcutter	324	31	8	87.5
Butcher	143	75	255	95
Shoemaker (including employers)	185	56	393	92
Grocery (including employers)	282	35	245	86
Drapery (including employers)	142	32	309	92.5
Sawyer	17	41	43	100
Cooper	43	32.5	179	96
Printer	148	36	216	75
Bookbinder	11	9	31	68
Lithographic Printer	5	40	33	48.5
Shipwright	13	46	30	100
Engine Driver, Stoker, Fireman	74	53	116	95
Factory labourer (undefined)	82	40	204	99.5
Blacksmith	62	60	145	97
Ironmonger (including employers)	71	34	54	83

Boilermaker	13	46	52	90
Engine & Machine Maker	73	40	111	74
Fitters & Turner	53	32	176	81
Messenger, Porter, Watchman (neither Railway nor government)	441	76	763	98
Harbour, Dock, Wharf, Lighthouse Service	324	90	732	98
Cannon, Carrier, Carter, Drayman	404	69	657	98
On Railways	283	53	593	92.5
Commercial Clerk	477	31	1,220	82.5
Teachers	93	45	138	85
Indefinite/Non-Productive	7,201	56.5	13,931	96

Source: 1911 Census.

Table 1. 11: Occupational Classes by Gender in Cork and Derry, 1911

Class	Cork				Derry			
	Men	Women	Total	Female (%)	Men	Women	Total	Female (%)
Professional	3,470	1,065	4,544	23	1,632	429	2,061	21
Domestic	437	3,942	4,379	90	242	1,923	2,165	89
Commercial	5,756	363	6,119	6	2,576	247	2,823	9
Agricultural	679	12	691	2	381	8	389	<1
Industrial	12,069	4,636	16,705	28	6,493	4,603	11,096	41
Non-Productive	13,931	30,304	44,235	68.5	7,210	15,045	22,255	67
Total	36,342	40,322	76,664	52.5	18,534	22,255	40,789	54.5

Source: 1911 Census.

Table 1. 12: Industrial Occupations by Gender in Cork & Derry, 1911

Occupation	Cork				Derry			
	Men	Women	Total	Female (%)	Men	Women	Total	Female (%)
Commercial	2,208	336	2,544	13	843	222	1,065	21
Conveyance of Men, Goods & Messages	3,548	27	3,575	<1	1,733	25	1,758	<1
Books, Prints & Maps	308	77	385	20	183	13	196	7
Machines & Implements	511	3	514	<1	219	0	219	0
Houses, Furniture & Decoration	1,745	27	1,772	2	967	4	971	<1
Carriages & Harnesses	305	1	306	<1	96	0	96	0
Ships & Boats	45	0	45	0	24	0	24	0
Chemicals & Compounds	93	4	97	<1	48	0	48	0
Tobacco & Pipes	31	45	76	59	31	3	34	1
Food & Lodgings	1,456	509	2,055	25	1,067	123	1,190	1
Textiles & Fabrics	420	838	1,258	7	165	135	300	45
Dress	950	1,668	2,618	64	843	3,184	4,027	79
Animal Substances	118	31	149	21	8	0	8	0
Vegetable Substances	365	48	413	12	130	84	214	39
Mineral Substances	805	22	827	3	386	21	407	5
General or Unspecified	4,902	1,271	6,173	21	2,318	1,035	3,353	31
Refuse Matters	15	2	17	12	8	1	9	11
Total	17,834	4,909	22,824	22	9,069	4,850	13,919	35

Source: 1911 Census.

Chapter Notes and References

¹ Cited in O'Connor, 1: *New unionism and old*, p. 10.

² *Cost of living of the working classes. Report of an enquiry by the Board of Trade into working class rents, housing and retail prices, together with the standard rates of wages prevailing in certain occupations in the principal industrial towns of the United Kingdom*, 1908, Cd. 3864, CVII, UKPP, p. 571.

³ Maura Cronin, *Country, Class or Craft? The Politisation of the Skilled Artisan in the Nineteenth-Century Cork* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), pp. 20-22. The trades that declined were corkcutters, handloom weavers, hatters, tailors, brushmakers, shoemakers, nailors, coopers, tanners and ropemakers. The number of coachbuilders, farriers and engineers had increased while printers and building trade craftsmen had largely held firm. See Murphy, 'Economic and Social Structure of Cork', p. 129 for a table illustrating the numerical strength of the Cork trades in each decade from 1841 to 1901. There were 748 tailors in 1841 but only 275 in 1901.

⁴ Andy Bielenberg, *Cork's Industrial Revolution, 1780-1880: Development or Decline?* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1991), p. 116; Ó Gráda, *A New Economic History*, pp. 306-313.

⁵ Colman O'Mahony, *The Maritime Gateway to Cork: A History of the Outports of Passage West and Monkstown from 1754-1942* (Cork: Tower Books, 1986), p. 114.

⁶ Borgonovo, *Dynamics of War and Revolution*, p. 158; Edward J. Riordan, *Modern Irish Trade and Industry* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1920), pp. 207-211.

⁷ Niamh Puirseil, 'War, work and labour', in John Horne (ed.), *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008), p. 184.

⁸ John Borgonovo, *The Dynamics of War and Revolution: Cork city, 1916-1918* (Cork: Cork University Press), pp. 158-159.

⁹ Donal Ó Drisceoil and Diarmuid Ó Drisceoil, *The Murphy's Story: The History of Lady's Well Brewery* (Cork: Murphy's Brewery Ireland Ltd, 1997), pp. 77, 79; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 3 July 1915, 14 Mar. 1917, U217/A/4, CCCA; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 185.

¹⁰ D.S. Jacobson, 'The Political Economy of Industrial Location: The Ford Motor Company at Cork, 1912-26', *Irish Economic and Social History*, no. 4, 1977, pp. 36-65; Gribbon, 'Economic and Social History', p. 348.

¹¹ Borgonovo, *Dynamics of War and Revolution*, p. 6.

¹² Paddy McCarthy, *Cork during the Years of the Great War, 1914-1918: Years that Shaped the Future* (Cork: Paddy McCarthy, 2009), p. 35.

¹³ A.M. MacSweeney, 'A Study of Poverty in Cork City' (UCC: MA, 1915), pp. 3, 4. See also MacSweeney's article of the same name in *Studies*, vol. IV, 1915, pp. 92-104; Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Alfred O'Rahilly, 'The Social Problem in Cork', *Studies*, vol. VI, 1917, p. 183.

¹⁵ J.C. Saunders, *Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1935* (Cork: Guy & Co. Ltd, 1936).

¹⁶ Colman O'Mahony, *In The Shadows: Life in Cork, 1750-1930* (Cork: Tower Books, 1997), p. 316.

¹⁷ D.J. Coakley, *The General Principles of Housing and Town Planning* (Cork: Eagle Printing Works, 1917), MP 79, Munster Printing collection, Boole Library, UCC.

¹⁸ Cronin, *Country, Class or Craft?*, pp. 25, 75; Maura Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City, 1820-1899' (University of Leicester: PhD, 1979), pp. 161-172. See pp. 161-163 for tables of the frequency of strikes in the trades in Cork from the 1830s to the 1890s.

¹⁹ Seán Daly, *Cork, a city in crisis: a history of labour conflict and social misery, 1870-1872* (Cork: Tower Books, 1978).

²⁰ Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', p. 217.

²¹ Maura Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', p. 281; Cronin, 'Work and Workers', p. 744.

²² Luke Dineen and Liam Cullinane, *The Cork Council of Trade Unions, 1880-1960* (forthcoming book), pp. 1-7; Fintan Lane, *In Search of Thomas Sheahan: Radical Politics in Cork, 1824-1836* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2001), pp. 55-61; Maura Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', pp. 248-264.

²³ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 146-148; Daly, *Cork, a city in crisis*, pp. 113-116.

²⁴ Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', p. 293. The flax mill workers struck unsuccessfully for an increase to 14s. and the pork-curers were partially successful in their demand for an increase, the removal of a foreman and a change in working conditions.

²⁵ Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', pp. 281-283.

²⁶ Maura Murphy, 'The Working Classes of 19th Century Cork', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, vol. 85, 1980, p. 43; Eric Taplin, *The Dockers' Union: A study of the National Union of Dock Labourers, 1889-1922* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), p. 28.

- ²⁷ Maura Cronin, 'Place, Class and Politics', in J.S. Crowley, R.J.N. Devoy, D. Linehan and P. O'Flanagan (eds.) *Atlas of Cork City* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2005), p. 208; Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', pp. 288-289.
- ²⁸ Cronin, *Country, Class or Craft?*, p. 192.
- ²⁹ Murphy, 'The Working Classes of 19th Century Cork', p. 43. A 'handyman' was the term used to describe a labourer who turned his hand to a skilled worker's job. Handymen were despised by the tradesmen.
- ³⁰ Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', pp. 294-297; Conor McCabe, *The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland, 1911-1923* (University of Ulster: M.Litt., 2006), pp. 2-3; Peter Rigney, 'Trade Unionism on the Great Southern and Western Railway, 1890-1911,' (TCD: BA, 1977), p. 13. The 1889 strike was undertaken by the Irish Amalgamated Society of railway Servants, a separate, short-lived organisation from the ASRS.
- ³¹ Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', pp. 302-304
- ³² *Report on Strikes and Lock-outs by Labour Correspondent of Board of Trade, 1890, 1890-91*, C.6476, UKPP, pp. 55, 78, 84, 86, 88, 89, 92, 103, 104.
- ³³ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp ; *ibid*, p. 281.
- ³⁴ Emmet O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland, 1824-2000* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), p. 47.
- ³⁵ *Report on Strikes and Lock-outs by Labour Correspondent of Board of Trade, 1891*, C.6890, 1893-94, pp. 141, 180; *Report on Strikes and Lock-outs by Labour Correspondent of Board of Trade, 1893*, C.7566, 1894.
- ³⁶ Ó Gráda, *A New Economic History*, pp. 236-254; Cronin, 'Work and Workers', p. 729.
- ³⁷ Kevin O'Rourke, 'Emigration and Living Standards in Ireland since the Famine', *Journal of Population Economics*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Nov. 1995, pp. 407-412.
- ³⁸ Cronin, 'Work and Workers', p. 729.
- ³⁹ Murphy, 'The Role of Organised Labour in the Political and Economic Life of Cork City', pp. 281, 283.
- ⁴⁰ J.T Lecky, 'The Railway Servants' Strike in Co. Cork, 1898', *Saothar*, no. 2, 1976, pp. 39-44; *Report on Strikes and Lock-outs by Labour Correspondent of Board of Trade, 1898, 1899*, C.9437, UKPP, pp. 20, 74
- ⁴¹ Cronin, 'Work and workers', p. 745.
- ⁴² The Taff Vale case was the result of a law suit taken against the ASRS by the Taff Vale Railway Company in South Wales. Its judgment meant that trade unions were liable for the loss of profits to employers that were caused by strikes. It had a devastating impact on labour militancy across the UK.
- ⁴³ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 151, 155-156; *Strikes and lock-outs. Board of Trade (Labour Department). Report by the chief labour correspondent on the strikes and lock-outs of 1900, with statistical tables, 1901*, Cd. 689, UKPP, pp. xl, 54, 70.
- ⁴⁴ David Lynch, *Radical Politics in Modern Ireland: The Irish Socialist Republican Party, 1896-1904* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), pp. 105, 108; Fintan Lane, *The Origins of Modern Irish Socialism, 1881-1896* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997), p. 221.
- ⁴⁵ Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', p. 186.
- ⁴⁶ Emmet O'Connor, *James Larkin* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), p. 17; Dermot Keogh, *The Rise of the Irish Working Class: The Dublin Trade Union Movement and Labour Leadership, 1890-1914* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1982), p. 123. Within three months, the Cork branch had 800 members.
- ⁴⁷ *CE*, 12 Sept. 1908.
- ⁴⁸ Bill McCamley, *The Third James: James Fearon, 1874-1924 – An Unsung Hero of Our Struggle* (Dublin: SIPTU, 2000), p. 15. The men's demands included parity of wages with the Clyde, re-instatement of dismissed union men, the right to see the bill of lading on coal boats and the abolition of the 'relief' system. The relief system was the name given to the dismissal of men and their replacement with a fresh crew after only a few hours' work. See Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', p. 120.
- ⁴⁹ Emmet Larkin, *James Larkin: Irish Labour Leader, 1876-1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1965), p. 55; *CE*, 10-12 November 1908.
- ⁵⁰ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 24; *CE*, 9, 10, 12 December 1908.
- ⁵¹ P.J O'Brien, 'Munster's Glorious Past', in *Liberty: Fiftieth Anniversary Commemoration Issue* (Dublin: ITGWU, 1959).
- ⁵² *Ibid*, 28 April 1909; Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), County Inspector (CI), Monthly Report (MR) for Cork East Riding (ER) for Apr. 1909, CO 904/77, *The British in Ireland* microfilm series, Boole Library, UCC.
- ⁵³ *CE*, 28 Apr.-15 May 1909; *Report on strikes and lock-outs and on conciliation and arbitration boards in the United Kingdom in 1909 with comparative statistics for 1900-1908*, 1910, Cd. 5325, UKPP, p.74.
- ⁵⁴ *Report on trade unions in 1905-1907*, Cd. 4651, LXXXIX, 1909, UKPP, p. 132. Specifically, membership was reported at 2,000 in 1903, 3,195 in 1904, 5,000 in 1905, 4,000 in 1906 and 8,000 in 1907.
- ⁵⁵ John Borgonovo, *The Dynamics of War and Revolution: Cork City, 1916-1918* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013), p. 13.
- ⁵⁶ *CE*, 30 Apr. 1909.

- ⁵⁷ Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', pp. 158-160.
- ⁵⁸ CE, 11 June to 1 August 1909; Peter Berresford Ellis, *A History of the Irish Working Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1985), p. 185; O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland*, p. 27.
- ⁵⁹ RIC (CI) Report for Cork ER for Sept. 1909, CO 904/79, Boole Library, UCC.
- ⁶⁰ James Larkin, *Labour war in Ireland: stories of a great betrayal. Larkin versus Cork employers, Simon Punch, James Sexton, the alleged Labour leader, and others* (Dublin: Irish-Ireland Printing Works, 1909), LO P 92, National Library of Ireland.
- ⁶¹ CE, 13 Aug. 1909.
- ⁶² Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', pp. 179-181.
- ⁶³ CE, 20, 22 July 1911; Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', pp. 199-200.
- ⁶⁴ Conor McCabe, 'The context and course of the Irish railway disputes of 1911', *Saothar*, no. 30, 2005, pp. 25-26; CE, 18, 19, 21 Aug. 1911; *Freeman's Journal*, 18, 19, 21 Aug. 1911.
- ⁶⁵ CE, 18-21 Sept. 1911; Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', pp. 199-202.
- ⁶⁶ CE, 5 Oct. 1911; Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', p. 203; McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', p. 43.
- ⁶⁷ *Cost of living of the working classes. Report of an enquiry by the Board of Trade into working-class rents and retail prices, together with the rates of wages in certain occupations in industrial towns of the United Kingdom in 1912, 1913*, Cd. 6955, LXVI.393, UKPP, p. 288.
- ⁶⁸ From May to July 1913, Larkin, P.T. Daly, James Connolly and William O'Brien visited Cork and urged local workers to join the ITGWU. When Ben Tillett, leader of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union, visited Cork he openly encouraged men to join the ITGWU, even though his union had a branch in the city. See *Irish Worker*, 17 May, 21 June, 19 July, 2 Aug., 1913; Keith Harding, 'The Irish Issue in the British Labour Movement, 1900-1922' (University of Sussex: PhD, 1983), p. 152.
- ⁶⁹ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 170; Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', p. 227.
- ⁷⁰ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 14.
- ⁷¹ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 171.
- ⁷² Reddick, 'Political and Industrial Labour in Cork', p. 232.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 22; CE, 13 Oct., 21 Nov. 1914.
- ⁷⁴ *Irish Worker*, 12 June 1915; CE, 24-26 Feb., 23, 24 Mar., 9, 17, 18, 19 Nov. 1915.
- ⁷⁵ CE, 11, 12 Apr., 27, 28, 29 June, 1 July 1916.
- ⁷⁶ Cited in Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 155.
- ⁷⁷ McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 71-78.
- ⁷⁸ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 175; Cork District Trades Council Minutes, 31 Aug., 14, 28 Sept., 12, 26 Oct. 1916, U216/1/1, CCCA. Denis Denehy, secretary of the Typographical Association's Cork branch and a key instigator of the split, supported the amalgamation.
- ⁷⁹ John Hume, *Derry Beyond the Walls: Social and Economic Aspects of the Growth of Derry: 1825-1850* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2002), pp. 102, 104; E.J. Riordan, *Modern Irish Trade and Industry* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1920), pp. 24, 28.
- ⁸⁰ Brian Mitchell, *The Making of Derry: An Economic History* (Derry: Genealogy Centre of Derry, 1992), pp. 102-103; Eithne McLaughlin, 'Maiden City Blues: Employment and Unemployment in Derry City' (QUB: PhD, 1986), p. 62.
- ⁸¹ Brendan Mark Browne, 'Trade Boards in Northern Ireland, 1909-45' (QUB: PhD, 1989), p. 69; Brenda Collins, 'The Organisation of Sewing Outwork in Late Nineteenth-Century Ulster', in Maxine Berg (ed.), *Markets & Manufacturing in Early Industrial Europe* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 148-151.
- ⁸² Margaret Neill, 'Homeworkers in Ulster, 1850-1911', in Janice Holmes & Diane Urquhart (eds.), *Coming into the Light: The Work, Politics, and Religion of Women in Ulster, 1840-1940* (Belfast: QUB, 1994), pp. 2-28; Geraldine McCarter, *Derry's Shirt Tale* (Derry: Guildhall Press, 1991), p. 19. For a history of the enforcement, or lack thereof, of state regulation of industrial employment (including outwork), see Desmond Greer & James W. Nicolson, *The Factory Acts in Ireland, 1802-1914* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).
- ⁸³ Eithne McLaughlin, 'Women and Work in Derry City: A Survey', *Saothar*, no. 14, 1989, pp. 36-37; Durnin, *Tillie's: Tillie and Henderson Shirt Factory* (Derry: Guildhall Press, 2005), pp. 18-19.
- ⁸⁴ McLaughlin, 'Maiden City Blues', p. 62; Gavin Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 115.
- ⁸⁵ McLaughlin, 'Maiden City Blues', pp. 58, 77; Desmond Murphy, 'Derry and North-West Ulster, 1790-1914' (M.Litt. Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1980), pp. 37, 381.
- ⁸⁶ Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, *Ireland: Industrial and Agricultural* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan Ltd, 1902), p. 418; O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old, 1889-1906*, p. 11.
- ⁸⁷ Gribbon, 'Economic and social history', Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: VI*, p. 307.
- ⁸⁸ Mitchell, *The Making of Derry*, p. 122.

- ⁸⁹ Andy Bielenberg, 'The Watt Family and The Distilling Industry in Derry, 1762-1921', *Ulster Folklife*, Vol. 40, 1994, pp. 16-25; Mitchell, *The Making of Derry*, pp. 122-125; Riordan, *Modern Irish Trade and Industry*, p. 162.
- ⁹⁰ Gerald Hassan, *Thunder & Clatter: The History of Shipbuilding in Derry* (Derry: Guildhall Press, 1997), pp. 5-17.
- ⁹¹ Mitchell, *The Making of Derry*, pp. 111-115.
- ⁹² Hassan, *Thunder & Clatter*, pp. 28-31.
- ⁹³ Ibid, pp. 33-35.
- ⁹⁴ Mitchell, *The Making of Derry*, p. 116. Typical trades found at the yards included platers, shipwrights, drillers, turners, boilermakers, caulkers, riveters, electricians, plumbers and carpenters and joiners.
- ⁹⁵ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old, 1889-1906*, pp. 18-20.
- ⁹⁶ Kerr detailed his time in Derry in his 1834 pamphlet *Legislative Tyranny and the Defence of the Trade Unions*. As the first Irish publication to argue the case for trade unionism, it is an important document in the historiography of the Irish Labour movement. See Brian Lacy, *Siege City: The Story of Derry and Londonderry* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1994) pp. 182-183.
- ⁹⁷ Lacy, *The Story of Derry*, p. 184.
- ⁹⁸ Desmond Murphy, *Derry, Donegal, and modern Ulster: 1790-1921* (Derry: Aileach Press, 1981), p. 52.
- ⁹⁹ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 95; *Derry Journal (DJ)*, 5, 7 Nov. 1883, 4, 6, Feb. 1884, 3, 5 Aug. 1885. The *Londonderry Journal* had retitled itself the *Derry Journal* in 1880, probably to reflect its growing support for Irish nationalism and Home Rule.
- ¹⁰⁰ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 31; McAteer, 'The 'New Unionism' in Derry', p. 12; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 158. From June 1889 to January 1890, a fifty-seven-hour week was in operation.
- ¹⁰¹ McAteer, 'The 'New Unionism' in Derry', pp. 12-14.
- ¹⁰² Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 96.
- ¹⁰³ Henry Pelling, 'The Knights of Labor in Britain, 1880-1901', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1956, p. 328. The Holy Order of the Knights of Labor was founded in Philadelphia in 1869. Its goal was to unite the working class into a masonic-type, ritualistic fraternity that promoted temperance, respectability and thrift. However, it also function as a trade union. For more information on the Knights' operations in the UK, including Derry, at this time, See Steven Parfitt, *Knights Across the Atlantic: The Knights of Labor in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- ¹⁰⁴ McAteer, 'The 'New Unionism' in Derry', p. 13; Pelling, 'The Knights of Labor in Britain', p. 331.
- ¹⁰⁵ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 33. The comportment of the RIC was even raised at the annual conference of the British Trades Union Congress and at Westminster by Alexander Blane, the socialistic Irish Parliamentary Party MP for South Armagh and himself a tailor.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Derry Standard*, 2, 23, 26 May, 1 Oct. 1890; Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', p. 93. McCarron was back in court that October for intimidating scabs
- ¹⁰⁷ *Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1890, by the Labour Correspondent to the Board of Trade*, 1891, C.6476, lxxviii, HCPP, p. 105.
- ¹⁰⁸ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 46; McAteer, 'The 'New Unionism' in Derry', p. 15.
- ¹⁰⁹ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, pp. 33-34.
- ¹¹⁰ *DJ*, 18, 20 Nov. 1891. Her speech, which was delivered at St. Columb's Hall, is reprinted in *Labour History News*, vol. 8, 1992, pp. 22-23.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid, 23 Nov. 1891, 23 Mar. 1892; McCarter, *Derry's Shirt Tale*, p. 27.
- ¹¹² Julie-Ann Grew, 'The Derry shirtmaking industry, 1831-1913' (University of Ulster: M.Phil., 1987); Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', pp. 96-98.
- ¹¹³ Greiff, 'Marching Through The Streets Singing And Shouting', pp. 29-30. See also Patterson, 'Industrial labour and the labour movement', pp. 174-177.
- ¹¹⁴ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, pp. 38-39, 43; McAteer, 'The 'New Unionism' in Derry', p. 18; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, pp. 109-110.
- ¹¹⁵ McAteer, 'The 'New Unionism' in Derry', p. 18.
- ¹¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁷ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 38.
- ¹¹⁸ *Strikes and Lock-outs. Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1891, by the Labour Correspondent to the Board of Trade*, C.6890, HCPP, 1893-4, p. 171; *DJ*, 31 Aug., 4, 14 Sept. 1891; O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, pp. 38-41.
- ¹¹⁹ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 40.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 41; Taplin, *The Docker's Union*, pp. 168-169.
- ¹²¹ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 41; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, pp. 110-112.
- ¹²² *DJ*, 10 Jan. 1887; Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and Modern Ulster*, p. 172.
- ¹²³ Ibid., 22 Sept. 1890, 15 June 1891, 9 May 1892, 8 May 1893, 31 May 1894; O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 43.

- ¹²⁴ Walter Gallagher, 'People, work, space and social structure in Edwardian Derry, 1901-1911' (University of Ulster: DPhil, 1994), pp. 99-104.
- ¹²⁵ Before 1891, local unions included the Londonderry House and Ship Painters' Trade Union, the Londonderry Carpenters' and Joiners' Trade Union, the United Operative Plasterers of Londonderry, the Londonderry Shirt Collar and Underclothing Cutters' Trade Union, and the United Operative Bricklayers and Masons of Londonderry. See O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p.
- ¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 30.
- ¹²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 44.
- ¹²⁸ Boyle, *The Irish Labour Movement*, p. 107.
- ¹²⁹ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, pp. 51-53.
- ¹³⁰ John Lynch, 'Labour and Society, 1780-1945' in Liam Kennedy and Philip Ollerenshaw (eds.), *Ulster since 1600: Politics, Economy, and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 203.
- ¹³¹ *DJ*, 8, 13 June 1898; *Strikes and lock-outs. Board of Trade (Labour Department). Report by the chief labour correspondent on the strikes and lock-outs of 1898, with statistical tables*, p. 20, C.9437, XCII.277, 1899, HCPP.
- ¹³² O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 53; *Report by the chief labour correspondent on the strikes and lock-outs of 1897, with statistical tables*, 1898, C.9012, LXXXVIII.423, UKPP, p. 20; *Report by the chief labour correspondent on the strikes and lock-outs of 1898, with statistical tables*, C.9437, XCII.277, 1899, HCPP, pp. 20, 70; *Report by the chief labour correspondent on the strikes and lock-outs of 1899, with statistical tables*, 1900, CD.316, LXXXIII.383, UKPP, p. 20; *Report by the chief labour correspondent on the strikes and lock-outs of 1900, with statistical tables*, 1901, Cd. 689, LXXIII.591, UKPP, p. 40.
- ¹³³ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 54. This local ditty from the time is cited in Lacy, *The Story of Derry*, p. 212: 'May the rose of England always grow, and the thistle of Scotland always blow, and the harp of Ireland always play, 'till the Swilly porters get more pay'.
- ¹³⁴ Edward M. Patterson, *The Lough Swilly Railway: A History of the Gauge Railways of North-West Ireland, part two* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1964), p. 72; Frank Sweeny, 'The Letterkenny & Burtonport extension railway, 1903-47: its social context and environment' (NUI Maynooth: PhD, 2004), pp. 279-280. McFarland's scabs were provided by the National Free Labour Association, which was formed in 1893 by resentful ex-docker to fight Labour. It had strong connections with British railway companies. For a history of the Association, see Geoffrey Alderman, 'The National Free Labour Association, *International Review of Social History*, vol. 21, 1976, pp. 309-336.
- ¹³⁵ Grew, 'The Derry Shirt-Making Industry', pp. 213, 215; Gavin, Kelly F& O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, pp. 166-167. Cuts in the shirt industry were proposed by means of altering the method of how workers were paid.
- ¹³⁶ *DJ*, 3, 5 Feb. 1904, 8 Dec. 1905, 7, Mar. 1906; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 88; Grew, 'The Derry Shirt-Making Industry', pp. 216-218; *DJ*, 26, 28 Sept., 1, 15 Oct., 7 Nov. 1906; *Report on strikes and lock-outs and on conciliation and arbitration boards in the United Kingdom in 1906*, Cd. 3711, LXXX.111, HCPP, pp. 96, 101.
- ¹³⁷ O'Connor, *1: New unionism and old*, p. 42.
- ¹³⁸ Hunt, *The National Federation of Women Workers*, pp. 42-43.
- ¹³⁹ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 95.
- ¹⁴⁰ *DJ*, 17, 24 Aug. 1906. The Textile Operatives' Society of Ireland was founded in 1893 to organise female linen workers in Belfast. For biographies of Mary Galway, see Theresa Moriarty, 'Mary Galway (1864-1928)', in Mary Cullen & Maria Luddy (eds.), *Female activists: Irish women and change, 1900-1960* (Dublin: Woodfield Press, 2001), pp. 9-36; and Theresa Moriarty, 'Mary Galway', in Emmet O'Connor and John Cunningham (eds.), *Studies in Irish radical leadership: Lives on the left* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 85-93.
- ¹⁴¹ Grew, 'The Derry Shirt-Making Industry', p. 223; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 88; Cathy Hunt, *The National Federation of Women Workers, 1906-1921* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 45.
- ¹⁴² Margaret Stewart & Leslie Hunter, *The Needle Is Threaded: The History of an Industry* (London: Heinmann, 1964), p. 15; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 93-94; *DJ*, 23, 25 Mar., 21 Oct. 1914. In 1900, the Amalgamated Society of Tailors became the ASTT when it established its firm female section
- ¹⁴³ O'Connor, *1: New Unionism and old*, p. 18; *Report of an Enquiry by the Board of Trade into the Earnings and Hours of Labour Workpeople in the United Kingdom, II – Clothing trades in 1906, 1909*, Cd. 4844, UKPP, p. xxxv
- ¹⁴⁴ O'Connor, *2: Larkinism and syndicalism, 1907-23*, p. 10.
- ¹⁴⁵ *DJ*, 20, 22, 24, 27 May, 7 June 1907.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Irish Independent*, 6 July 1907; *DJ*, 8 July 1907. For a thorough account of the Belfast dock strike of 1907, see John Gray, *City in Revolt: James Larkin and the Belfast Dock Strike of 1907* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1985).
- ¹⁴⁷ *DJ*, 9, 11, 13 Sept. 1907, 9 Apr. 1909; *Irish Independent*, 10 Sept. 1907; O'Connor, *2: Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 14.
- ¹⁴⁸ Grew, 'The Derry Shirt-Making Industry', pp. 218-219. Tillie's tried to cut the rate of payment on certain types of goods by 2d. per shilling; this, the workers claimed, would lead to weekly reduction of at least 3s.

- ¹⁴⁹ *Report on strikes and lock-outs and on conciliation and arbitration boards in the United Kingdom in 1907*, Cd. 4254, XCVIII.599, 1908, HCPP, pp. 108, 177; *DJ*, 18 Dec. 1907.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Report on strikes and lock-outs and on conciliation and arbitration boards in the United Kingdom in 1908*, Cd. 4680, XLIX.1, 1909, HCPP, p. 116; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 16.
- ¹⁵¹ *DJ*, 28 Feb. 1906; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 11.
- ¹⁵² *DJ*, 15 Jan. 1909. At the 1909 ITUC annual conference, McCarron, McNulty and two other NUDL Derrymen led the charge against the ITGWU's affiliation. See *Report of the sixteenth ITUC*, 1909, National Library of Ireland (NLI), pp. 29, 33, 42.
- ¹⁵³ *DJ*, 27 Jan, 2, 5, 7 Apr. 1909.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 30 June 1909.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25, 27 Aug., 25 Sept. 1911; McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', p. 31.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12 Feb., 15 May 1912.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Report on strikes and lock-outs and on conciliation and arbitration boards in the United Kingdom in 1913, with comparative statistics*, Cd. 7658, XXXVI.489, 1914-16, HCPP, p. 138; *Ibid.*, 26, 28 Feb., 3, 7, 10 Mar. 1913.
- ¹⁵⁸ *DJ*, 4, 29 Aug., 10 Sept., 22 Oct. 1913; *Report on strikes and lock-outs and on conciliation and arbitration boards in the United Kingdom in 1913, with comparative statistics*, Cd. 7658, XXXVI.489, 1914-16, HCPP, p. 106.
- ¹⁵⁹ For a very thorough account of the 1913 Dublin lockout, see Pádraig Yeates, *Lockout: Dublin 1913* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2000).
- ¹⁶⁰ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 116.
- ¹⁶¹ *DJ*, 26 Nov. 1913.
- ¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 2-11 Feb. 1914; *Irish Independent*, 2, 7 Feb. 1914; *Sunday Independent*, 8 Feb. 1914; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 7 Feb. 1914. The 14 February 1914 issue of the *Derry Journal* contains a full copy of the agreement.
- ¹⁶³ *Irish Independent*, 9 Feb. 1914. The NUDL had recently organised the carters as part of its move away from a 'dockers only' policy to one that included all unskilled workers, including the shirt operatives which they unsuccessfully tried to organise. As such, it changed its name to the NUDL and Riverside Workers, but for simplicity's sake it will be continued to be referred to as the NUDL. See O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 22-23.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Sunday Independent*, 26 Apr. 1914; *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Apr. 1914.
- ¹⁶⁵ *DJ*, 25 May 1914.
- ¹⁶⁶ The shirtmaking trade board was consequent of the 1909 Trade Board Act, which created boards in certain industries on which an equal number of trade unionists and employers sat with the chairman appointed by the government. The boards' mandate was to establish a legally enforceable minimum wage. Separate Irish trade boards for tailoring and shirtmaking were established in March 1913 and in May 1914 respectively.
- ¹⁶⁷ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 27; *DJ*, 8 June 1914.
- ¹⁶⁸ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 74; *Labour Gazette (LG)*, June 1915; *DJ*, 27 Aug., 13, 24, 29 Sept., 1, 8, 13, 25 Oct., 1, 10 Nov., 15, 29 Dec. 1915.
- ¹⁶⁹ Theresa Moriarty, 'Work, warfare and wages: industrial controls and Irish trade unionism in the First World War', in Adrian Gregory & Senia Pašeta (eds.), *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to Unite Us All'?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 75, 78; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 27-28.
- ¹⁷⁰ Ball had seen a poster promising that his employment in the company would be intact upon his arrival home. The quoted exchange is cited in O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 26.
- ¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* A similar incident of judicial snobbery took place in June 1918 when 'Judge Todd' allegedly slandered dockers. His remarks were denounced by the trades council, which demanded an apology. A dockers' strike was threatened unless he did so but nothing came of this. See *DJ*, 10-14 June 1918; *LS* 11, 13 June 1918.
- ¹⁷² *DJ*, 3, 17 Feb. 1915. The NUR was the result of mergers between the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the United Pointsmen and Signalmen's Society and the General Railway Workers' Union.
- ¹⁷³ *DJ*, 27 Aug., 26 Nov. 24 Dec. 1915; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Nov. 1915, 9, 18 Mar. 1916.
- ¹⁷⁴ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 87.
- ¹⁷⁵ *DJ*, 13 Sept., 4, 15 Oct. 1915
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ulster Herald*, 13 May 1916; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 13 May 1916; *DJ*, 15, 18, 20, 22 Sept. 1916.
- ¹⁷⁷ *DJ*, 5, 7 May 1915; 11 Sept. 1916, 8 Jan. 1917; E.B. McGuire, *Irish Whiskey: A History of Distilling, the Spirit Trade and Excise Controls in Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1973), pp. 303-306.
- ¹⁷⁸ *DJ*, 22 June 1921; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 28-29. In Belfast and in eastern and central Ulster, the British-based Workers' Union had a similar presence as the NAUL in Derry. See Richard Hyman, *The Workers' Union* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), pp. 112, 133, 126. The Workers' Union had tried to organise in Derry in 1907 but nothing appears to have of this. See *DJ*, 20 Dec. 1907.
- ¹⁷⁹ *DJ*, 5 July, 4 Oct. 1916; *Report of the twenty-second meeting of the ITUC*, 1916, pp. 48-49.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 24 Sept. 1916.

¹⁸¹ McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 55, 71-78, 82; *New Way*, Sept. 1917.

¹⁸² Cited in O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 31.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ The carters originally wanted a 5s. a week increase and threatened to go on strike to get it.

¹⁸⁵ See also agreement between Irish Master Printers' Association and the Derry branch of the Typographical Association, 30 Oct. 1916, LAB 83/1981; award in arbitration between the Friendly Society of Ironfounders of England, Ireland and Wales and the Londonderry Ironfounders' Association, 13 Jan. 1917, LAB 2/189/IC257/1917/Part2, both found in Ministry of Labour records, UK National Archives (UKNA).

Section I: Class Conflict in Cork and Derry, 1917-24

2

The Birth of the Workers' Republic: Class Conflict in Cork, 1917-21

Throughout 1915 and 1916, most employers had successfully resisted demands for increases. Instead, they gave war bonuses that rarely exceeded 2s. a week. From 1917, however, union militancy compelled them to give higher bonuses and permanent increases, as well as a shorter week. This would culminate in Labour's two anni mirabiles – 1919 and 1920, when class conflict swung decidedly in favour of the workers. Inflation continued during the post-war boom, but it was surpassed by wage increases. Syndicalism provided the basis for success because it encouraged working-class solidarity and Labour's spread to new sectors like non-manual workers and women. The ITGWU led the charge, making its drive to become Ireland's One Big Union seem like an attainable goal. Its growth in Cork was replicated everywhere outside of Ulster. By late 1920, it had 120,000-130,000 members nationally.¹ By mid-1920, Irish Labour was more powerful than ever. Since 1916, numbers affiliated to Congress grew from 70,000 to a peak of 229,000. A further 20,000 trade unionists, mainly in the northern shipbuilding and engineering industries, were unaffiliated for political reasons.² Employers and the authorities took note.

Inflation and the exigencies of war compelled greater government intervention and the state tried to mitigate class conflict with arbitration. The Board of Trade's Labour Department had grown exponentially since the war began and in 1916 it was made into a separate Ministry of Labour. In July 1919, it set up an Irish Department in Dublin. One of its primary functions was to arbitrate disputes, a process that generated rewards for workers. The Catholic Church took a similar approach to class conflict, allowing a Kilkenny-born Capuchin to become the most beloved figure in working-class circles in Cork. It seemed that life was finally getting better for the beleaguered proletariat.

The birth of Irish syndicalism

Wartime profiteering accentuated a pre-war malady that afflicted the working class: a successful accumulation of capital that far exceeded Labour's gains. Across Europe, Australasia and the Americas inflation transformed pre-1914 discontent into a revolutionary or semi-revolutionary sentiment that syndicalists were happy to exploit. Between 1910 and 1920, semi-insurrectional strike waves comparable only to the seismic international working-class upheavals of 1869-1875 and 1968-1974 engulfed France, Germany, Britain, the US, Italy and Spain. Elsewhere, similar levels of workers' unrest took place in Scandinavia (1909 to mid-1920s), Mexico (1915-16), Russia (1917) and Argentina (1919).³ Exogenous influences on syndicalist movements were as powerful as endogenous ones. Radical migrants and activists helped to spread the movement internationally, as did sailors. Irish syndicalism was part of this diffusive network and it borrowed much from the international movement, most notably the idea of the One Big Union which was embodied most perfectly in the ITGWU.⁴

From late 1916, the Transport Union swiftly expanded in Cork under Denis Houston, its new regional organiser, and was fast becoming the chief medium through which working-class anger was being channelled. Labourers, urban and rural, were at the heart of its renaissance. In this way, Irish syndicalism more closely resembled American, Italian and Spanish syndicalism than its French or British variants.⁵ In January 1917, the ITGWU took over the local Builders' Labourers' Society, and sought a 32s. wage and a reduction of hours from sixty to fifty-one for carters and storemen. The CEF refused to negotiate due to 'past experience with this union'.⁶ Having issued strike notices, it successfully agitated on behalf of the tramwaymen in March, June and July.⁷

From April 1917, an unprecedented wave of labour agitation swept through Cork. A building trade strike heralded the new dawn. It all workers except painters – 900 in total. The masons and bricklayers sought 1s. 6d. more a day and the plasterers an extra 1s. The carpenters went further and demanded 6s. 3d. a week, a 3s. bonus and a fifty-hour week. The Master Builders' Association's offer of lesser increases was turned down. Having agitated for seven months, the men ceased work on 31 March. After seven days, all but the carpenters returned to work. A conference of arbitration presided over by the lord mayor fixed improved wages and a fifty-one-hour week. As they could find work elsewhere, the carpenters remained out for another two weeks until arbitration gave them most of their demands: 10d. per hour and a fifty-hour week.⁸ (See Tables A & B, Appendix 10).

Construction workers contributed disproportionate support to syndicalist movements in several countries, most notably France, but also Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Portugal. Though building tradesmen had been traditionally hostile to radicalism, economic change forced a change in outlook. The ‘second industrial revolution’ of the early twentieth century brought a litany of technological and organisational innovations that altered working conditions in the industry by reducing numbers and endangering painstakingly acquired skills. Carpenters were threatened by mechanical saws and prefabricated wood; masons by mechanised devices for working stone spread and by iron and concrete.⁹

. . . labour relations in the industry were being altered in the new century, particularly by increasing commercialization or speculative construction which was accompanied by the proliferation of competitive general contractors and subcontractors. A typical feature of the new situation was that . . . construction workers were contracted for each new building site and were therefore increasingly reduced to conditions akin to casual workers. Job control was further threatened by the willingness of contractors to shift from skilled to unskilled workers when possible, or to employ non-union workers. Strikes against non-union labour were common in the construction trades.¹⁰

Moreover, the nature of construction work lent itself to radicalism:

The industry . . . clearly exhibited a characteristic frequently associated with the appeal of syndicalism: work in small. . . seemingly self-sufficient groups . . . those that syndicalism saw as the local productive and administrative groups of the future. That these small but changing work groups worked on limited-term projects, for changing employers at changing sites, no doubt also placed a high premium on direct industrial action. Grievances . . . had to be settled quickly, for lengthy processes might well outlive the construction project and the grievance. . . moreover . . . there was a tendency . . . towards larger construction firms and better-organised employer groups . . . better able to resist workers’ demands. . . widespread and increasingly competitive subcontracting . . . gave subcontractors a strong incentive to drive hard bargains with workers.¹¹

Thus, Irish building craftsmen were prompted to ally with labourers to secure their bargaining power; a growth in syndicalist sympathy among both was the outcome. However, unlike most countries where syndicalism emerged, Irish tradesmen stuck with their non-syndicalist craft unions.

Rocketing inflation was another factor that produced syndicalist sentiment. The RIC testified that, 'the abnormal prices of food stuffs make it difficult for workers and their families to maintain themselves on their wages.'¹² It noted discontent among artisans and labourers in March, railwaymen in April, and mill and tramway workers in May.¹³ Accordingly, the NUR pressed for 8s. more on their bonus to bring it into line with British railwaymen. It acquired 5s. (making the bonus 12s.) but, much to its ire, the differential with Britain remained.¹⁴ In July, a dockers' strike was averted when, after three weeks of negotiations, government intervention produced a settlement that gave permanent men an extra 3s. Fr. Thomas Dowling, a Capuchin priest who had recently arrived in Cork, was central to the talks.¹⁵ He would soon become one of the era's most significant individuals for Cork's working class. Employers were being inundated with demands for wage increases, but they remained intransigent despite the inflationary environment, making union pugnaciousness necessary. Consequently, industrial mediation was becoming more extensive, with Dowling taking the lead. In October, the carters put forward to the Carriers' Federation their claim of a 30s. wage for a fifty-one-hour week and eight consecutive paid holidays per annum. The threatened strike was resolved when Dowling secured the wage.¹⁶ He also settled a dispute at D.J. Lucy & Co. wool manufacturers.¹⁷ When John Wallis & Sons withheld the 30s. wage from their carters, the British government stepped in and awarded it to them for a sixty-hour week thus averting a strike there.¹⁸

Across Ireland, assistant workers were establishing themselves as some of the most militant workers. The IDAA was growing rapidly to become one of the foremost Irish unions. Its British rival, The National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks, had undergone a major expansion of its Irish operations since late 1916 and trebled its Irish membership in 1917. Its Cork branch was obtaining major advances.¹⁹

Militancy among women

Under the leadership of the Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU), an offshoot of the ITGWU, from late 1917 there was an upsurge in militancy among women. Workers at the Munster Laundry presented a united front and won two increases and a week's holidays with full pay at Christmas, the first non-craft workers in Cork to do so. At the same time, 120 women at four printing and paper bag-making works struck for a minimum wage of 17s. 6d., as recommended by the Cardboard Box Trade Board (Ireland). Most of these women earned less than 10s. and some as little as 4s. After a week, they obtained their full demands. Male clerks, packers and messengers, who also secured increases, picketed alongside them.²⁰ In the same period, the British-based National Federation of Women Workers spread from the artillery shell factory to the Douglas Woollen Mills. In 1919, it transferred its Irish members over to the IWWU.²¹ But militancy could only gain so much. In September 1919, laundry workers were on only 21s. for their forty-eight-hour week.²²

By the end of 1917, the IWWU's brother union boasted more than 5,000 members and six branches in Cork, and had won pay raises at the gristmills, in the coal trade and at two shipping lines.²³ The period's bitterest strike in Cork ensued from its organisation of the teenage staff at Alfred Dobbin's jam factory, Ogilvie & Moore. Dobbin paid girls 6s. a week on average and men 22s. 6d. In late 1917, the employees asked for a wage of 18s. for women and 30s. for men and rejected Dobbin's offers of smaller increases. Dobbin then sacked workers who refused to perform their duties. On 28 January 1918, the women struck. The stoppage continued for eighteen months and followed an antiquated pattern of class conflict: state prosecution of picketers, attacks on scabs and police escorts of company lorries.²⁴

Syndicalism's record on women's rights is unimpressive. In Britain, France, the US, Spain and Italy syndicalists a sexist indifference to women's issues typical of the time. The suffragette movement was viewed by many as toxic and bourgeois because it sought to destroy the solidarity of working-class men and women and replace it with a fallacious cross-class one based on sex. Syndicalist preoccupation with workplace struggle led to a 'workerist', rather than feminist, commitment to women's rights. It was a commitment based solely on class and it ignored how women's oppression transcended home and work. Some syndicalists even believed that a woman's place was in the home and made no attempt to organise women. However, most wanted to end women's degradation which could only be achieved through class-based action: getting women into the workforce and unionising them. The ITGWU's

record on women is similar. It sponsored the foundation of the IWWU in 1911 by Delia Larkin (sister of Jim) and both unions developed a close working relationship. It supported suffrage and considered itself a champion of women's rights. Nevertheless, the ITGWU's language was often explicitly masculine (appeals to manhood, calling on men to be men, etc.) and manliness was a strong part of the union's ethos.²⁵ Syndicalist movements everywhere were, to varying degrees, influenced by the prevailing culture. Despite clear national differences, a conception of masculinity in which independence and 'homosocial alliances' were central to global syndicalism. Francis Shor has argued that the syndicalist tactic of industrial sabotage (see p. 125) was also a ritualistic means of asserting one's manhood. Regarding syndicalist susceptibility to racism, Pieter van Duin has argued that the South African IWW made no attempt to organise non-white workers despite explicit anti-racist claims, but this is disputed by Lucien van der Walt.²⁶

The wages movement in 1918: growing momentum

Proletarian militancy continued to flourish across Cork in 1918 and unskilled workers were at the vanguard. January 1918 was a portent of what was to come as militancy continued its spread to disparate sectors. Teenage labourers at Ryan's soap, candle and glycerine factory; tramwaymen; and weighmen and storemen at Green & Co. grain mill were among those who secured increases through strike or the threat of it.²⁷ Irish syndicalism's strong appeal to labourers is noteworthy given that the same movement was more alluring to tradesmen in Britain and France. The war had rapidly accelerated the long-term trend of craft dilution, a by-product of the second industrial revolution. Employers used technological change as a weapon with which they could take control over production away from workers:

For example, new management techniques were introduced, which resulted in the replacement of systems of internal contract and indirect employment whereby skilled workers hired, paid and supervised their own assistants, or team leaders contracted with the overarching employer but assembled, monitored and paid their own teams, by direct employment and bureaucratic control. . . In addition to increasing direct supervision, employers experimented with various means, such as piecework, premium bonuses, internal promotion and job ladders, to elicit greater worker effort, docility and loyalty . . . a common feature of the new managerial

procedures was the consolidation of control over the work process, which involved transferring production expertise from workers to the employers, and which inevitably drew resistance.²⁸

Inflation and workplace change were the bases for craft militancy. From early 1918, the tradesmen, who heretofore experienced great difficulty in preserving their standard of living, found the tide turning in their favour. Even their apprentices were taking matters into their own hands and making gains. In January 1918, apprentice painters struck for 6s. extra on their 3s. to 18s. wage scale. Two months later, they attained modified increases. In early February, apprentice plumbers struck for a final year wage of 34s. 6d. and against being compelled to perform the duties of a labourer. They did not return to work until 13 April.²⁹ Apprentices were bound by an indenture that tightly controlled their wages and their behaviour both on and off the job. Most trades only paid 'encouragement money' of a few shillings in an apprentice's first year, gradually increasing to about 50 per cent of a journeyman's rate by the final year.³⁰ In March, after agitating for 15s. extra, the coopers secured 5s. the following month.³¹ Perhaps to placate them, in July the brewers voluntarily gave the coopers another 8s, catching them by surprise and giving them a 60s. wage. Piece-rates, where they still operated, were raised to a standardised 50 per cent above the pre-war levels.³²

In April, Dowling and Patrick Lynch averted a stoppage in the building trade by obtaining increases and standardising hours at fifty.³³ Militancy was so pervasive that it even reached the picturesque, campus of University College Cork. In March, ITGWU boys employed to weed its gardens for 5s. a week withdrew their labour for an increase. The college authorities replaced them with non-unionised girls who would work for 4s.³⁴ Despite greater craft militancy, the ITGWU remained Cork's most successful union. In April, it won concessions for breadvan drivers (who had earned 33-35s.), tramwaymen (aided by Lynch and Dowling) and Corporation workers. These increases totalled an additional £10,000 worth of wages annually.³⁵ Printers were also experiencing improvements, (see Table 2. 1).

Table 2. 1: Wages in the Cork Printing Trade, 1918³⁶

Job	May 1918	Sept. 1918
Casemen (day)	52s.	54s.
Machine operators (day)	58s. 6d.	60s. 9d.
Casemen (night)	55s.	57s.
Machine operators (night)	63s. 6d. & 60s. ³⁷	65s.
Jobbing hands	-	54s.

Wages upsurge continues

In late May, the Shop Assistants initiated a major strike at Guy's printing works, where most employees still earned less than 20s. The union kept them out for seven weeks for a 25 per cent wage increase, paid sick leave and other advances. Non-government arbitration produced a disappointing award: a 2½ per cent advance and other small concessions. Although dejected, the workers accepted the result.³⁸ Meanwhile, the Shop Assistants' chief rival, the IDAA, continued to establish a reputation as one of Ireland's most militant and successful unions. Strikes were becoming part of the fabric working-life in Cork. The soaring inflation remained the chief cause of unrest. Disputes at Kiloh's and John Daly's, in the boot and shoe trade, and at the Spinning and Weaving Co. (which involved over 700 women) were settled by Dowling, whose role as an industrial mediator continued to grow.³⁹

Unskilled workers remained at the heart of the syndicalist upsurge, with dockers and agricultural labourers particularly prominent. This is explained by the nature of their work, characterised as it was by episodic employment, frequent changes of employer and changes in worksite and geographic locale. When there was no work available on the docks, men typically had to find jobs elsewhere to maintain an income. Interchange was common between the building trade and dock work, and periodic trans-occupational migration inevitably stimulated attempts to establish unions across industries, like the ITGWU. Since dockers were not bound to a single, long-term employer, they did not have to endure the restraints characteristic of a client-patron relationship. The constant change in their places of employment made them less afraid of dismissal than those with a (semi-) permanent employer and thus more likely to withdraw their labour. Finally, when grievances arose on such jobs, where time was of the essence, workers had to act immediately. There was no opportunity to plan strategy, build up a strike fund or engaging in the time-consuming process of mediation. Accordingly, the appeal of the syndicalist notion of direct action to casual, seasonal or project workers is clear.⁴⁰

It is therefore unsurprising that Cork's most protracted strike of 1918 took place on the docks. When the Committee on Production turned down the National Transport Workers' Federation's demands, 250 dockers struck for a pay rise and a reduction of hours. Cork's dockers were earning 40s. for a sixty-hour week – the worst conditions at any Irish port – and they demanded an extra 5s. and a fifty-four-hour week. The strike lasted for six weeks before Dowling negotiated another compromise.⁴¹ In November, coalporters, drapers' and grocers' assistants, and tailors pushed for improvements.⁴² They were largely successful, with the grocers' assistants obtaining 20s. over pre-war levels.⁴³ In tandem with their national executives, the Cork branch of the Irish Asylum Workers' Union (IAWU) – whose members were among Ireland's worst-paid attendants – and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) agitated for increases. The former demanded 20s. above pre-war levels and a reduction of hours to fifty-six; the latter demanded a war bonus on par with that given to other civil servants. Both groups threatened strike if their claims were ignored. The asylum workers accepted increases of 17s. for men and 12s. for women. A teachers' strike was set for 4 November but was called off. The British Government awarded increases that brought teachers' yearly war bonus to £32. 10s. for men and £26 for women.⁴⁴

Government Arbitration

The British government's war effort was predicated on industrial peace and a content proletariat. The scale of class conflict from 1917 necessitated a huge expansion of the state's role as an industrial arbitrator, forcing employers to make concessions. On 23 March 1918, via the Ministry of Labour, the NUDL won a 35s. wage for carters and storemen and improvements for tonnage workers from the CEF's coal section. In February 1919, the same workers secured better hours, conditions and overtime rates from state arbitration.⁴⁵ On 5 September 1918, the Committee on Production ruled that all Irish tradesmen and their labourers were entitled to the 12½ per cent bonus on earnings that existed in Britain. This bonus became a symbol of Labour achievement that employers loathed paying. The following month, government arbitration gave flourmill labourers a wage 21s. higher than what prevailed in 1914 (see Appendix 4).⁴⁶ Table 2. 2 conveys the magnitude of the advances typically received by workers after state arbitration.

Table 2. 2: Arbitration Award at the Cork Gas Company, May 1918

Occupation	Increase
Machine men	3s. 6d.
Firemen	3s. 6d.
Stop pipe men	3s. 6d.
Assistant firemen	3s. 6d.
Yardmen and outside labourers	2s. 6d.
Gas fitters	4s.
Main and service layers	2s. 6d.
Lamp repairers	2s. 6d.
Meter fixers	2s. 6d.
Slot collectors	3s.
Carmen	3s.
Boys	2s.

Source: Arbitration Award between the Cork Gas Consumers' Company and the National Union of General Labourers, 20 May 1918, LAB 2/85/IC2776/2/1918, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

Cork Labour in 1919

By the end of 1918, most Cork workers had received wage increases ranging from 25 to 100 per cent since 1914 (see Table 2. 4). Wages began to rise more swiftly from late 1918 in concert with the spread of syndicalism. Most impressive of all were the improvements obtained by women at Ogilvie and Moore which were well above the norm, albeit from a very low base. In August 1914, the average wage was 5s. 1d. before reaching 8s. 4d. by August 1916. and 15s. by December 1918. The working week had been cut from fifty-five to forty hours over the same period.⁴⁷ Avenging their June disappointment, the Shop Assistants won large increases in December 1918 (see Table 2. 3) The union received another boost when the Cork branch of the Irish Chemists' Assistants Association became a section of it.⁴⁸ However, despite Labour's victories, most workers were still earning at best 50 per cent above their pre-war wages while food prices were significantly more than 100 per cent dearer.⁴⁹

Table 2. 3: Shop Assistants' Wages in Cork, 1918

Occupation	Feb. 1918	Dec. 1918.
Assistant (male)	12s. 6d.	27s. 6d.
Assistant (female)	12s. 6d.	22s. 6d.
Clerk	7s. 6d.	17s.
Charge hands	25s.	40s.

Source: *The Shop Assistant*, 28 Dec. 1918.

Table 2. 4: Wages in Cork in late 1918

Workers	Wage
Undertakers' drivers	30s. (up from 21s. in 1917)
Butter workers	33s.
Drapers' assistants	32s. (up from 27s. 6d. in 1917)
Egg packers	37s. 6d. for men & 17s. 6d. for women
General labourers	40s.
Typographers	60s. & 67s. 6d.

Source: Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 204.

Class conflict and the Cork Conciliation Board

As 1919 began, strikes continued to proliferate. The stoppage at Dobbin's jam factory was still unsettled and threatened to spread. Extra police had been drafted into Cork to protect scabs. The CTC's attempts at conciliation were met with a frosty response from the CEF who refused to co-operate, echoing employers in the days of Larkinism. Dobbin demanded that the trades council disown the ITGWU before any settlement could be reached. It refused.⁵⁰ The ITGWU and the council toyed with the idea of calling a general strike against Dobbin, but this never happened.⁵¹ Advocacy of the general strike was something that united syndicalists everywhere. The general strike, it was believed, would circumvent a violent crackdown from the state because the overwhelming numbers involved meant there would be no precise target for repression. The revolution would be widespread and diffuse, everywhere and nowhere, and would thus paralyse the bourgeois social order. Localised general strikes became a notable feature of Irish syndicalism: Youghal in 1917 and Dungarvan in 1919 are prime examples. But it was also a trait of other syndicalist movements: the 1919 Winnipeg general strike organised by the OBU in Canada, for example.⁵²

Although a local general strike never occurred in Cork, a more significant CTC initiative did materialise. On 15 February 1919, a proposal to establish the Cork Conciliation Board to arbitrate industrial disputes was revived at a conference between the CTC and the CEF under Dowling's auspices. Cork became the first city in the English-speaking world to establish such an institution. Dowling had championed a conciliation board as a long-term solution to class conflict since late 1917.⁵³ The Cork Conciliation Board was formally constituted at its first meeting held on 1 March 1919.⁵⁴

The spread of militancy

Despite the Board of Trade granting Irish railwaymen eight-hour day from 1 February, there was continued unrest on Cork's railways. On 4 February, the RCA conducted a day-long strike across the UK to win recognition from the Railway Executive Committee, which now operated the railways. The Committee recognised the ASLEF and the NUR but not the RCA. In a provisional agreement, the government largely ceded this demand; however, the chief, personal and staff clerks working for the individual general managers and superintendents were not covered. The RCA accepted this. But the Committee interpreted the agreement so broadly that the exemption was applied to most clerks. Negotiations recommenced but ruptured in early March. Another strike was set for 11 March unless the agreement was applied fairly but was postponed for further negotiations. On 24 March, a settlement was announced that gave the clerks the eight-hour day and better pay and conditions.⁵⁵ Their action was the only direct connection between Cork and the strike endemic engulfing Britain.⁵⁶

But this was not enough to persuade the British government, which was alarmed by the spread of class conflict in Ireland and failed to comprehend it as a phenomenon. That August, Lloyd George told his cabinet that:

The Irish question, in his opinion, had more to do with the existing industrial unrest than the great majority of people imagined. The policemen on strike, the many agitators who were, actively engaged in various parts of the country in stirring up trouble and fomenting unrest, were generally of Irish extraction, and they were creating a vicious atmosphere. He had been told by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police that none of his Irish officers were really to be trusted. A satisfactory settlement of the Irish question was most important from the point of view, not only of the position as regards the Industrial world, but also of our relations with the Dominions and the United States.⁵⁷

Having dismissed Irish Labour as a republican front, the British tried to explain Irish unrest with absurd conspiracy theories based on gross exaggerations and lumping various forces of discontent together.⁵⁸ Agitation was always seen as a part of an insidious, global 'Bolshevist' plot. In 1918, the threat was the 'Bolshevik, Syndicalist, and the German Spy'; after the war, it was 'Bolshevik Jews . . . Communist Sects . . . and sullen, murderous hobbleheads in Ireland'.⁵⁹

With such a poor understanding of Irish syndicalism, it is unsurprising that the government could not halt its spread. Across Ireland, assistants were now heeding the call of militancy. On 17 January 1919, Cork bar assistants served demands for wages of 65s. for charge hands, 55s. for second hands and 40s. for junior hands. The Licenced Vintners' Association rejected these claims, prompting the Irish National Union of Vintners', Grocers' and Allied Trades Assistants to issue strike notice. A stoppage was avoided when union recognition and wages of 60s., 50s. and 35s. respectively were granted.

Unlike their British counterparts, most Irish workers continued to confront and negotiate with employers on a purely localised level, reflecting the differences in capitalist development between the two countries. Irish employers were organised on sectional lines and in bodies designed for trade promotion, not industrial conflict. They made little effort to set wage levels for an industry, especially in the south. One exception to this was the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Irish Master Printers' Association and the Typographical Association in March, an extension of a system already operational in Britain. In Cork, collective bargaining granted a forty-eight-hour week for day workers, a forty-five-hour week for night workers and a week's paid holidays, demands previously refused by local employers acting individually.⁶⁰ Later that month, employers from across Ireland met in Dublin and launched the Irish Association of Employers. Benjamin Buckworth of the CEF seconded the resolution to establish it and was elected to its executive council. As its founders made clear, it was a direct response to union militancy. Its stated goals were government recognition, countering Labour and combatting socialism and nationalisation.⁶¹

In subsequent years, collective bargaining spread across the Irish economy. Although the short-term benefits were clear, in the long-term it brought more harm than good to some workers, especially during recessions. Between 1910 and 1940 collective bargaining was introduced in many countries to diffuse class antagonism. Syndicalists in several countries initially rejected it as collaboration with the bourgeoisie that would bureaucratised unions, undermine revolutionary spirit and restrict freedom of action. This position was subsequently abandoned in the Netherlands, Sweden, Argentina and Canada. Collective bargaining aided the demise of international syndicalism by institutionalising unions into the state apparatus. It made union leaders responsible for disciplining workers during contract periods and turned them into a buffer between capitalists and workers which made them more conservative. Moreover, under collective bargaining wages were fixed for a set period (sometimes several years) even if the

workers had urgent demands, which sapped radical impulses among the working class.⁶² In Ireland, however, other reasons determined syndicalism's collapse (see Conclusion).

In the meantime, Labour radicalism was thriving in Cork. In spring 1919, the coopers secured another 8s. after threatening strike (which would have their first since 1894), giving them 68s.⁶³ The building trade remained a constant source of discontent. On 7 April, the Conciliation Board halted a planned stoppage by awarding tradesmen (except plumbers, carpenters and joiners) higher wages.⁶⁴ But it failed to prevent plumbers and the carpenters and joiners from downing tools for hourly rates of 1s. 6d. and 1s. 9d. respectively. Despite Conciliation Board mediation, the carpenters' strike dragged on until 23 September when a conference fixed hourly rates at 1s. 8d. for a forty-seven-hour week.⁶⁵ The following month, the Board averted another strike in the trade by awarding these rates and hours to all craftsmen bar plumbers from 1 January 1920. Though they were given the 1s. 8d. rate, plumbers' hours remained fifty.⁶⁶ Throughout this period, furnishing workers' wages tracked those in the building trade and they too had the 1s. 8d. rate by late 1919, although their week was still fifty hours.⁶⁷

May Day 1919

The peak of post-war proletarian exuberance in Ireland was reached on May Day 1919. The ITUC called a national general strike for 1 May and the CTC was happy to participate. Over 8,000 Corkmen – 6,000 from the city and 2,000 from the county – abstained from work. They partook in a procession which featured the red flag, orderly marches, militant speeches, republican music and vocal praise for the Bolsheviks, whose revolution Labourites regarded as a blow to imperialism. It was enough to worry the police. 'There is nothing to show a marked tendency towards Bolshevism, but the fact that red flags were carried . . . would indicate a slight tendency in that respect'. By now, the CTC had grown to include unions from every sector of the economy.⁶⁸ The procession's biggest bloc was formed by the ITGWU and its 4,000 members who were, according to the RIC, 'all members of the Sinn Féin organisation'. It had six sections and even organised some craftsmen like stonecutters, having taken over the Cork-based Operative Stonecutters of Ireland Trade Union in 1918.⁶⁹ The ITGWU was now a real force to be reckoned with in Cork, as it was in many Irish cities. In Limerick, for example, its growth from 1917 was similarly impressive and it had 3,000 members by mid-1919.⁷⁰

The rally also featured a contingent of girls from the Irish Citizen Army: a scouts' unit that often led ITGWU processions. A local ICA women's branch, 'Ireland's Own', had also existed since 1917. It operated like Cumann na mBan though it was poorly supported by that body. Nora and Sheila Wallace, who owned a newsagent that regularly housed republicans on the run, led the branch. The Wallace sisters were early Cumann na mBan members who later drifted towards the Citizen Army and the IRA. They were both Connollyites who viewed the Labour and republican struggles as inseparable. Ireland's Own existed until the truce. It hosted socials and raised funds for the republicans. It was Cork's only ICA branch: the men's unit had been subsumed into the IRA.⁷¹ In April 1920, the Citizen Army discussed re-establishing a men's section in Cork but dropped the proposal two months later.⁷² A Citizen Army boy scouts' division was started in late 1918 or early 1919 and peaked with a membership of about forty before petering out the following year. During its brief existence, it made inroads within Fianna Éireann, the republican boy scouts organisation. The Citizen Army made a negligible impact in Cork and there are few records of its activities beyond appearances at republican/ITGWU processions and marches, and at funerals of IRA trade unionists in the latter part of the War of Independence.⁷³

Deepening class conflict

Class conflict deepened in Cork during the summer of 1919. The biggest stoppages resulted from lockouts rather than strikes. This hardening of employer class consciousness illustrates the limitations of Dowling's mediation endeavours as the bosses sought to reassert their hegemony in revolutionary Cork. The Conciliation Board was impelled into action for all but the shortest of these battles. It persuaded the tramwaymen, farriers and tobacconists' assistants not to withdraw their labour by mediating their grievances.⁷⁴ But Dowling was unable to stop every dispute from developing into a strike. On 12 May, the ITGWU brought out the egg-packers for higher pay and fewer hours. Male packers earned 37s. 6d. for a forty-eight-hour week. Under Dowling's counsel, the employers made concessions. But trouble was not abating.⁷⁵

In early May, a wage claim in the bakeries led to Conciliation Board intervention. Dowling put forward proposals that were acceptable to the workers but not the master bakers because the Ministry of Food refused to increase the price of bread or reduce the price of flour. After a stoppage from 15-26 May and ten days without bread, the price of a loaf was increased

by ½d. and bakers' wages by 24s., giving them 66s. a week. Confectioners were given 20s. (giving them a 70s. rate) and breadvan drivers 7s.⁷⁶ The Board was also unable to stop a strike at Lyons that began on 28 May when the company locked out the IDAA after it demanded an upward revision of wages.⁷⁷ Likewise, on 23 June the tailors withdrew their labour for a 70s. minimum. Dowling ended both stoppages by awarding modified improvements.⁷⁸ Although workers rarely secured their full demands through the Capuchin, he had earned the reputation of being a friend of the working class. After the tailors' strike, firms paid 140-150 per cent above pre-war levels. The master tailors were impressed with Labour's unity and unhappy with their own lack of it. They vowed to change this.⁷⁹ Low wages and employer obstinance meant that the tailoring trade had been in a state of conflict since February. The ASTT had put forward claims of 9d. an hour (from 6½d.), a shorter week and improved conditions, but were forced to accept the employers' offer of 7d. and a forty-eight-hour week.⁸⁰ The union would not relent until it received an award given to British workers. On 22 May, the Ministry of Labour deliberated in Dublin on whether the award applied to Ireland but withheld the findings. The situation remained unresolved when the Cork branch met in August and demanded a trade board for Irish dressmakers and milliners.⁸¹

Not only were wages on the up, hours were coming down. Coachbuilders' pay jumped by a sizable 16s. 7d. and their hours were cut from fifty-four to forty-seven.⁸² Industrial trouble was spreading to unlikely places. In June, the barmaids declared their intention to strike if wages of 45s. for second hands and 40s. for junior hands were not given. The women were granted annual salaries of £30 and £40 respectively.⁸³ The ASE sought an 84s. wage for a forty-seven-hour week. It attained an 80s. flat rate, making Cork's engineers the best paid in Ireland.⁸⁴ By July, what remained of the strike at Ogilvie & Moore's had fizzled out. Dobbin, who had replaced the sacked workers, emerged triumphant. But his victory was a pyrrhic one. It came at considerable financial cost and, in John Borgonovo's opinion, contributed to a deep unpopularity that had near-fatal consequences. A staunch Unionist, a republican gunman tried to assassinate him in 1920 and a year later the IRA burned his mansion as a counter-reprisal.⁸⁵ Labourers remained at the forefront of trade union militancy as another spate of disputes broke out that autumn. The ITGWU pursued an advance for corn porters (who earned 20-30s. a day) and brought out gristmill and Cork Tanning Company labourers, who earned 45s. for a fifty-four-hour week.⁸⁶ Tradesmen agitation continued to yield impressive results. The coopers negotiated an increase to give them Cork's first uniform rate (81s. 4d.), even though it was less than the 87s. 9d. they had wanted.⁸⁷ Electricians received an advance that made them

among Cork's best paid workers and had their hours cut from fifty to forty-seven. (See Table M, Appendix 7).⁸⁸ The strike wave was so endemic that the threat of labour withdrawal was enough to force employers to make concessions, as seen in Table 2. 5.

Table 2. 5: Threatened strike in Cork, 1917-20.

Workers/union	Demand	Outcome	Threat issued
CCSPC sailors & firemen	60s. wage	Successful	Mar. 1917
CCSPC labourers	40s. wage	Modified increase	Nov. 1917
IDAA	25 per cent increase	Modified increase	Oct. 1917
Assistant teachers	Increased salary	Modified increase	Mar. 1918
Tramwaymen	Wage increase	Modified increase	Apr. 1918
Coalporters	Wage increase	Modified increase	Nov. 1918
Part-time teachers	Extra remuneration	Postponed until academic year after Dowling intervenes	Jan., Mar. 1919
Gasworkers	10s. increase	Modified increase	Feb. 1919
ASLEF	Fireman not be sacked	Notice withdrawn	Jan. 1919
ASTT	15s. increase and an eight-hour day	5s. increase	May 1919
Corn porters	20 per cent increase	Referred to Wheat Commission	Aug. 1919
Journeyman butchers	Wage increase	12s. increase and improved piece rates	Sept. 1919
Gristmill labourers	Wage increase	Modified increase	May 1920
Printing trade labourers	Wage increase	Modified increase	May 1920
Oil, colour, wine and spirit workers	Wage increase	10s. increase	Aug. 1920

Source: CE, 1917-20; Watchword of Labour, 1919-20; CCSPC minutes, 1917-18, 370/A/10, CCCA.

White-collar militancy

White-collar workers continued to assert themselves as never before. That summer, the Southern Law Clerks' Association, agitated for improvements.⁸⁹ A perfect expression of the zeitgeist occurred on 1 September when the Part-Time Teachers Association brought out the professors at the Cork School of Music for a 50 per cent advance over pre-1914 rates. A settlement could not be found, and the professors resigned in protest.⁹⁰ The IDAA led the white-collar charge. In July, it had sought a new wage scale and improved working conditions for drapers' assistants, which the employers could not accept. The dispute rumbled on until strike was set for 18 October. Dowling persuaded the union to postpone off its action, which would involve over 600 assistants. In November, he negotiated a better deal and the stoppage was

avoided.⁹¹ The following month, another planned strike at two draperies was called off when the staff received increases of 75 per cent at one firm and 20s. at the other.⁹² Table 2. 6 shows the IDAA's successes. Simultaneously, after months of negotiations, Dowling obtained higher wages and a forty-seven-hour week for the grocers' assistants (including clerks), as outlined in table 2. 7.⁹³

Table 2. 6: Advances Secured by the IDAA, 1919-20

Firm	Advance	Date
Kiloh & Co.	£550 worth of increases and £200 worth of bonuses	Aug. 1919
Hardware stores	60s. minimum with 33½ per cent increases on wages below 60s. and 25 per cent on wages above 60s. ⁹⁴	Aug. 1919
T.J. O'Connell's ⁹⁵	£30 annually	Oct. 1919
Baker & Wright's	7-16s. a week for office & warehouse staff	Dec. 1919
Kerin's and Egan's	7-15s. a week	Dec. 1919
Power Bros. and John Hill & Sons	20s. a week	Dec. 1919
Moynihan's, Fitzgerald's, Cahill's and the Gas Company	Wage increases	Jan. 1920
Dwyer & Co.	Reduction of hours	Jan. 1920
Drapers' assistants	Scale of £104 to £186 (after ten years) for men and of £78 to £144 for women	Feb. 1920

Source: *Drapers' Assistant*, vol. 17, Sept., Nov. 1919, Jan. 1920; IDAA executive committee minutes, 18, 25 June, 19 Nov. 1919; Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House; *LG*, Mar. 1920.

Table 2. 7: Grocers' Assistants' Wages in Cork from 6 October 1919

Position in Trade	Wage
3-4 Years	35s.
19 Years Old	37s. 6d.
4-5 Years	40s.
5-6 Years	50s.
6-7 Years	53s.
Over 7 Years	67s. 6d.
Charge Hands	87s. 6d.

Source: *CE*, 27 Nov. 1919.

Despite their gains, some clerks encountered intense employer hostility to trade unionism, akin to what tradesmen and labourers had experienced in previous generations. In mid-1919, Sutton's clerical staff had their request for an improved bonus denied because of their membership of the Irish Clerical Workers' Union (ICWU). Strike was called but it soon collapsed, and the clerks were forced to sign a document renouncing their union. Employers had good reason to fear the ICWU. Since the Cork branch's formation in January it had won a fortnight's annual holidays and weekly increases of 10-40s. (20s. on average).⁹⁶ Syndicalism was also emboldening white-collar women to unionise. In November 1919, the Cork Nurses' Association was founded. It spent much time campaigning for the eight-hour day.⁹⁷

Most extraordinary of all was the novel sight of bank clerks organising and issuing strike notice for better salary and recognition of their union. The Irish Bank Officials Association (IBOA) was formed on 17 March 1918. By 1919, its assertiveness had grown after repeatedly encountering the bankers' obduracy. By that autumn, it had unionised over eighty per cent of the Irish bank clerks. It wanted a minimum annual salary of £80 for the first year that would rise incrementally to £500 after twenty years' service. Despite promises of victimisation, strike was set for 31 December. However, the bankers soon backtracked. They agreed to recognise the IBOA and to submit its claims to arbitration. In March 1920, a tribunal issued a major victory for the clerks. The award fixed an initial salary of £100 for male clerks rising by annual increments before peaking at £450. For permanent female employees, the new salary scale would commence at £100 and rise to £190. Salaries were to be free of income tax and a 20 per cent cost of living bonus was instituted. Tellers and cashiers were given a £20 responsibility allowance while accountants and sub-managers were given a £40 allowance. From now on, all permanent male officials would be entitled to a retirement pension after fifteen years' service, with the amount growing to two-thirds of the salary after forty-five years' service. The resolve of the IBOA's executive had found strong support among Cork's bank clerks.⁹⁸

White-collar militancy also manifested itself in a strike of chemists' assistants in several Irish cities, including Cork. On 2 December, after pleas for an improvement on their 37s. 6d. wage were not met, strike was called. The assistants had originally planned to cease work on 23 November but postponed it after accepting Ministry of Labour arbitration. In Cork, the strike lasted until 19 December when an agreement was reached.⁹⁹ Shortly before the strike, tragedy struck the Shop Assistants when Edward Owens, its Irish organiser, died from pneumonia. O.

W. Humphrey of the Cork branch described him as ‘the greatest figure that ever carried the banner of shop life reform through Ireland’.¹⁰⁰

The height of the class war, 1919-20

Irish syndicalism climaxed from late 1919 to mid-1920 when it coloured all aspects of the Labour movement. Like France, Spain and Italy, and unlike Britain and the US, syndicalism’s influence in Ireland is attested by its impact on the traditional centres of craft unionism: pre-modern workshops, worksites and small and medium industries.¹⁰¹ By late 1919, the wages of Cork’s boot and shoe operatives ranged from 50-60s. However, inflation meant that they had experienced no tangible benefits during the war. The NUBSO was thus compelled to present their employers with claims for a wage 100 per cent above pre-war levels, a forty-eight-hour week and a 35s. wage for women. They refused, sparking a seven-week strike from late October that was ended by Dowling. The Cork Master Shoe Repairers’ Association agreed to give an average advance of 50 per cent on piece-rates, as arranged by the Boot and Shoe Repairing Trade Board (Ireland). Hours were also reduced by one to forty-eight.¹⁰² In 1920, the NUBSO negotiated UK-wide wages of 65s. and 68s. for men and 40s. for women, their peak rates.¹⁰³

By the end of 1919, labour had much to be proud of. Across all sectors, workers’ living standards had improved. The ITGWU, the finest crystallisation of Irish syndicalism, had the most to be proud about. An example of its success was its organisation of workers at Gouldings. There, it had obtained 57s. 6d. for carmen (from 14s. in 1914) and 55s. for labourers (5s. above the standardised minimum) after a 5s. increase in December. It also secured a 56s. wage for yardmen at Kenny’s and labourers at Sutton’s, and rates at Lunham’s ranged from 50s. to 70s. All had the forty-seven-hour week. On average, the unions had enhanced workers’ pay by about 25 per cent.¹⁰⁴

Industrially, February of 1920 was the era’s most disturbed month in Cork. Fittingly, it began with a work stoppage. Via Dowling, the ITGWU secured improvements for carters and labourers at Jennings & Co. water factory after a 7-day strike.¹⁰⁵ But the Transport Union did not represent Cork’s most exploited workers, the Lunatic Asylum’s attendants. The IAWU had a torrid time in pressing for a reduction of their working week – about seventy hours – to fifty-six hours and for better pay. The asylum’s management reluctantly conceded the demands after a national conference held on 25 February between the asylums’ management committees and

the IAWU standardised wages and hours across Ireland. Monthly minimum wages were now 100s. for men and 70s. for women, with 10s. monthly increments given after a year's service. Men's annual pay would be £92 and women's £72. Hours were cut to fifty-six.¹⁰⁶

The brewery workers' and printers' strikes

On 11 February 1920, the year's first major strike materialised when 300 brewery labourers went out for a 70s. wage, a forty-seven-hour week and seven days annual paid holiday. The trades council and its affiliates gave the strikers generous financial support. Throughout 1919, the Cork Brewery Workmen's Association had pushed for wage increases and a shorter week. It attained a 50s. wage but failed to reduce hours below fifty despite struggling for the forty-four-hour week.¹⁰⁷ After five weeks on strike, the men were granted a 62s. 6d. wage and a 47½-hour week. Though previously hostile to labourers, the coopers contributed generously to the CTC's appeals and refused to scab, making the strike far more effective.¹⁰⁸ This support is significant because cooperage was traditionally a trade in which the gulf between craftsman and labourer was particularly pronounced.¹⁰⁹ The maltsters and draymen were also given increases to maintain their differentials over the labourers.¹¹⁰ The strike's ultimate legacy was the enduring foothold it gave Guinness in Cork, allowing it to become a major competitor to the local breweries. The unions tried to nip this in the bud. At the behest of the coopers, they conducted a public campaign against the local consumption of Guinness from August to October 1923. With their employers' support, trade unionists picketed the Guinness offices interfered with deliveries. Though initially successful, it failed to halt Guinness's growth in Cork.¹¹¹

Table 2. 8: Wages at Murphy's Brewery, 1914-20

Year	Watchmen	Enginemen	Lorry Drivers
1914	26s.	30s.	-
1915	27s.	31s.	-
1916	30s.	34s.	-
1917	36s.	40s.	-
1918	41s.	50s.	-
1919	53s.	-	72s. 6d.
1920	-	-	90s.

Source: Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 160; *Workmen's Register*, BL/BC/MB/334, Murphy's brewery collection, UCC Archives (UCCA).

Printers encountered similar employer obstinance as the brewery labourers. In July 1919, in accordance with a national agreement, the master printers instituted wages of 67s. 6d. for Cork jobbing compositors and 65s. for bookbinders and machine rulers, with another 2s. 6d. increase operative from September.¹¹² At the year's end, the *Cork Examiner's* staff tendered notices. Employers then granted increases of 12s. 6d. to compositors, machinemen and linotype and monotype operators in the morning newspapers, and 10s. for those in the evening newspapers. Lithographic printers secured 7s. 6d. and bookbinders and machine rulers 5s. (see Table 2. 9).¹¹³ But the workers needed more to deal with inflation. In February 1920, a year after the introduction of collective bargaining to the printing trade, Cork employers pulled out of national negotiations when the local Typographical Association's applied for a 15s. advance. The Association's executive intervened and advised a return to work as a strike in Cork could jeopardise talks across the UK. On 21 February, the printers at the jobbing houses ceased work. They held out until 19 March when an agreement giving them 10s. more was signed. Jobbing compositors now had 80s. National collective bargaining was resumed once again. By April, machine operators in the jobbing houses were earning an impressive 85s.¹¹⁴

Table 2. 9: Wages in the Cork Printing Trade, January 1920

Job	Wage
Compositors	87s. 6d. (night) & 80s. (morning)
Lithographic printers	83s.
Bookbinders & Machine rulers	72s. 6d.
Stereotypers	60s.
First cutters	54s.
Second cutters	40s.
Monotype casters	48s.
Store polishers	47s. 6d.
Shop assistants	50s.
Charge hands	30s.
Women	12-27s. (depending on age)

Source: *LG*, Jan., Feb. 1920; *Watchword of Labour*, 13 Dec. 1919, 14 Feb. 1920; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 3, 17 Jan. 1920, U2217/A/4, CCCA.

The advent of proletarian power

On 16 April, Irish dockers launched an initiative that demonstrated Labour's capacity to advance workers' interests outside the sphere of industrial relations. By order of the ITUC, the ITGWU and the NUDL launched a national embargo on the exportation of bacon, butter and live pigs following the British Government's promise to decontrol food prices. Congress warned merchants that if they did not fix prices at a reasonable level then the workers would seize control of industry and do so themselves.¹¹⁵ The stoppage was 'strictly observed' in Cork.¹¹⁶ Syndicalism's influence on the dockers is obvious here. Syndicalists championed a decentralised brand of socialism where workers' democratic control of the means of production, distribution and exchange were the defining features of a more just social order.

The trade unions were viewed as both the chief agency of class struggle in the *present* and the embryo of the new hoped-for classless society in the *future*. . . they were anticipated to become an organ of economic and industrial administration in the post-revolution society. . . the guiding and most important principle was that management of production should occur at the base of society, not at its summit, with decisions flowing upward from below. . . instead of a political state apparatus, the only form of government would be the economic administration of industry exercised directly by workers themselves through the unions.¹¹⁷

On 3 May, the embargo was called off after merchants agreed to maintain control-era prices on bacon and butter.¹¹⁸ Even conservative news outlets were impressed with this display of proletarian power.¹¹⁹ For the employers, the embargo was proof that Irish Labour was irredeemably Bolshevik and the culmination of the descent into anarchy that 1920 had brought. Government inefficacy was equally depressing. The power of Irish employers had been steadily shrinking since 1917 and Labour was now openly attacking the basis of capitalism. They desperately sought an answer but found none. Wartime state intervention had deepened Irish employer class consciousness by reinvigorating their federations; the growth of trade unionism had a similar effect. The war had generated a shift in attitudes that led many to grudgingly recognise the unions. But they remained firmly opposed to direct action and felt increasingly isolated by government inactivity against Labour's law breaking. Only political stability could give them what they wanted.¹²⁰

More white-collar militancy

Militancy among assistants and clerks remained one of the era's defining features. In March, the ICWU brought out the Steam Packet Company's clerical staff for an increase and union recognition. The clerks received strong financial support from their fellow-workers, skilled and unskilled alike. The strike lasted for over six weeks and demonstrated that militancy was not the sole preserve of the manual sectors. The company was forced to recognise the ICWU.¹²¹ Charges were brought against several strikers for intimidating scabs but were dismissed in court.¹²² Ireland's first ever teachers' strike was another proclamation of the zeitgeist. On 3 May, the Association of Secondary Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) brought out its Cork branch in pursuit of an extra £80 a year, claiming that they had only received increases of 14 per cent since 1914. After a week, the Catholic Headmasters' Association capitulated and granted a £75 increase. Three weeks after that, the Christian Brothers did the same which settled the dispute.¹²³

Syndicalism drove the ITGWU to try and unite all workers and to spread itself to the centres of white-collar 'respectability'. From 27 May to 1 July, it led a strike of Prudential Insurance Company agents for a 20s. top-up on their 60s. wage. Modified improvements were granted.¹²⁴ The Transport Union took over the Southern Law Clerks' Association and negotiated improved rates for the legal clerks (see Table 2. 10). Subsuming this union was a victory for the ITGWU, as the legal clerks had considered joining the ICWU. In June, with CTC support, the Part-Time Teachers' Association sought an increase to make pay 150 per cent over pre-1914 levels.¹²⁵ By now, the Steam Packet Company's salaried staff had attained sizeable gains from what they had in January 1919, especially those at the lower end. Most were on over 50 per cent more and some were now paid over 100 per cent more.¹²⁶ In April 1920, the RCA threatened all-out strike on the Irish railways from 3 May if the agreement reached in August 1919, which gave the clerks substantial concessions, was not implemented by the companies. A strike of 3,000 railway clerks and stationmasters was deferred when the Ministry of Transport facilitated a series of conferences to resolve the dispute. After six weeks of arduous talks, the same conditions as prevailed in Britain were applied to Ireland. Irish railway clerks obtained eleven months of arrears in a lump sum and a wage increase. Drivers obtained 14s. a week more and firemen 11s.¹²⁷ Though strictly a temporary phenomenon, white-collar militancy aided the cohesion of the local wages' movement. Tradesmen and labourers were happy to assist their comrades in the professions, helping to force employers to review their wages policy.¹²⁸

Table 2. 10: Wage Scale obtained by the ITGWU for Cork Law Clerks, June 1920

Position	Wage
First Year	15s.
Second Year	22s. 6d.
Third Year	30s.
Fourth Year	37s. 6d.
Fifth Year	45s.
Sixth Year	52s. 6d.
Seventh Year	60s.
Eighth Year	65s.
Ninth Year	70s.
Over Ninth Year and First Clerks	75s.
Managing Clerks	80s.

Source: *Watchword of Labour*, 5 June 1920.

The peak of the wages' movement

The UK economy continued to boom through the spring and summer of 1920, enabling the unions to get their final concessions from employers. On 17 April 1920, the bakers went out for higher wages. The employers offered to submit the claim to arbitration under the Conciliation Board or to the Ministry of Labour, but this was refused. The strike dragged on for nearly six weeks and was marred by the violence of old with windows smashed and employer property damaged. The industrious Dowling negotiated a settlement on 27 May. However, a new conflict between the vanmen and bakers emerged two days later and resulted in the latter continuing their strike.¹²⁹ Unwilling to become embroiled in an inter-union dispute, the CTC referred the question to a Dáil Éireann court of arbitration whose ruling was accepted by all.¹³⁰ That the trades council would refer such disputes to the Dáil, an illegal parliament since September 1919, and not the British Ministry of Labour is emblematic of Cork labour's political transformation since 1916.

On 3 May, the wages movement reached its zenith in the building trade and acquired its workers' final improvement for many years. A general stoppage in the trade had been threatened but Dowling's intervention convinced the master builders to acquiesce.¹³¹ Table 2. 11 shows that the new rates compared well to other towns and cities, especially for labourers. The Capuchin's value to Labour was also on display when he resolved a six-week engineers' strike in mid-July on the men's terms, procuring for them a sizable 25s. increase. Cork engineers now had a 105s. wage, the highest in the UK (see Table C, Appendix 6).¹³² In mid-May, a strike of bar assistants was planned for a 50 per cent increase and a forty-eight-hour

week. They settled for a fifty-six-hour week and wages of 90s. for charge hands, 75s. for second hands and 52s. 6d. for junior hands.¹³³

Table 2. 11: Building Trade Hourly Rates (in pence) & Working Hours in Ireland, 1920

Locality	B	M	C&J	S	Plmbr	Plstr	Pntr	L	Hrs
Cork	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	20	47
Drogheda	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47½
Dublin	26	25½	25½	25½	25¾	25½	25	19	44
Galway	-	19	19	-	-	19	19	-	-
Killarney	18	18	18	-	-	18	-	12	-
Limerick	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	19	47
Cobh	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	20	-
Waterford	20	20	20	-	20	20	19½	17	50
Wexford	18	18	18	-	-	18	-	-	47

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 9.

The ITGWU was flourishing amidst the proletarian revolt and it remained the union most feared by Irish employers. Its pugnaciousness on the docks was rewarded with an impressive new wage scale from 10 May (see Table A, Appendix 6).¹³⁴ Assistants continued to assert themselves and make gains. In mid-July, the Cork Grocers' Assistants and Allied Trades Association withdrew the labour of tobacconists' assistants for the abolition of Sunday work.¹³⁵ The following month, the IDAA threatened to bring out 600-700 drapers' assistants if its claims for better wages and conditions were not met. Consequently, in November retail assistants and clerks were granted an additional 25 and 33⅓ per cent respectively.¹³⁶ From late August, the union led a seven-week strike of hardware assistants for an enhanced wage scale. With the intermediary skills of Dowling and Deputy Lord Mayor Donal O'Callaghan, the assistants were granted the bulk of their demands.¹³⁷

Wages continued their ascent until the latter part of the year. The bacon trade granted a 5s. advance and Goulding's gave its carters and labourers 10s., making wages 73s. and 72s. respectively. Brewery labourers got their last advance in October. Their new 70s. rate lasted until 1926, but numbers were severely reduced in the meantime. The coopers secured a 97s. rate in May 1920. It was their last advance for many years, though they continued to secure reductions in hours and productivity bonuses.¹³⁸ The Typographical Association received advances of 10s. in August and 5s. in November. Like the coopers, it would be several years before their pay was improved again, though new rates would be conceded for apprentices.¹³⁹ Peak wages in Cork compared favourably to other localities, as Tables 2. 12 and 2. 13 reveal

for the cooperage and printing trades (see appendix 7 for other trades). This was the high-water mark for the Irish trade union movement. The massive expansion in output that the First World War necessitated had become a crisis of overproduction in the summer of 1920. By the winter of that year, the post-war economic boom had come to a sudden stop and a deep recession had begun. Across Ireland, pay improvements largely ended and it would be many years before most workers began to see advances again. Employers sought to cut wages and shed surplus labour in response to falling prices and reduced demand. Defending hard earned gains was now the imperative.¹⁴⁰

Table 2. 12: Coopers' Wages and Hours in Ireland, 1920

City	Wage	Hours
Belfast	101s. 10d.	47
Dublin	98s.	44
Derry	97s. 11d.	47
Cork	97s.	47
Waterford	81s. 3d.	50
Limerick	81s. 1¾d.	47½

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 137.

Table 2. 13: Printers' Wages in Irish Towns and Cities, 1920¹⁴¹

Locality	Jobbing, weekly & bi-weekly news	Evening news	Morning & tri-weekly news
Dublin	92s. 6d.	96s.	108s.
Cork	90s.	92s. 6d.	98s.
Limerick	81s. 6d.	84s.	89s. 6d.
Waterford, Drogheda, Dundalk, Skibbereen	76s.	78s.	84s.
Galway	73s. 6d.	76s.	81s. 6d.
Killarney	71s.	73s. 6d.	79s.
Bandon, Youghal	68s. 6d.	71s.	76s. 6d.

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 123.

Chapter Notes and References

- ¹ Devine, *Organising History: A Centenary of SIPTU, 1909-2009* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2009), p. 93; McCarthy, *Trade Unions in Ireland*, p. 53.
- ² O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 23; Arthur Mitchell, *Revolutionary Government in Ireland: Dáil Éireann* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1995), p. 242.
- ³ Ernesto Screpanti, 'Long Cycles in Strike Activity: An Empirical Investigation', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. XXV, no. 1, 1987, pp. 99-124; Marcel van der Linden & Wayne Thorpe, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', in Marcel van der Linden & Wayne Thorpe (eds.), *Revolutionary Syndicalism: an International Perspective* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990), pp. 5-7; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 77-82.
- ⁴ Van der Linden, 'Second Thoughts on Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 74-75; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 88-92.
- ⁵ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, pp. 175-200, 224; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 189; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 95-104; van der Linden & Thorpe, 'Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 7-12. Houston, a native of Donegal, had cut his teeth in Irish trade unionism through the Belfast Trades Council. In November 1918 he was sent to Belfast and replaced by Thomas O'Donovan.
- ⁶ CE, 15 Jan. 1917; City of Cork Steam Packet Co. minutes, 22 Jan. 1917, U370/A/10, CCCA.
- ⁷ CE, 16, 19 Mar., 25, 26 June, 2, 3, 4, 7 July 1917.
- ⁸ Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 20 Mar., 1, 12, 20, 24, 25, 30 Apr. 1917, TU/1/37, CCCA; CE, 31 Mar.-13, 17, 20, 24, 25, 30 Apr. 1917. Over 400 of the 900 on strike were carpenters, inclusive of the 144 engaged in munitions work.
- ⁹ Van der Linden, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', p. 56.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 55.
- ¹¹ Wayne Thorpe, *The Workers Themselves: Syndicalism and International Labour, 1913-1923* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1989), pp. 29-30.
- ¹² Cited in Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 155.
- ¹³ Ibid., p. 163.
- ¹⁴ New Way, Mar.-June 1917.
- ¹⁵ CE, 23, 25, 27, 28, 31 July, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15 Aug. 1917; City of Cork Steam Packet Co. minutes, 2 Apr., 7 May, 11, 25 June, 16, 23 July, 13 Aug. 1917, U370/A/10, CCCA. By this time, the NUDL had renamed itself the National Union of Dock Labourers and Riverside Workers in Great Britain and Ireland, having changed its name in 1912. However, the union was still commonly called the NUDL in many quarters. As such, it will be referred to as the NUDL throughout. For an account of this change of name, see Taplin, *The Dockers' Union*, p. 104.
- ¹⁶ CE, 13 Aug. 1917, 1-3, 13-20 Oct. 1917.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 2 Oct 1917.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 21, 24 Nov. 1917; arbitration award between the ITGWU and Messrs. John Wallis & Sons, 20 Nov. 1917, LAB 2/143/IC1803/3/1917, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; various letters of correspondence between the ITGWU and the Ministry of Labour, May, June, Sept. 1917, LAB 2/143/IC1803/2/1917, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. While the new wage was 6s. higher, the ITGWU's claim was for 8s. The company's counteroffer was 2s., which was rejected.
- ¹⁹ Keith Harding, 'The Irish Issue in the British Labour Movement', pp. 183-184.
- ²⁰ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 191; Lahiff, *Industry and Labour in Cork*, p. 191; *Irish Opinion*, 5, 12, 19 Jan. 1918; ITGWU, *Wage Earners' War News*, Nos. 9-11, Ms. 33,718/B(39-41), William O'Brien Papers, NLI.
- ²¹ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 162; Hunt, *The National Federation of Women Workers*, pp. 132-133; IWWU executive committee minutes, 24 Apr., 20, 27 Nov. 1919, undated meeting in April 1920, 13 Apr., 27 May 1920, 10 Nov. 1921, 5, 15 Jan., 4 May, 17, 31 Aug., 9 Nov. 1922, 15 Feb. 1923, 19/IWWU/1-4, Irish Labour History Museum (ILHM); CE, 9 Aug. 1920. Cork's IWWU branch regularly collapsed and re-established itself over the coming years.
- ²² CE, 3 Sept. 1919.
- ²³ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, pp. 184, 207; Devine, *Organising History*, p. 93. It had branches for carters, storemen, tramwaymen and builders' labourers.
- ²⁴ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 162; CE, 29 Jan.-4 Mar. 1918; ITGWU, *Wage Earners' War News*, nos. 8, 12, 23, 8.2-3, box no. 3, U626, Alfred Dobbin papers, CCCA.
- ²⁵ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 104-111; Emmet O'Connor, *Big Jim Larkin: Hero or Wrecker?* (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2015), pp. 93-94.
- ²⁶ Van der Linden, 'Second Thoughts on Revolutionary Syndicalism', in *Transnational Labour History*, pp. 75-76. See also Francis Shor, 'Masculine Power and Virile Syndicalism: A Gendered Analysis of the IWW in

Australia', *Labour History*, No. 63, 1992, pp. 83-99; and Lucien van der Walt, "'All Workers Regardless Of Craft, Race Or Color': The First Wave of IWW Activity and Influence in South Africa", in *Wobblies of the World*, pp. 271-288.

²⁷ Arbitration award between the ITGWU and J.W. Green & Co., 5 Jan. 1918, LAB 2/1351/C7626/1918, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; letters of correspondence between the Ministry of Labour and the ITGWU, 13 Nov.-21 Dec. 1917, LAB 2/424/IC7463/1917, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. The workers at Ryan's applied for 6s. more for men and 5s. for boys. The workers at Green's were awarded 6s.

²⁸ Van der Linden, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 57-58.

²⁹ *CE*, 16, 19, 21, 24 Jan., 8 Feb. 1918; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1918, LAB 34/18, Ministry of Labour record, UKNA. Apprentices were paid on a graduated scale depending on years served. The painters got increases of 2s. for first to third years and 3s. for fourth to sixth years

³⁰ For an example of the strictures of apprentice life, see indenture of Henry Marsh to the Painting Trade, June 1916, U233, UCC Manuscripts Collection, UCCA; Charles Callan, *Painters in Union: The Irish National Painters' & Decorators' Trade Union and its forerunners* (Dublin: Watchword, 2008), p. 154.

³¹ In April, apprentices at the breweries got increases proportional to the senior staff. A 6s. weekly wage became 8s., 12s. became 16s. and 15s. became 20s. Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 27 Feb., 5, 9, 16, 19, 25, 28 Mar. 1918, U218/A/8, CCCA; Murphy's brewery minutes, 2, 9 Mar., 12 Apr. 1918, BL/BC/MB/206, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA; National Union of General Workers, First Quarterly Report for 1918, TU/GENERALA/1/11, WCML.

³² Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 8 June 1918, U217/A/4, CCCA; Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 30 July 1918, U218/A/8, CCCA; *Typographical Circular*, Aug. 1918, MSS.39A/TA/4/1/47, Typographical Association collection, MRC, UW; Murphy's brewery minutes, 30 July 1918, BL/BC/MB/206, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA.

³³ Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 7 Dec. 1917, 31 Mar., 1 Apr. 1918, TU/1/37, CCCA; *CE*, 3 Apr. 1918; Callan, *Painters in Union*, p. 154. In December 1917, the masons had wanted a rate of 1s. 4d.

³⁴ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 164.

³⁵ *CE*, 28 Mar., 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15 Apr. 1918. The breadvan drivers accepted an offer very similar to that put forward by the employers when they offered wages of 39s. and 40s. The men also won a 4s. expense for those going to the country, a minimum wage for boys and an improved work schedule. See Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 199.

³⁶ Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 6, 20 Apr., 13, 22 May, 8 June 1918, U217/A/4, CCCA; *Typographical Circular*, Aug. 1918, MSS.39A/TA/4/1/47, Typographical Association collection, Modern Records Centre (MRC), University of Warwick (UW).

³⁷ The former rate applies to the *Examiner* the latter to the *Constitution*.

³⁸ *Irish Opinion*, 27 July, 3 Aug. 1918; *CE*, 29 May, 11 July 1918; *The Shop Assistant*, 9, 23 Feb., 17 Aug. 1918;

³⁹ *CE*, 29 June-3 July 1918; RIC CI for Cork ER, MRs for June and July 1918, CO 904/105, UCC; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1917, LAB 34/36, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁴⁰ Van der Linden 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary of Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 54-56.

⁴¹ *CE*, 27 July, 27, 28, 30 Aug., 7, 9, 11 Sept. 1918; award of the Committee on Production, 10 July 1918, LAB 2/127/IC1244/8A/1918, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁴² *CE*, 1, 29 Nov. 1918; Lyons & Co. minutes, 4 Sept., 17, 24 Oct., 8 Nov., 4 Dec. 1918, U354/9, CCCA. The drapers' assistants' secured a 33½ per cent bonus for porters and assistants in October and an annual bonus worth £25 from December.

⁴³ *CE*, 20 Dec. 1918; Woodford & Bourne minutes, 23 Dec. 1918, BL/BC/WB/53, Woodford Bourne collection, UCCA. The grocers' assistants also entertained the prospect of strike. The coalporters had planned to cease work on 23 November if their demands were not met. See *CE*, 14 Nov. 1918.

⁴⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Oct. 1918; *Irish Independent*, 28 Oct. 1918. From 1916-18, Cork's asylum attendants were organised into a local body, 'The Cork Asylum Attendants' Association, before that body merged into the IAWU. Prior to 1916, they were organised by the National Asylum Workers' Union. See Ciaran Mulholland and Michael Walker, 'Our cause is a just one': trade union organisation in Irish mental asylums, 1896-1917, *Saothar*, no. 38, 2013, pp. 23-26.

⁴⁵ Arbitration award between the NUDL and the CEF Coal Section, 5 Apr. 1918, LAB 2/125/IC1438/1918, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; *LG*, Mar. 1919. In March 1918, men who discharged coal with buckets per awarded 9½d. per ton while those who did so for holders, winchers, etc. were awarded 11d. per ton. Workers who discharged coal with baskets for storing were awarded 1s. 2d. per ton.

⁴⁶ *A.S.E. Monthly Journal and Report*, Nov. 1918, MSS.259/ASE/4/1/50, ASE collection, MRC, UW; *Irish Independent*, 20 Sept. 1918; *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Oct. 1918; *CE*, 5, 19 Dec. 1918.

⁴⁷ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 194-195.

⁴⁸ *The Shop Assistant*, 21, 28 Dec. 1918.

⁴⁹ Bowley, *Prices and Wages*, p. 35; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 194.

- ⁵⁰ CE, 1, 3, 9, 19 Jan. 1919; *Voice of Labour*, 8, 15 Feb. 1919; letter from RIC Assistant CI to Cork Town Clerk, 28 Dec. 1918, CSORP/1919/5854, Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, NAI.
- ⁵¹ Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 18 Jan., 15 Mar. 1919, U217/A/4, CCCA.
- ⁵² Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 39-45, 78. For histories of the 1919 Winnipeg general strike, see Kurt Korneski, 'Prairie Fire: The Winnipeg General Strike', *Labour/Le Travail*, vol. 45, Spring 2000, pp. 259-266; and Benjamin Isitt, 'Searching for Workers' Solidarity: The One Big Union and the Victoria General Strike of 1919', *Labour/Le Travail*, vol. 60, Autumn 2007, pp. 9-42.
- ⁵³ CE, 14 Dec. 1917, 15, 17 Feb. 1919; Patricia Curtin-Kelly, *An Ornament to the City: Holy Trinity Church and the Capuchin Order* (Dublin: The History Press Ltd., 2015), pp. 77, 114.
- ⁵⁴ Cork Conciliation Board minutes, 1 Mar. 1919, Fr. Thomas Dowling papers, Capuchin Archives, Dublin; CE, 2, 3 Jan., 22 Feb., 5 Mar. 1919; *Drapers' Assistant*, Feb. 1919, Vol. 16, Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, 25 Mar. 1919; LG, Apr. 1919; *Voice of Labour*, 22 Feb. 1919. The RCA's Cork branch had a membership of 220, about 200 of which went on strike. For details of the agreement.
- ⁵⁶ Like most of Europe, Australasia and the Americas, Britain experienced an intense period of working-class unrest in the post-war years.
- ⁵⁷ Most, though not all of this document is cited in O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 72. The rest is taken from War Cabinet minutes, 5 Aug. 1919, WC 606A, CAB 23/15, War Cabinet papers, Cabinet Office records, UKNA.
- ⁵⁸ See, for example, *Intercourse between Bolshevism and Sinn Féin*, 1921, Cmd. 1326, XXIX, UKPP; and Richard Dawson Bates, *Red Terror and Green: The Sinn Féin Bolshevik Movement* (London: Murray, 1920).
- ⁵⁹ Cited in O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 73.
- ⁶⁰ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 198-199; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 1 Mar. 1919, U217/A/4, CCCA.
- ⁶¹ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 74; *Irish Independent*, 22, 24, Feb., 1, 20 Mar. 1919.
- ⁶² Van der Linden & Thorpe, 'Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 11-12, 19.
- ⁶³ CE, 11, 12, 18 May 1894, 24 Sept. 1919; Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 18 Feb., 2, 9, 23 Apr., 24 Sept., 1, 7 Oct. 1919, U218/A/8, CCCA; Murphy's brewery minutes, 26 Feb., 9 Apr., 26 Sept. 1919, BL/BC/MB/207-208, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA. In February, the coopers agreed that their wages would always be 3s. above what the carpenters had.
- ⁶⁴ CE, 3 Apr. 1919; Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 13 Dec. 1918, 16, 30, 31 Mar., 3, 6, 22 Apr. 1919, TU/1/37, CCCA; *Workmen's Register*, 1914-24, BL/BC/MB/334, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA. The settlement had disappointed the masons who in December had decided to push for a 5s. per hour increase to make their rate 1s. 6d. The tradesmen were also given 12s. more in their 'country money' travel expense.
- ⁶⁵ CE, 2, 3, 5, 7 May, 23, 26 Sept. 1919. The carpenters and joiners rejected an offer of 1s. 7d. for a forty-seven-hour week. A proportionate increase in country money was also given..
- ⁶⁶ CE, 23, 26 Sept., 16 Oct., 1 Nov. 1919; Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 30 Sept., 29 Oct., 4 Nov. 1919, TU/1/37, CCCA;
- ⁶⁷ National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association, *Annual Report for 1919*, HD 6661 W8.19, TUC Library, London Metropolitan University. This group included cabinetmakers, upholsters, chairmakers, carvers, turners, polishers and machinemen.
- ⁶⁸ CE, 2 May; RIC CI for the Cork ER, MR for May 1919, CO 904/109, UCC. The following CTC affiliates partook in the May Day procession: assurance agents, asylum workers, brushmakers, bookbinders and machine rulers, brewery workers, breadvan drivers, bakers, boot and shoe operatives, boilermakers, confectioners, carpenters, coachmakers, clerical workers, coopers, chemists' assistants, drapers' assistants, electricians, engineers, furnishing workers, farriers, grocers' assistants, gasworkers, barmen, hairdressers and barbers, full-time and part-time teachers, journeymen butchers, lithographic printers, stonemasons, drivers and mechanics, musicians, sailors and firemen, dockers, railwaymen, painters, Board of Guardians employees, postmen, plumbers, railway clerks, Royal Liver agents, shipping and transport clerks, stonecutters, slaters and plasterers, shipwrights, shop assistants, warehousemen and clerks, steam engine makers, typographers, woodcutters and machinists, tailors and women workers (the most recent affiliates and were represented by the British-based National Federation of Women Workers).
- ⁶⁹ The union's six sections were: dockers, quay workers, Corporation employees and tramwaymen; mill workers, Goulding's employees, seed and manure workers, and gardeners; coal and general carriers, steamship men, breadvan drivers, undertakers' drivers, coffin-makers and general carpenters; provision trade workers; printers, insurance agents, pawnbrokers' assistants, harness-makers, barbers' assistants, clerks; and warehousemen, drapers' porters, mineral water workers and grocers' assistants. It also organised workers in the oil and colour, laundry and hardware trades. See CE, 2 May, 1 Dec. 1919; and Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 237.
- ⁷⁰ Dominic Haugh, 'The ITGWU in Limerick, 1917-22', *Saothar*, No. 31, 2006, p. 31.

⁷¹ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 141, 165-166. The ITGWU's own Connolly Memorial Band also partook in the rally.

⁷² In March 1920, the Citizen Army was still looking to restart in Cork and believed that establishing itself in the shop steward movement as the best means of doing so. Nothing appears to have come of this. ICA executive minutes, 10, 17 Feb., 10, 19 Mar., 16, 23 Apr., 1 June 1919, 7 Mar. 1920, ILHS.

⁷³ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 166. According to James Allan Busby, both Citizen Army scout divisions caused a split within Fianna Éireann's boy and girl scout ranks. See James Allan Busby, WS 1628, Bureau of Military records, NAI.

⁷⁴ CE, 28 May-2 Aug. 1919.

⁷⁵ CE, 13, 15 May 1919; *Voice of Labour*, 24 May 1919.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 15, 26 May 1919; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 202.

⁷⁷ CE, 29 May-5 July 1919; Lyons & Co. minutes, 4 Sept., 17, 24 Oct., 8 Nov., 4 Dec. 1918, 28 Mar., 4 Apr., 27 May, 30 June 1919, U354/9, CCCA; RIC CI for Cork ER, MR for July 1919, CO 904/109, UCC. The women at the factory were organised by the ASTT, whose women's section was organised by Josephine Bradley. A small strike of three or four members took place at Bailey & Co. at the same time and was not resolved until August. See *Drapers' Assistant*, vol. 16, June, Sept. 1919.

⁷⁸ CE, 21-30 June, 1-5 July 1919; RIC CI for the Cork ER, MR for June 1919, CO 904/109, UCC.

⁷⁹ IMTA Cork branch minutes, 4, 14 Feb., 21, 25 Mar. 1919, SM629, CCCA; *Journal of the ASTT*, Sept. 1919, L20, WCML. The proposed 70s. rate represented a 43 per cent advance.

⁸⁰ IMTA Cork branch minutes, 17, 19, 25 June, 4 July, 17 Oct., 2 Dec. 1919, SM629, CCCA.

⁸¹ CE, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21 May, 22 Aug. 1919; *Voice of Labour*, 24 May 1919. The ASTT also wanted an additional 7s. 6d. for those aged sixteen and over and 2s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. for apprentices depending on time served. The workers concerned were dressmakers, milliners, bodice makers, coat makers, ladies' tailors, children's dressmakers, skirt and blouse makers, machinists, alteration hands and underclothing makers. Their eight-hour-day was to stretch from 9am-6pm with an hour for dinner.

⁸² CE, 17, 19 May 1919; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1919, LAB 34/37, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁸³ CE, 23, 27, 30 June, 12 July 1919; Irish National Union of Vintners' and Grocers' Allied Trade Assistants executive committee minutes, 13 July 1919, Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House.

⁸⁴ A.S.E. *Monthly Journal and Report*, July, Sept. 1919, Sept. 1920, MSS.259/ASE/4/1/51-52, ASE collection, MRC, UW; Murphy's brewery minutes, 13, 15 Aug. 1919, BL/BC/MB, Murphy's brewery, UCCA; CE, 3 July 1919. The ASE also sought a graduated scale from 10-40s. for apprentices, which it attained in August 1920. The scale was as follows: 10s., 15s., 25s., 33s. and 40s.

⁸⁵ RIC CI for Cork ER, MR for July 1919, CO 904/109, UCC; Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 162-163; John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the Anti-Sinn Féin Society* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), p. 93. Dobbin's Protestantism and Unionism were common features of Irish employers until the early twentieth century. Cork Protestants had traditionally been disproportionately bourgeois relative to their small numbers. For the origins development and growing importance of the Irish bourgeoisie, see Andy Bielenberg, 'The Industrial Elite in Ireland from the Industrial Revolution to the First World War', in Fintan Lane (ed.), *Politics, Society and the Middle Class in Modern Ireland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 148-169.

⁸⁶ CE, 30 July, 1 Aug., 22 Aug.-8 Sept. 1919; *Watchword of Labour*, 18 Oct. 1919; RIC CI for Cork ER, MRs for Aug.-Oct. 1919, CO 904/109-110, *The British in Ireland* microfilm series, Boole Library, UCC. Afterwards, the ITGWU continued to agitate at the gristmills, seeking 15s. more for men and 8s. for women, girls and boys, as well as the forty-four-hour week, better overtime rates and a fortnight's paid holidays. At the tannery, the workers were compelled to return to work after the employers threatened to close the company.

⁸⁷ CE, 24 Sept. 1919; Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 24 Sept., 1, 7 Oct. 1919, U218/A/8, CCCA; Murphy's brewery minutes, 26 Feb., 9 Apr., 26 Sept. 1919, BL/BC/MB/207-208, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA. In February, the coopers had agreed that their wages would always be 3s. above what the carpenters had.

⁸⁸ Murphy's brewery minutes, 31 Dec. 1919, BL/BC/MB/207; *Workmen's Register*, 1913-24, BL/BC/MB/334, both found in Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA; CE, 20 Dec. 1919.

⁸⁹ CE, 30 June, 24-31 July, 2, 4, 18 Aug. 1919.

⁹⁰ CE, 1, 4, 9, 13, 23, 27 Sept., 7 Oct. 1919.

⁹¹ Lyons & Co. minutes, 30 Sept., 9, 15 Oct., 14 Nov. 1919, U354/9, CCCA; *ibid.*, 25 June, 18, 21 Oct., 6-8, 11, 15, 22 Nov. 1919. It was the IDAA's Cork branch secretary, L.J. Duffy, who demanded the new rates.

⁹² CE, 4 Sept., 12, 15, 27 Nov., 15 Dec. 1919; Lyons & Co. minutes, 19 Dec. 1919, U354/9, CCCA; RIC CI for Cork ER, MR for Nov. 1919, CO 904/110, UCC; *The Drapers' Assistant*, Vol. 16, Jan. 1920, Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House.

⁹³ CE, 1 July, 16 Aug., 27 Nov. 1919. A stoppage in the trades was threatened unless all employers implemented the new conditions by 27 November. The new scale appears to have pertained only to men even though women had been organised by the Grocers' Assistants since January 1919. See CE, 14 Jan. 1919.

- ⁹⁴ These rates were consequent of a strike in the hardware stores
- ⁹⁵ The increase at O'Connell's was the second the staff received that year, making their annual wages £42 higher than the year before.
- ⁹⁶ *Rights: Journal of the Irish Clerical and Allied Workers' Union*, Sept.-Oct. 1919, ILB 3381 p, NLI; *CE*, 13, 16, 18 Jan., 19 July 1919. The ICWU was formed in Dublin November 1917 by disgruntled Irish members of the RCA. See *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Nov. 1917.
- ⁹⁷ *CE*, 1, 3, 22, 29 Nov. 1919, 13 Feb., 19 May, 5 June 1920. Nurses working seven days a week at this time. In 1968, the Cork Nurses' Association later merged with the Irish Nurses' and Midwives' Organisation, which was also founded in 1919. See *CE*, 30 Apr. 1968.
- ⁹⁸ Gordon McMullan, 'The Irish Bank 'strike', 1919', *Saothar*, vol. 5, 1979, pp. 42-45; *LG*, Apr. 1920; *ibid*, 22, 24, 25 Nov., 3 Dec. 1919; *Cork Constitution*, 19, 23 Nov. 1919. As per the agreement, in February 1921 bank clerks had their bonus augmented by another 8 per cent, making the bonus 28 per cent in total.
- ⁹⁹ *CE*, 22 Nov., 2-20 Dec. 1919; RIC CI for Cork ER, MR for Dec. 1919, CO 904/110, UCC. In April, the assistants, still members of the Irish Chemists' Assistants' Association, had been given a wage increase with Dowling's aid. Letter from Cork branch of the Irish Chemists' Assistants' Association to Fr. Thomas Dowling, 3 Apr. 1919, Fr. Thomas Dowling Papers, Capuchin Archives, Dublin.
- ¹⁰⁰ Cited in Harding, 'The Irish Issue in the British Labour Movement', p. 185. For the resolution of sympathy the passed by the NAUSAWC's Cork branch, see *CE*, 26 Nov. 1919.
- ¹⁰¹ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, p. 64.
- ¹⁰² *CE*, 30 Oct., 1, 3, 4, 13 Nov., 15 Dec. 1919; 'Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 201; *LG*, Jan. 1920. The forty-eight-hour week had been agreed to at a national level in June 1919 but was not implemented by Cork employers. See *LG*, July 1919.
- ¹⁰³ *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, Cmd. 1253, XL, 1921, UKPP, p. 100.
- ¹⁰⁴ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 202; *LG*, Dec. 1919; *Watchword of Labour*, 13 Dec. 1919; Murphy's brewery minutes, 4, 6 Dec. 1919, BL/BC/MB/208, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 2-7 9, 15 Feb. 1919; *LG*, Mar., Aug. 1920. Dowling was still the Conciliation Board's chairman at this time. In January, he announced his resignation from the role, only to reverse his decision after appeals from both the CTC and the CEF. See, *CE*, 23 Jan., 5, 12 Feb. 1920.
- ¹⁰⁶ *CE*, 16, 19 Feb. 1920; *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 13 Mar. 1920.
- ¹⁰⁷ *CE*, 12 Feb., 6, 9 Mar. 1920; letters from the board of Beamish & Crawford to the Cork Breweries Workmen's Trade Union, 16 Feb. 1918, 10, 28 Jan., 5 Feb., 9, 15 May, 11, 19, 22, 24 Dec. 1919, 19 Jan., 3 Feb. 1920, U18/Letter Book 1911-25, Beamish & Crawford collection, CCCA; Murphy's brewery board minutes, 24 Nov. 1919, 19 Jan., 3 Feb. 1920, BL/BC/MB/208, Murphy's brewery collection UCCA.
- ¹⁰⁸ *CE*, 16 Mar. 1920; Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 11, 18, 20 Feb. 1920, U218/A/8, CCCA; *Watchword of Labour*, 21 Aug. 1920; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 204; Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 2 Mar. 1920, TU/1/37, CCCA. The stonemasons also contributed financially to the strike.
- ¹⁰⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), p. 283.
- ¹¹⁰ *Workmen's Register*, BL/BC/MB/334; maltings' directors' minutes, 1917-26, BL/BC/MB/218, both found in Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA; *Register of Employees*, 1890-1939, U18/Acc2016/004, Beamish & Crawford brewery collection, CCCA. These pay differentials existed throughout the period. The maltsters' differential was 13s. (see Appendix 7) and the draymen's was 4s. Both worked a forty-eight-hour week.
- ¹¹¹ Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 7, 21, 28, 31 Aug. 1923, U218/A/8, CCCA; Ó Drisceoil & Ó Drisceoil, *The Murphy's Story*, pp. 84-85; Donal Ó Drisceoil & Diarmuid Ó Drisceoil, *Beamish & Crawford: The History of an Irish Brewery* (Cork: Collins Press, 2015), pp. 264-265, 291; *Irish Times*, 2-6 Oct. 1923.
- ¹¹² Cork Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 26 Apr., 10, 24 May, 7, 21, 28 June, 16, 19, 31 July 1919, U217/A/4, CCCA; *LG*, Aug. 1919, p. 343; National Wages Agreement for Ireland, 14 July 1919, LAB 83/1983, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. The Typographical Association's Cork branch had wanted 2s. 6d. more than was given.
- ¹¹³ Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 3 Jan. 1920, U217/A/4, CCCA.
- ¹¹⁴ *CE*, 23-28 Feb., 9, 20 Mar. 1920; *Derry Journal*, 28 Jan. 1921; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 31 Jan., 5, 21, 23, 28 Feb., 2-6, 15-16, 19 Mar., 24 Apr., 11, 25 Sept. 1920, 10 Dec. 1921, U217/A/4, CCCA; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 204-205.
- ¹¹⁵ *Irish Independent*, 16 May 1920; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-sixth annual meeting*, 1920, pp. 24-31, NLI.
- ¹¹⁶ *CE*, 20 Apr. 1920. For reports on the embargo in Cork, see *CE*, 19-24 Apr. 1920.
- ¹¹⁷ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 42-44.
- ¹¹⁸ *Irish Independent*, 16-27 Apr. 1920; *Freeman's Journal*, 16-27 Apr. 1920.
- ¹¹⁹ See, for example, *Londonderry Sentinel*, 24 Apr. 1920.
- ¹²⁰ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 74-76.

¹²¹ CE, 8, 20 Mar., 19 Apr. 1920.

¹²² Ibid., 10, 13 Apr. 1920.

¹²³ Ibid., 1, 3, 13, 14 May, 1 June 1920; *Irish School Weekly*, 15 May-5 June 1920; P.J.N. Riordan, 'The Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland, 1909-1968: some aspects of its growth and development' (UCC: MA, 1975), pp. 60-63; John Cunningham, *Unlikely Radicals: Irish post-primary teachers and the ASTI, 1909-2009* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2009), pp. 47-53; John Coolahan, *The ASTI and post-primary education in Ireland, 1909-1984* (Dublin: Cumann na Meánmhúinteoirí, 1984), pp. 48-55. For more details on the day-to-day events of the strike, see John Coolahan, 'The Association Of Secondary Teachers, Ireland and the secondary teachers' strike of 1920', *Saothar*, No. 10, 1984, pp. 43-59. The ASTI had been preparing for a strike since December 1919. See CE, 19 Dec. 1919.

¹²⁴ CE., 28 May, 10, 11, 18, 19, 22 June 1920; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1920, LAB 34/38, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

¹²⁵ CE, 26 June 1920.

¹²⁶ City of Cork Steam Packet Company, salary book for 1921-23, U370/F/194, CCCA.

¹²⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 18-23 Aug. 1919, 23 Apr.-3 June, 21 July 1920; *Irish Independent*, 18-23 Aug. 1919, 23 Apr.-3 June 1920; *Belfast Newsletter*, 1 May 1920. See CE, 16 Aug. 1919 for support issued to the Irish Council by the RCA's Cork branch.

¹²⁸ *Watchword of Labour*, 5 June 1920; Lahiff, 'Labour and Industry in Cork', p. 206.

¹²⁹ CE, 20 Apr., 14, 28, 31 May 1920; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 32.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 2, 4 June 1920. The *Examiner* praised the CTC for its referring the dispute to the Dáil.

¹³¹ Ibid. 30 Apr., 1, 10, 11, 13 May 1920; LG, June, July 1920. The strike was due to begin on 1 May.

¹³² CE, 3 June, 15 July 1920.

¹³³ Ibid., 14, 15, 17 May 1920; *Rights: The Irish Labour Review*, 21 May 1920, Ir 300 p 47, NLI.

¹³⁴ LG, June, July 1920; *Watchword of Labour*, 15 Nov. 1919

¹³⁵ CE, 17, 27 July, 3 Aug. 1920.

¹³⁶ Lyons & Co. minutes, 30 Sept., 13 Oct., 24 Nov. 1920, U354/9, CCCA; IDAA executive committee minutes, 18 Aug. 1920, Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House. In October, the company offered raises of 20 per cent raise to men employed in retail and 15 per cent to women, and to convert the 25 per cent of the bonus given to wholesale workers into salary. The board also offered that the wholesale bonus be paid quarterly instead of half-yearly. On 1 October 1920, the *Cork Examiner* reported that the CEF was considering locking out the assistants after protracted negotiations were faltering.

¹³⁷ CE, 24, 27 Aug., 7, 15 Sept., 9, 11 Oct. 1920; minutes of T. Lyons & Co., 30 Sept. 1920, U354/9, CCCA. The IDAA wanted a scale that began at 20s. and rose to 110s. after eleven years, peaking at 120s for charge hands, senior departmental assistants and ledger clerks. See the abovementioned minutes for the full wage scale.

¹³⁸ Murphy's brewery board minutes, 7, 11 Oct., 2 Nov. 1920, BL/BC/MB/209, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA; Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 27 Apr., 2, 5 May 1920, U218/A/8, CCCA; *Workmen's Register*, BL/BC/MB/334, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA; Lahiff, 'Labour and Industry in Cork', p. 211.

¹³⁹ LG, Sept.- Dec. 1920; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 17, 31 July, 14, 28 Aug., 11 Sept., 20 Nov. 1920, U217/A/4, CCCA.; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 210.

¹⁴⁰ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 211.

¹⁴¹ The working hours for these wages are forty-eight for daywork and forty-five for nightwork.

3

The Death of the Workers' Republic: Class Conflict in Cork, 1921-24

In contrast to other parts of Ireland, the first eight months of 1921 were relatively peaceful for labour relations in Cork. As the slump took hold, employers sought to return to pre-1914 wages. Industrial disputes would increasingly end in defeat for workers as the employers gained the upper hand in the class war. The employers justified their actions by reference to cheaper prices. The cost-of-living index, weighed at 100 in July 1914, had peaked at 276 in November 1920 before dropping to 169 in March 1923.¹ But the slump coincided with the height of the war of independence, the civil war and the resulting political instability, meaning that employers had to delay their counterattack. When it was launched, it triggered Cork's biggest ever industrial crisis. Syndicalism's last major act in the city was to provide the ideology and the methodology to resist.

Wage increases in 1921 – the last sting of a dying wasp

Only two major stoppages took place between January and August 1921. The first was on the tramways from 1 February to 23 March for a 20s. raise. The men obtained 5s. Dowling was involved in ending the strike. The CTC accused the engineering managers' union, the British-based Electrical Power Engineers' Association, of blacklegging.² The other strike took place in the printing trade. It began on 5 February when the ITGWU brought out skilled and semiskilled workers in the *Cork Examiner's* machine and dispatch rooms for better pay. The *Cork Constitution's* staff were also involved. The Typographical Association remained at work and thus it too incurred allegations of scabbing. The dispute ended on 1 March when the workers accepted smaller improvements. The *Constitution's* staff rejected a 3s. increase but resumed work nonetheless.³ Six months later, compositors secured 2s., their final increase for many years.⁴

Some workers still managed to attain improvements without having to withdraw their labour. In January, the IDAA and the ITGWU, who organised packers and porters in the draperies, intended to bring out their members at Dwyer's for an increase, but called it off in favour of a conference presided over by the Lord Mayor. The workers were granted 2s. 6d.⁵ Six months later, the CTC averted two strikes: at the gristmills by winning a 5s. for the workers and in the building trade by persuading Meagher & Hayes to pay the standardised labourers' rate.⁶

Table 3. 1: Wages in the Cork Printing Trade, July 1921

Newspaper	Casehands	Linotype Operators
Morning	95s.	102. 6d.
Evening	102s. 6d.	112s.

Source: LG, Aug. 1921.

Table 3. 2: Wage Increases in Cork by the ITGWU, 1921

Workers	Increase
Anglo Oil Company	5-10s.
Gristmill workers	5s.
Tramway boys	3-10s.
Teenagers at Lunham's	5-20s.
Junior bar assistants	7s. 6d.

Source: CE, 2 July, 3 Oct. 1921, 25 Jan. 1922.

Employers gain the upper hand

Despite these minor victories, the tide was turning in the class war from 1921. That January, workers at Goulding's withheld their labour in a dispute concerning their method of payment. A settlement was affected by arbitration, and the men were duly victimised – only half were re-employed. In April, the drapers ended their assistants' 50 per cent bonus and issued dismissals.⁷ That summer, the ITGWU led stoppages against reductions at Kinmonth's and J.J. Barry's.⁸ The CTC proposed the establishment of a 'Council of Action' to co-ordinate the fightback but nothing appears to have come of this.⁹ A serious conflict was brewing in the flourmills. In July, the employers announced that men's pay was to be cut by 6s. 6d. and boys' and women's by 50 per cent. Pending Dáil arbitration, this was postponed until 1 November and then postponed indefinitely due to the political turmoil. Mill sawyers were also threatened

with reductions.¹⁰ In September, when Free State shippers took 6s. off dockers' wages, only the Corkmen (grain porters) put up a fight by withdrawing their labour. Dockers in the other ports narrowly voted to accept the cut from 12 September. The employers had originally sought a 3s. a day reduction but the ITGWU's threat of national stoppage bartered it down to 1s. a day.¹¹ The counterattack was aided by a depressed economy. In January 1921, the Spinning and Weaving Company closed for several months, adding 600 to 800 to the roll of the unemployed. That November, Cork's flourmills shut down as employers prepared to attack wages, throwing another 400 out of work.¹²

The railway crisis in Cork

By August 1921, the British government still controlled Ireland's railways. The arrangement had achieved what it intended: industrial harmony. But ideological commitment to private enterprise meant that government control was always going to be temporary measure. Accordingly, on 14 August 1921 the British Government relinquished control. The removal of state subsidies forced the railway companies to cut pay and extend the working week. The railway managers had never liked the eight-hour day and always sought to undermine it. Two years before, the NUR's *The New Way* reported that drivers on the GSWR in Cork often worked nine to twelve hours a day. On 23 August 1921, GSWR engine cleaners struck against the 6s. reduction implemented by the companies. Three days later, coalmen, cleaners and firefighters at the Bandon Railway joined them. The strikes appeared to presage national action. NUR general secretary J.H. Thomas and Dowling intervened and persuaded all parties to accept mediation under the Irish Railways Arbitration Tribunal chaired by Sir William Carrigan.¹³

On 10 September, Carrigan issued two verdicts: wages and conditions on the Irish railways should be standardised following an appropriate classification and grouping of each railway, and the maintenance of a universal eight-hour working day was no longer affordable. These findings were those of the chairman himself and not the final award. In effect, Carrigan ruled in favour of cuts and an extension of hours.¹⁴ The response of Cork's railwaymen was instantaneous. On 19 September, GSWR shopmen struck, as did the cleaners on the Bandon.¹⁵ But the shopmen subsequently accepted the 6s. cut. Nonetheless, the unrest continued to spread. By 6 October, the shopmen and two store porters on the Bandon Railway were out.¹⁶ Seven days later, another 100 men from the company struck only to return to work the following morning when management agreed to temporarily suspend the reductions and hold

a conference instead. Its shopmen also resumed work.¹⁷ The conference failed to find a resolution.¹⁸

Accordingly, on 5 November 160 shopmen and storemen from the Bandon, the Cork and Macroom Direct Railway and the Cork and Muskerry Light Railway withdrew their labour against the 6s. cut, due to come into effect in two days.¹⁹ The shopmen's apprentices on the Bandon line struck seven days later. The companies had resolved to reduce the shopmen's 12½ per cent bonus in three episodes: on 11 November, on 1 December and on 1 January 1922.²⁰ By 17 November, approximately 670 shopmen were on strike: 500 from the Bandon, 100 from the Cork and Macroom, and 70 from the Cork and Muskerry. A conference held five days later resolved nothing.²¹ The Irish Engineering and Industrial Union (IEIU) – the name for the Irish Engineering, Shipbuilding and Foundry Trades Union since 1 August 1921 – was a growing force in Cork's workshops. It was leading the fightback against proposed reductions which, it claimed, amounted to 11s. In October, it took over the NUR's Cork no. 4 branch and by mid-November it was looking to poach more NUR men as well as the National Union of Vehicle Builders (NUVB). It received a further boost when its main rival, the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), accepted the reduction, a deeply unpopular move. Smelling blood, the IEIU even contemplated – but rejected – withdrawing its members on the GSWR in Cork to damage the AEU (and other British unions) and poach the disillusioned shopmen. The IEIU's Cork branch had grown from 320 to 358 because of its stance.²²

On 19 November 1921, Carrigan issued the segment of his award on conditions of work. To the bitter disappointment of the railwaymen, it found in favour of the extension of hours initiated by the railway companies on 16 August. The award abolished the guaranteed day and stipulated the working week range from fifty-four to sixty hours.²³ The NUR's Irish Council had reluctantly accepted wage cuts on condition that the eight-hour day was kept intact. But the companies rebuffed this olive branch. Thus, under intense pressure from its rank-and-file, the Irish Council opted to fight for the eight-hour day.²⁴ The award would see shunters' wages lessened to 59s., ticket collectors to 46s., station foremen to 55s., signalmen to 57s. and platelayers to 43s. 6d.²⁵ It would result in many railwaymen losing 20s. a week.²⁶ *The Voice of Labour* illustrated its impact on other grades of railwaymen:

Special station foremen getting 75/6 in July, or 73/6 last month, will be reduced to 65/-. . . Porters who got 53/6 in July will fall to 35/- . . . Certain head porters who got 81/-, or 71/6, will now fall to 67/-. . . Porters in goods depots fall from 53/6, or 48/6 now, to 38/-, gangers from 58/-, or 53/- now, to 42/-. . . Drivers who used to get 80/- on appointment and are entitled to 72/-, will fall to 63/-. Some drivers who had 92/- and are now getting 86/- will fall to 78/-. . . Firemen who get 71/- after five years have now 63/-, and will fall to 57/-, while in the first and second year they'll have only 45/-.²⁷

On 3 December, the GSWR's shunters struck against Carrigan. The following day, the NUR's Cork (No. 3) Branch categorically rejected the award. By 5 December, the strikes on the Cork railways were affecting about 800 labourers. Two days later, a further 100 clerical and supervisory staff struck.²⁸ As always, the employers were supported by the *Cork Constitution*, the reactionary, Unionist mouthpiece of the city's establishment.²⁹ On 7 December, just when the situation was spiralling out of control, the strikes were called off when Lord Mayor Donal O'Callaghan convinced both sides to agree to arbitration under the Department of Labour. The possibility of wage increases was also under the arbitrator's remit.³⁰ The Arbitration Court sat the following day and convinced employers to postpone implementing the award if the railwaymen resumed work under old conditions.³¹ The Bandon, the Muskerry and the Macroom had not been a party to the national settlement and cuts had been imposed without negotiation. Unhappy with the support from their British unions, shopmen there came out in sympathy and promised to join the IEIU after the dispute. The arbitrator reinstated the 6s. cut, which led to members of the ASLEF, NUR and NUVB joining the IEIU. It was a significant victory for the Irish union.³²

On 10 December, the companies agreed to postpone Carrigan until 2 January 1922.³³ A week later, Carrigan released the portion of his award dealing with wages. It backed the companies' August reductions and cuts to the shopmen's bonus.³⁴ Additionally, it declared that the sliding scale based on the cost of living should be restored. As the cost of living had fallen to 99 per cent above pre-war levels, this meant a further 4s. reduction. The end of national pay agreements was confirmed by the grouping of the railway companies by size, with each grouping subject to different wage agreements.³⁵ On 28 December, Dáil intervention persuaded the companies to defer the Carrigan award for another two weeks.³⁶ Crisis had been temporarily averted. The young Free State government's handling of the railway crisis will be examined in Chapter 9.

Class conflict outside of the railways

As the economic crisis deepened, employers across Ireland stepped up their attempts to roll back Labour's gains. In October 1921, the Engineering Employers' Federation in Britain, to which Irish employers were affiliated, enforced a 6s. cut and eliminated the 12½ per cent bonus.³⁷ It is not surprising that engineers were among the first to suffer their employers were particularly anxious to cut pay. By 1920, their 105s. wage was 176 per cent higher than what prevailed in 1914 (Table 3. 5 charts similar growth in the bacon factories). On 11 November, Seán Moylan, acting for the Department of Labour, arbitrated a wage conflict at Wallis & Sons in Cork by ruling against the company's proposal to decrease clerical wages by 10 per cent. Five days later, another strike took place at the same firm; this too was settled by Department of Labour arbitration.³⁸ Employers were now in the ascendency. In December, coachbuilders began a lengthy strike against a 25 per cent reduction.³⁹ When the Irish Master Printers' Association sought a general wage reduction of 7s. 6d. (10 per cent), Cork and Belfast were reported to be the only two Irish centres to resist it.⁴⁰

Class conflict in 1922

The New Year brought with it a renewed focus on the country's political affairs. On 7 January 1922, Dáil Éireann ratified the Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed on 5 December 1921, thus creating the twenty-six county Irish Free State. As will be described in more detail in Chapter 9, the new state would become a powerful ally of the employers. Amidst the political upheaval, employers continued to twist the knife. On 2 January 1922, the ASTT and the Irish Tailors' and Tailoresses' Union struck as part of a national action against cuts and the introduction of female labour, which they feared would undercut their trade.⁴¹ Male tailors earned 1s. 1½d. hourly and women a wage 130 per cent higher than 1914.⁴² Their 'log' rate was 1s. 1d. per hour.⁴³ A threatened national strike of 5,000 dockers against a 1s. a day cut in pay did not materialise as it was accepted by the men under Dáil arbitration; the tailors' strike was also settled in this manner.⁴⁴ On 12 April, a prolonged strike began at Woolworth's when the ITGWU and the Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks (IUDWC) – established in October 1921 as the successor to the IDAA – brought out a dozen girls for better pay, union recognition and an end to non-union labour. The shop was forced to close but re-opened the following month under the protection of the IRA's 'republican police'. The strike dragged on until November 1923.⁴⁵

The political situation was fast becoming a crisis, ruining the stability on which the employers' campaign was predicated. Like the British administration it replaced, Dáil Éireann kept class conflict in check by arbitrating disputes. In April, following intervention from Dowling, the Lord Mayor and the Department of Labour, the NUVB and the IEIU brought the coachbuilders back to work after seventeen weeks on strike, forced to accept reductions.⁴⁶ In May, the Spinning and Weaving Co. issued a 25 per cent wage decrease. The workers, whose earnings ranged from 49s. to 66s., refused to accept this and were locked out accordingly. Arbitration from the Department of Labour brought a return to work the following month under a modified reduction.⁴⁷ In June, state arbitration fixed the wages of workers at the Bandon Railway at the lower rates outlined in Table 3. 3.

By late 1922, the Provisional Government had largely established its authority over the twenty-six counties. Most Free State workers were still on peak wages. In Cork, these wages were among the highest in either Britain or Ireland, as Table 3. 4 outlines regarding the baking trade. However, with the Free State more secure, Irish employers felt more buoyant in re-embarking upon their counterattack. The government would set a firm example by taking on its own postal workers in a wage dispute (see Chapter 9). In September 1922, the master tailors decided that 'the time was ripe to ask for another reduction of wages' – and so they did. On 4 December, they enforced a 15 per cent cut off trade board rates and 10 per cent off log rates.⁴⁸ The employers' counteroffensive, which had spent so much time maturing, had finally commenced.

Table 3. 3: Wages at the Bandon Railway, June 1922

Occupation	Wage
Vicemen	67s. 6d.
Platers	72s.
Wheel lathe men	72s.
Drillers	67s. 6d.
Painters' Helpers	63s. 6d.
Boilermakers' Helpers	63s. 6d.
Labourers	62s. 6d.
Sawyers	83s. 4d.
Sailmakers	67s. 6d.

Source: Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway minutes, 1, 8 June 1922, CIÉ archives, Heuston Station.

Table 3. 4: Bakery Wages in Cork, London & Dublin, 1922

Occupation	Cork	London	Dublin
Foreman baker	102s.	73s. 6d.	-
Doughmaker	100s.	63s. 6d.	-
Ovenman	100s.	60s. 6d.	106s. 6d.
Stoker	100s.	60s. 6d.	-
Tablehand	96s.	57s. 6d.	94s.
Vanman ⁴⁹	70s.	50s.	81s.
Labourer	62d. 6d.	50s.	70s.

Source: *CE*, 21 Oct. 1922, 1 Aug. 1923; Yeates, *A City in Civil War: Dublin, 1921-24*, p. 166.

Table 3. 5: Wages & Hours in the Bacon Factories in Cork, 1914 & 1922

Workers	Wage (1914)	Hours (1914)	Wage (1922)	Hours (1922)
Bacon pumpers	27-35s.	51	81-85s.	48
Practical men	24-27s.	51	74s. 6d.-78s. 6d.	48
Women (first grade)	5½d. per every 100 pigs	51	38s. 6d.	47½
Women (second grade)	9s. 4d.	51	36s. 4d.	47½
Girls under 19	6-8s.	51	24-30s.	47½
Boys under 18	7-10s.	50	36-38s.	47½
Boys under 21	10-12s.	50	65s.	47½
Helpers	21-24s.	50	70s.	47½

Source: Report of the Committee on the Cost of Living, 1922, P7/A/69, Richard Mulcahy Papers, University College Dublin Archives

The January 1923 dock strike

By January 1923, the anti-Treatyites had been largely defeated, placing the new state on more stable footing. Stability meant more effective policing of (potentially violent) opposition to cuts, which guaranteed a more confident bourgeoisie. Dock labourers were among the first to suffer. A strike in all Free State ports was threatened if shippers implemented a 2s. a day reduction.⁵⁰ However, on 12 January a daily decrease of 1s. was accepted.⁵¹ Having refused to acquiesce, 900 Cork dockers struck three days later.⁵² To make matters worse for Labour, the indefatigable Dowling was leaving for America on 20 January. Since late 1920, the Capuchin had been a peripheral figure. By early 1923, the Cork Conciliation Board was effectively defunct – another victim of the counterattack. Dowling's parting gift was to arrange a conference between the shippers and the ITGWU. He was given a moving send-off by the trades council.⁵³

The dock strike brought a return of violence as a characteristic of labour disputes, symptomatic of the heightening sense of catastrophe. Although it was more aggressive and less reactive than before, violence was still a minor and intermittent feature of strikes. On 18 January, Edward Grace, the American manager of the Ford's plant, was physically threatened by strikers who set fire to his motor lorry. On the same day, the Packet Company's clerical staff, who were scabbing, were picketed; this was halted by the military firing shots over the picketers' heads. The following day, R.W. Sinnott, general manager of the Steam Packet Company, was pelted with rotten eggs upon arriving at a restaurant during a picket by 200 dockers.⁵⁴ The IUDWC and the NUR refused to scab on the dockers, resulting in a shortage of coal.⁵⁵ On 1 February, an agreement was reached at a Dublin conference arranged by the Department of Labour. The dockers had lost. Hourly pay would be abolished and the 'half-day minimum' was secured. The 1s. a day cut was acceded to. The *Voice of Labour* reported that 'pay would be reduced by ½d. per ton amongst six men in the case of grain cargoes, and ¼d. per ton in the case of coal.' The men accepted these terms the following day.⁵⁶ The CTC condemned the ITGWU for finalising the agreement without a local ballot.⁵⁷

The flourmill soviet

By January 1923 Irish flourmill workers and their employers had been in dispute for nearly eighteen months. In Cork, wages had peaked at 65s. in October 1920 after a final 10s. improvement.⁵⁸ In late 1922, political stability gave the Irish Flour Millers' Association the confidence to seek a 18s. cut which it claimed was necessitated by the importation of cheaper flour.⁵⁹ After a series of conferences, agreement could not be reached. The employers' final offer was a 16s. reduction. As Irish flourmill workers earned over 20s. more than their British counterparts, Liberty Hall advised acceptance. But Corkmen believed they could retain more and would only accept an 8s. reduction.⁶⁰ Following the breakdown of talks, a national strike of 370 flourmill workers began on 20 January. Two days later, it became a lockout.⁶¹

By now, Irish workers had embraced a novel approach to addressing local grievances. In April 1919, the IRA had attempted a daring rescue one its volunteers, Robert Byrne, from Limerick Workhouse Hospital where he was being detained and treated for the effects of hunger strike. A confrontation between the IRA and the RIC led to an exchange of bullets in which Byrne was shot. He subsequently bled to death. In response, the authorities designated most of Limerick city and a part of the county as a 'Special Military Area', with permits

required for those seeking to enter and/or leave the city. The city's working class responded decisively: A general strike was declared. The trades council then seized control of the city and managed it collectively as a soviet (or workers' council) from 15 to 27 April 1919.⁶² The Irish working class rallied to support the Limerick strike with generous financial donations. At the 1919 ITUC, Good claimed that the Cork railwaymen were willing to strike in support of Limerick, whether their executive in London liked it or not, but that the 'facts' of what was happening in Limerick never emerged.⁶³

Although local issues primarily inspired the Limerick soviet, it was still the most vivid distillation of syndicalism's and Bolshevism's influence over Irish Labour. Syndicalist sentiment meant that the Limerick Trades Council regarded the situation as an industrial relations crisis as well as a political one. The council's response was in keeping with the syndicalist current: a localised general strike which it hoped would soon become a national one. Limerick's stand was highly influential. The tactics of workplace occupations were soon applied to the wages movement in which soviets functioned as auxiliaries that demonstrated Labour's increasingly radical aspirations without threatening official strategy.⁶⁴ Kostick estimates that over 100 soviets emerged in Ireland between 1919 and 1920.⁶⁵ There is no doubt that the proliferation of soviets in Ireland was partially inspired by events in Europe: they were a central feature of revolutionary movements in Germany (1918-20), Italy (1920) and Hungary (1920).⁶⁶ In 1919, the *Voice of Labour* proclaimed its support for the institution of the soviet system in Ireland:

To-day the Soviet idea is sweeping westward over Europe . . . The Soviet has shown itself the only instrument of liberation in Europe. Ireland's best and most effective answer is the immediate establishment of Soviets, the instruments which will bring about the dictatorship of the Irish proletariat.⁶⁷

But Irish soviets were not the result of such lofty ideological goals. On 5 February 1923, Furlong's and the Cork Steam Mills were seized by the strike committee and red flags were hoisted above the premises. The committee had intended to appropriate a third mill, Messrs Shaw's, but this was not possible as it lacked grain stocks. The occupation lasted only a few hours and the buildings were voluntarily returned. This soviet carried no revolutionary subtexts. It was, as admitted by the committee, a bargaining chip for a favourable settlement.

The committee vowed to pay for all materials used, to continue milling until grain stocks were exhausted and to sell flour at cost price. Its spokesman was even more apologetic. Promising that the soviet would not interfere with the companies' documents and commercial correspondence, he claimed that the importation of cheaper American and British flour was the cause of the dispute, not friction with the employers.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, illegal direct action continued. The ITGWU levied a tax on imported flour to supplement strike pay.⁶⁹ As one Cork employer reported to the *Manchester Guardian*:

The labour outlook here is as bad as ever. The Transport Union have started a levy of 8s. per ton on imported flour, also levies on meal and millers' offals in order to support the hands that are on strike in the local flour mills, while so far the Government has refused to take any action against this usurpation of their authority. The situation seems to be fast drifting into the same state as it was in Northern Italy before the Fascists came on the scene, but unfortunately I don't think there is any chance of another Mussolini arising in this country.⁷⁰

The soviet could only mill flour at the Cork Steam Mill. At Furlong's, the day was spent repairing machinery. The soviet had its desired effect. On 7 February, a truce was called, and a conference was organised for that day. Seven days later, the bosses offered an amended reduction of 9s. 6d. (6s. 6d. immediately and 3s. from 1 June). It was rejected by 900 votes to 500, with most of the no votes coming from Cork. It was then offered to spread the cuts over twelve months, which was accepted. On 6 March, Irish flourmill workers returned to work. Though there was no victimisation, the settlement left most with less real take home pay than they had in 1914.⁷¹

The calm before the storm

After the flourmill settlement, Cork was largely free of major industrial disputes until July. But some stoppages did take place. The egg packers struck from 5 February to 13 March to combat a 10 per cent wage cut. They were partially successful.⁷² On 15 April, ITGWU seamen in Irish ports struck against a 6s. 6d. reduction arranged by the National Maritime Board in London, which had already been agreed to by the NSFU. Three days later, it spread to Cork. Three days after that, the ITGWU was also forced to accept the cut.⁷³ Another disruption was a 'lightning' strike of ITGWU locomotive men at the GSWR's Glanmire terminus to protest the suspension of three porters. It began on 31 May when workers refused to shunt trains, claiming the job required more manpower and that a redundant shunter should be employed to help. Claims of victimisation also contributed to its outbreak. On 4 June, a settlement was reached by arbitration under the Department of Industry and Commerce. Vacancies would be filled by previous employees of appropriate grade and the GSWR agreed to reinstate the three men. The NUR, the ASLEF or the RCA did not participate.⁷⁴ But the tentative industrial peace was illusionary, merely the calm before the storm. The CEF was preparing for an all-out assault on wages and conditions that would ignite the largest labour dispute in Cork's history.⁷⁵

The Storm

On 24 May 1923, the Irish Civil War officially ended when Frank Aiken, the IRA's Chief of Staff, ordered his men to dump arms and to not resist the Free State. Effective policing that guaranteed the protection of private property could now be instituted. Fear of violent retaliation was all that had heretofore held back employers from waging all-out class war. Once again, the dockers were the first to suffer. In July 1923, the fuse that was lit in August 1921 exploded into total class war on the Irish docks.⁷⁶ In Cork, dockers for overseas ships were earning 16s. a day; those for Silloth and Isle of Man boats, 14s. a day; and those for coasting vessels, 13s. per day. Employers intended to shrink these rates to 10s. by cuts of 2s. – a 25 per cent decrease. Hours would remain at forty-six for permanent dockers and storemen, and forty-eight for carters and loaders. Casual dockers would still work eight hours a day with a guaranteed minimum of four hours. Employers also wanted revised working conditions to 'assist the free movement of traffic.'⁷⁷ They were ready to stand firm against the unions' 'Bolshevik' wing, which they felt the slump had empowered by drastically reducing the room for compromise between what was vital for commercial survival and Labour expectations. To employers,

‘Labour’s willingness to countenance economic catastrophe was chilling, and countered the normal advantages that would otherwise accrue from recession’.⁷⁸

On 12 July, a national conference in Dublin collapsed. Four days later, Free State dockers were officially on strike. Over 1,000 men were affected in Cork. By 19 July, most stores on the Cork quays had closed.⁷⁹ Another conference began on 28 July under the supervision of the Department of Industry and Commerce before breaking down on 1 August.⁸⁰ The government could no longer contain the employers. On 1 August, the Assistant Minister for Industry and Commerce asked them to keep the present level of wages for three months, by which time it was hoped that the disputes would be reconciled. They refused. On 21 July, the CTC formed a strike committee to co-ordinate the fightback. On 10 August, it called for an end to the lockout, an immediate withdrawal of wage reductions, a truce lasting until 1 January 1924, and a re-opening of dialogue between the employers and the ITGWU.⁸¹ But the CEF was not interested in such a proposition. It demanded pay decreases of 20, 25, 40 and 50 per cent depending on the trade from 20 August.⁸² For example, employers in the distributive trade ordered cuts of 20 per cent for assistants, 25 per cent for craftsmen and 40 per cent for labourers.⁸³ Class antagonisms had soared. As Liam de Róiste noted: ‘general opinion is that the lock-out will lead to violence, smashing of shops, etc., perhaps even to shooting of members of the Employers’ Federation.’⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the strike at Woolworth’s was still unresolved and dockers picketed the premises in solidarity. On 27 July, the CTC barred membership to any girl who scabbed and boycotted the company.⁸⁵

Table 3. 6: Quayside Wages Sought by the CEF

Job	Wage
Casual dockers	12s. a day
Permanent dockers	61s. a week
Storemen	54s. a week
Double-horse carters	58s. a week
Single-horse carters	56s. a week
Loaders	54s. a week

Source: CE, 13 July 1923

A conference between the CEF and the sixteen unions involved sat from 14-17 August, when it collapsed. The next day, the employers announced their willingness to postpone the changes until September pending another conference. The unions rejected this and demanded a six-month deferral. In the meantime, they recommended that a commission of inquiry examine the relation between the cost of labour and selling prices.⁸⁶ The CEF also demanded the flexibility to sack retail employees during slump periods. For the Grocers' Assistants, IUDWC and ICWU, this was a bigger source of discontent than wage reductions.⁸⁷ The stipulation, 'if conceded, would mean the virtual end of Trade Unionism in shop life in Cork.'⁸⁸

Table 3. 7: Wages in British & Irish Towns & Cities, August 1923.

City/Town	Building Tradesmen	Builders' Labourers	Painters	General Labourers	Sawyers
Cork	94s.	78s. 4d.	94s.	62s. 6d.	78s. 4d.
Waterford	82s. 3d.	54s. 10d.	-	-	-
Dublin	78s. 10d.	58s. 8d.	77s.	-	72s. 6d.
Limerick	-	-	-	-	67s.
London	73s. 4d.	55s.	66s.	50s.	-
Belfast	69s. 8d.	44s.	66s.	43s.	64s. 5d.
Rushbrooke Docks	69s.	-	-	43s. 11d.	-
Haulbowline	55s.	-	-	37s. 5d.	-

Source: CE, 1 Aug. 1923.

Table 3. 8: Wages in British & Irish Towns & Cities, August 1923.

City/Town	Drapers' Assistants	Hardware Assistants	Grocers' Assistants	Gristmill Labourers
Cork	80s.	92s. 6d.	92s. 6d.	63s.
Waterford	80s.	60-70s.	-	-
Dublin	<80s.	-	70s.	60s.
Limerick	80s.	-	-	-
London	66s.	75s.	-	-
Mallow	-	-	-	45s.
Belfast	-	-	-	47s.

Source: CE, 1 Aug. 1923.

The 1923 lockout

On 20 August, 154 businesses closed. A mass lockout had commenced. The primary unions involved were the ITGWU, the IUDWC, the Cork Grocers' Assistants' Association and the Building Trades' Federation. The Typographical Association was not involved and was anxious to avoid dispute with their employers. The previous January, it had accepted an 8s. cut. The bakers also did not feature in the lockout, despite rumours to that effect.⁸⁹ On 22 August, more than 2,000 locked-out workers marched through the city, carrying banners displaying slogans such as 'Our ideal: the Workers' Republic' and 'An injury to one is the concern of all'.⁹⁰ On the Corporation, Labour Party councillor James Allen moved a resolution that condemned the bosses and asked that the Corporation adjourn from 24 to 29 August to protest the lockout. It was debated and withdrawn; a diplomatic call for arbitration passed instead. Fearful of social crisis, the government intervened. Assistant Minister for Industry and Commerce Professor Joseph Whelehan arrived in Cork on 23 August. Two days later, he met with the unions and the CEF, and arranged a joint conference for the following week over which he would preside.⁹¹ Initially, it looked as if mediation could succeed. On 29 August, the grain workers returned to work after lengthy discussions. Grain workers – along with labourers in the coal and timber trades – had gone on strike despite not experiencing cuts. They returned just as the city's stocks of flour disappeared.⁹²

Amidst this industrial unrest, both sides were preparing for the upcoming general election to be held on 27 August. The previous spring, a local Labour Party branch had been formed to contest it. It nominated three candidates to contest the Cork Borough constituency: incumbent TD Robert Day, William Kenneally and Richard Anthony of the Typographical Association. Labour went into the election with unprecedented confidence that workers' discontent and government conservatism would translate into seats. The employers had formed their own party, the Cork Progressive Association, which put forward Andrew O'Shaughnessy, a mill owner, and Richard Beamish. It had close links to Cumman na nGaedheal and both contested the election under an electoral pact.⁹³ Across the state, the election was a disaster for Labour. In Cork, conservatives took four of the five seats. Day lost his Dáil seat and Kenneally his deposit. Locally, the party totalled only 5,300 votes. The *Irish Times* blamed the industrial situation and the conduct of some of those on strike for the poor showing in Cork. The *Manchester Guardian* also partially attributed Labour's terrible performance to the industrial disputes. But the reality was more complex. It may well have been the case that workers abandoned the party because of how it had distanced itself from the industrial struggle. The

civil war had ended only four months before and most workers voted along Treaty lines. Class politics had once again been upstaged by the national question. Moreover, Labour's 1922 vote had been artificially high, inflated by the anti-republican protest vote it received.⁹⁴

Wages were coming under severe attack across the Free State – about 20,000 trade unionists were affected. The counterattack took on its most savage manifestation in east Waterford, which since May had been gripped by a lockout of farm labourers that had descended into violent class conflict. Alarmed by the ITGWU's 'Bolshevism' and 'Irregularism', the government intervened on the farmers' behalf, helping to ruthlessly crush the strike.⁹⁵ In Cork, the turbulence produced a situation more critical than in any other part of the country as 6-10,000 workers were locked out.⁹⁶ The lockout was devastating the economy and causing tremendous hardship. The Harbour Board was £20,000 in debt and was forced to fire 400 'non-essential' staff. They were later re-employed on reduced wages.⁹⁷ About 200 tons of rotting flour, valued at £4,000, was held up on the docks and had to be dumped. Alarming, medical apparatus for the city's hospitals was held up on the ships.⁹⁸ The *Irish Times* reported that 'the shortage of foodstuffs has become acute, and, such is the shortage of coal, that. . . unless a fresh supply can be procured by tomorrow no food can be cooked.'⁹⁹ Coal was in such short supply that several houses were reduced to burning coke.¹⁰⁰ On 2 October, the Lee Boot Factory announced it would soon shut down with 250 job losses as it had become impossible to procure materials.¹⁰¹

The labour war was generating a sturdy display of inter-union solidarity. The Cork Lock-Out Workers' Committee, of which J.F. Fitzgibbon of the IUDWC was secretary, co-ordinated the fightback.¹⁰² The *Voice of Labour* reported that 'practically all the employed Trades Unionists in the city are willingly sacrificing a day's pay per week to supplement the Strike Funds'. The Irish National Painters', Decorators' and Allied Trade Union (INPDATU) issued 35s. a week strike pay to its Cork members, which was funded by a national levy.¹⁰³

On 6 September, Whelehan's conference got under way but adjourned after eight days, effecting no major change. He suggested that half of the employers' demands be conceded and that conditions of employment be referred to a district industrial council for consideration. His suggestions were rejected outright by the employers.¹⁰⁴ On 24 September, workers in the goods stores at the Macroom Railway were dismissed due to a lack of traffic, adding to the throngs of unemployed men.¹⁰⁵ The CEF's war had a clear objective: that class relations would be the same as they had been in pre-revolutionary Cork.¹⁰⁶ As one local employer put it:

In your letter of today a correspondent suggests settlement by arbitration. But I scarcely think any sane employer is likely to assent to arbitration, to decide whether or not he owns his own business. . . The arbitration of common sense has already decided this matter, i.e. – the opinion of the employers.¹⁰⁷

The employers wanted not only to stamp their authority over the workers, but also over the young state itself. On 25 September, William Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, gave a speech in the Dáil on the industrial crisis in Ireland. He appealed ‘to both parties to these disputes, both of which . . . are equally to blame, or at least could be charged with a considerable portion of the blame’ and urged the employers to reduce their prices.¹⁰⁸ In a written response, John Reardon, CEF secretary, refuted Cosgrave’s assertions and issued three demands:

1. Wages must be reduced immediately to an economic level to enable our businesses to carry on and retain their efficiency. We want to advance, not recede, and we cannot compete with other countries unless we can produce as cheaply.
2. The government cannot finance the country unless the trade of the Free State is able to make profits out of which to pay taxes.
3. The expenses of Government itself must be reduced; everything the Government buys is loaded with high wages; every service it pays for has to bear the same burden.¹⁰⁹

October began with feelings of cautious optimism as Cork’s bacon curers returned to work on 1 October, having assented to a 10s. reduction. This would be done in two instalments: 7s. 6d. immediately and 2s. 6d. from 1 March 1924.¹¹⁰ On 5 October, a conference under the Cork Industrial Development Association was held. It voted to appoint a six-man ‘Committee of Action’ to work with Alfred O’Rahilly to end the labour war. The CEF abstained from the vote.¹¹¹ O’Rahilly had been toiling relentlessly for a concord but was consistently met with employer intransigence.¹¹² Nevertheless, the committee made an immediate impact. By 8 October, it had formulated an agreement on the right of dismissal.¹¹³ The employers got their way, although the three unions retained the right to protect against victimisation.¹¹⁴ The

employers' rigidity was beginning to cause public consternation. De Róiste observed that 'some fear the working people may adopt Irregular methods. So far they have been very restrained. Petty employers have been more determined advocates of "the strong hand" than either the larger employers or the workers.'¹¹⁵ However, both Chambers of Commerce called for the creation of industrial courts of compulsory, binding arbitration to avoid a repeat of the current disaster.¹¹⁶

On 10 October, Cosgrave announced that the Minister for Industry and Commerce would shortly be communicating the following proposals to both parties:

1. That on resumption of work there should be a reduction in wages of 1s. per day, with consequential reductions in tonnage and overtime rates and in the wages of men who have previously followed the settlements relating to dock labour.
2. That the Minister, in the exercise of his powers under Part II of the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, should, as soon as possible after the resumption of work, set up a Court of Inquiry to report on this question of dock labour.¹¹⁷

On 15 October, the dockers voted to resume work under these conditions. Seven days later, the CEF revealed that it too would accept Cosgrave's strategy provided the men return to work on or before 24 October. Thus, on 24 October, after a stoppage of fourteen weeks, Irish dockers resumed work.¹¹⁸ The strike had lost its backbone and it was only a matter of time before the others returned. On 22 October, the CEF circulated a letter containing the terms of agreement as directed by Gordon Campbell, Secretary to the Minister for Industry and Commerce:

1. An immediate reduction in wages amounting to one half of the employers' demand.
2. The balance of the demand to be submitted to the decision of Professor A. O'Rahilly, T.D., immediately after work is resumed, which decision shall be binding on all parties.¹¹⁹

For the CEF, the fight was for a nobler cause. As Reardon asserted, ‘in their efforts to place the city’s commerce on the only foundation upon which it can thrive, the employers are, in reality, fighting the workers’ battle’.¹²⁰ On 25 October, the Distributive Workers rejected the agreement. But this would have little bearing because the strike was disintegrating quickly. A few days later, the IUDWC admitted defeat and returned to work.¹²¹ By then, commercial activity had been restored to Cork’s docks. The carters were the only quayside labourers to remain on strike.¹²² On 30 October, O’Rahilly attended a conference at the Department for Industry and Commerce’s Cork offices. On 3 November, it concluded with both sides agreeing to hold a ballot on the terms put forward on 22 October.¹²³ Despite the rapprochement, active sabotage remained a feature of disputes. In fact, its application had evolved and become more purposeful, indicative of syndicalism’s enduring appeal. On 4 November, some undertakers’ assistants broke into a hospital mortuary, removed a corpse and smashed a coffin, actions strongly condemned by the CTC four days later.¹²⁴ Ballots were taken on 7 November and both sides voted to accept the Department’s terms. On 9 November, the terms were signed by both parties and three days later most of the men returned to work, including the carters who had voted against the agreement.¹²⁵ This settlement applied solely to the disputes that began on 20 August. Other disputes were still unresolved.

Building trade workers took an immediate 12½ per cent cut. Gristmill workers suffered an immediate decrease of 5 per cent, with a 5s. cut due to come into effect from 1 August 1924. The wages of one-horse carters were decreased to 58s., with a proportionate decrease for two-horse carriers. Engineering labourers experienced the following cuts: 7s. for those on 70s., 6s. 6d. for those on 61s. and 5s. for those on 55s. Nevertheless, Cork’s engineers remained the best paid in either Britain or Ireland.¹²⁶ In December, Goulding’s re-opened after its workers – who had been locked out since the first week of August – accepted a 6s., or 10 per cent, reduction, half of what was originally sought. Before the lockout, they earned 16s. a week more than their equivalents in Belfast, Derry or Britain. Workers in all other trades bar one suffered an instant 7½ per cent reduction with another 5 per cent to come off from 1 August 1924. The exception was the distributive labourers, whose August reduction was 12½ per cent.¹²⁷ (See Appendix 8). By December 1923, labourers’ wages at the Packet Company had been considerably reduced from their peak of 80s. Its best paid workers now earned barely 70s. and there were few such people.¹²⁸ By November 1924, most of its carmen earned less than 60s.¹²⁹ By the end of 1923, all but one of the disputes had been settled by the Department of Industry and Commerce.¹³⁰

The 1923 Cork lockout was a draw.¹³¹ Proletarian spirit and unity meant that the employers could enforce only half of what they had wanted, an outcome largely replicated nationally. The ITUC had pleaded with the government for a national, all-encompassing settlement of disputes, but made no effort to co-ordinate unrest. Nor did it exploit the government's fear of a Labour-republican alliance by merging industrial and political discontent.¹³² O'Connor regards the 1923 autumn crisis as a 'watershed in Labour history'.¹³³

From a movement with a capacity to defend living standards and an ambition to change class relations, trade unionism became a destructive force with no vision beyond immediate sectional interests. The dock strike unleashed a wider assault on unskilled workers because employers had less to lose in lockouts and little incentive to make concessions to strikers.¹³⁴

In Cork, the general strike was extremely costly for the unions. For example, while most stonemasons and bricklayers accepted lesser wages, some did not. These men went on strike and received 11s. a week strike pay from their union. However, by mid-November, with funds severely stretched, they too had conceded defeat.¹³⁵ The Distributive Workers received £3,581 from Dublin, which was funded by levying other branches. By the end of 1923, Cork INPDATU's branch was on the brink of collapse. Consequently, its national executive disaffiliated it in January 1924. The branch then broke away and renamed itself the Cork House Painters' Trade Union. Most of the £460. 7s. 1d. the INPDATU spent on dispute pay pertained to Cork.¹³⁶ 1923 had been *annus horribilis* for Irish Labour, arguably the worst in the movement's history. No union suffered more than the ITGWU, which had spearheaded the fightback. The counterattack had cost Liberty Hall £128,724 in dispute pay, with Cork receiving more than any other branch. Having forwarded nearly £6,000 more to Dublin than it received in 1922, Cork had gone from being the Transport Union's most profitable branch to its most expensive.¹³⁷

Table 3. 9: Money Flow Between Liberty Hall and Select ITGWU Branches, 1923

Branch	Remitted to Head Office	Received from Head Office
Cork	£7,019. 6s. 3d.	£23,901. 12s. 10d.
Dublin No. 1	£14,529. 15s. 1d.	£27,069. 7s.
Dublin No. 3	£7,743. 4s. 4d.	£2,924. 1s.
Limerick	£3,116. 9s. 1d.	£5,357 8s. 8d.
Belfast	£1,677 7s. 7d.	£2,409. 1s.
Mid-Waterford	£543 1s. 2d.	£12,845 1s.
Waterford	£752 4s. 7d.	£4,503 15s. 6d.

Source: ITGWU, *Annual Report*, 1923.

Cork Labour in 1924

By January 1924, the last of the Irish autumn disputes had ended. Cork had been devastated by its lockout. The Harbour Board had lost over £22,000 because it. On 3 January, the jarvies and undertakers' assistants, the last of the workers to hold out, resumed employment. Like the others, they had been forced to assent to some decreases.¹³⁸ Allegations of victimisation prompted the sitting of an arbitration court consisting of O'Rahilly, Beamish and O'Shaughnessy, all of whom were now TDs.¹³⁹ Irish syndicalism was dead. It had brought historic gains through the most intense period of working-class revolt in Irish history. The dust may have settled but it was Cork's working class who had to pick up the pieces of their broken city. Although the employers' energy had been drained, Labour had been almost completely exhausted. Workers felt compelled to accept further cutbacks throughout 1924 and showed little of the fighting spirit that had characterised the previous year. Having not featured in 1923, the railwaymen were a notable exception.

In early 1924, the Irish railway companies set out to cut wages by 3s. to 10s., abolish the guaranteed week and extend hours from forty-eight to between fifty-four and sixty. These changes would apply to the conciliation grades. Both the NUR and the ASLEF vehemently opposed any alterations.¹⁴⁰ The ASLEF claimed the cuts would mean a weekly loss of 22s. 6d. for engine drivers and 18s. for firemen.¹⁴¹ The RCA countered with a claim that clerks should reach the maximum 77s. weekly salary after nine years' service rather than fourteen, a claim it had first submitted in July 1923.¹⁴² Conferences held in February between the unions and the companies failed to produce a result. The disputes were submitted to the Central Wages Board, its first use since its inauguration (see Chapter 9). It met on 27 February and failed to agree.¹⁴³ The Irish Railway Wages Board was then called into action. It sat from 28 April to 2 May and, to the relief of the NUR and the ASLEF, decided to leave wages and conditions unchanged.¹⁴⁴

The NUR was a changed union from the one that had won and defended the eight-hour day for its Irish members. It had abolished its Irish Council in December 1923, bringing its Irish branches under the authority of London once more.¹⁴⁵

The RCA, however, was not as content and pressed ahead with its claims for improvements. It announced its intention to strike from 5 June if its demands weren't met. The companies responded by threatening to terminate the clerks' employment. However, strike was averted on 1 June when the claims were submitted to arbitration under the Irish Railway Wages Board. Four days later, the Board granted most clerks, stationmasters and supervisors significant increases, with many clerks receiving yearly improvements of £20-40. The award especially benefited the lower paid classes. Stationmasters' annual salaries were now £160-220 depending on grade and years of service.¹⁴⁶ The railway unions' executives had been supported throughout by their Cork branches.¹⁴⁷

Table 3. 10: Annual Salaries of Fifth Class (Male) Railway Clerks

Year of service	After the award	Before the award
First	£110	£100
Second	£125	£110
Third	£140	£120
Fourth	£155	£130
Fifth	£170	£140
Sixth	£185	£150
Seventh	£200	£160

Source: *Freeman's Journal*, 6 June 1924.

Table 3. 11: Wages for Female Railway Clerks (Class Two) from June 1924

Year	Wage
First	25s.
Second	30s.
Third	35s.
Fourth	40s.
Fifth	45s.
Sixth	50s.
Seventh	52. 6d.
Eighth	55s.
Ninth	57s. 6d.
Tenth	60s.

Source: award of the Irish Railway Wages Board, 4 June 1924, LAB 83/2367, Min. of Labour records, The National Archives UK (UKNA).

Table 3. 12: Wages at the GSWR, February 1924

Occupation	Wage
Vicemen	61s.
Stationary Boilermen	61s.
Smiths' Helpers	58s. 6d.
Boilermakers' Helpers	58s. 6d.
Drillers (machinists)	58s. 6d.
Sailmakers	58s. 6d.
Fitters' Helpers	55s.
Vicemen's Assistants	54s.
Labourers	54s.
Carpenters	82s. 3d.
Wagonmakers	79s. 9d.

Source: GSWR Works & Traffic Committee minutes, 27 Feb. 1924, GSWR archive, IRRS.

In May 1924, Jim Larkin – who had returned to Ireland in April 1923 after nine years in the United States – broke away from the ITGWU and formed the Workers' Union of Ireland, taking two-thirds of the Dublin membership with him as well as 23 of the 300 provincial branches.¹⁴⁸ Though Larkin was 'enthusiastically received' when he addressed a large crowd from Connolly Hall in May 1923, Cork stayed loyal and no local WUI branch was launched.¹⁴⁹ In the summer of 1924, a demarcation dispute resurfaced between the plasterers and the carpenters over which union had the right to lay Trafford tiles on roofs. The plasterers had previously walked off a job because of the issue, causing the employers to threaten a lockout in the trade. The dispute had first emerged in 1921. Arbitration from the ITUC found in favour of the carpenters but not before both were locked out by the employers. Likewise, the Building Trades' Federation, Alfred O'Rahilly and the Department of industry and Commerce all ruled in favour of the carpenters, but the plasterers persisted. For this, they incurred the opprobrium of several CWC delegates.¹⁵⁰ On 5 July, the master builders locked out the plasterers. They were not re-admitted for over three weeks. Under arbitration from the Building Trades Federation, the Plasterers' Society agreed to refer the question to a joint industrial council for the trade, which also ruled in favour of the carpenters.¹⁵¹ One of the year's only strikes began in late November at Goulding's. About 100 labourers were involved. It was resolved in mid-December when the men accepted the employers' terms: a 3s. reduction, making wages 55s. for a forty-eight-hour week.¹⁵² Table 3. 12 demonstrates the extent to which wages had fallen since their 1920 peak.

Cork Labour had come full circle since 1914. The zeitgeist had travelled from revolutionary upheaval to a conservative consensus that included the Irish left. Labour's story

from 1917-24 is exemplified by the Socialist Party of Ireland, which was founded in January 1917 by William O'Brien. Openly Marxist and revolutionary, it began with modest expectations but blossomed in the flush of domestic and international radicalism of 1919-20 and developed strong links with the ITGWU. By late 1919, it had a Cork branch which brought the 'James Connolly Labour College' to the city the following year.¹⁵³ At its 1920 annual conference, the ITUC ended its brief flirtation with communism, which isolated the Socialist Party. It also suffered from internal factionalism. In late 1921, moderates like Cathal O'Shannon and O'Brien were expelled for 'reformism' and the party was relaunched as the Communist Party of Ireland with a Cork branch of twenty-eight members. However, in 1924 this incarnation collapsed having been on the retreat since its foundation.¹⁵⁴ Like syndicalism, it too was a casualty of the capitalist counterattack of 1921-23 and the return of a conservative consensus that would dominate the Irish state for decades.

Chapter Notes and References

¹ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 211; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 98; James Meenan, *The Irish economy since 1922* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1970), p. 66.

² *CE*, 17, 21 Jan., 3, 5, 8, 11, 15 Feb., 1, 9, 24 Mar. 1921; *Irish Independent*, 24 Mar. 1921; ILPTUC national executive minutes, 28 Feb. 1921, ILHS; letters from Cork Tramway Co. to Dowling, 21 Jan., 2 Feb. 1921, Dowling Papers, Capuchin Archives. The tramwaymen received over £885 in support from Liberty Hall. See ITGWU payment books, 15 Feb.-29 Mar. 1921, Ms. 7,269, ITGWU papers, NLI.

³ Trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1921, LAB 34/39, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 3, 12, 15 Feb., 12 Mar. 1921, U217/A/4, CCCA; *CE*, 9 Feb. 1921.

⁴ *LG*, Aug. 1921.

⁵ IDAA executive committee minutes, 5, 12 Jan. 1921, Mandate Trade Union archive, O'Lehane House; *CE*, 25 Jan. 1922.

⁶ *CE*, 2 July 1921. Meagher & Hayes was paying its labourers the old rate of 62s. 6d.

⁷ IDAA executive committee minutes, 3 Apr. 1921, Mandate Trade Union archive, O'Lehane House; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1921, LAB 34/39, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁸ ITGWU Cork branch minutes, 4, 11, 29 May, 5 June 1921

, TU-IT, CCCA; *CE*, 11 June, 20, 23 July 1921; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1921, LAB 34/39, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁹ Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 26 Apr., 3, 7 May 1921, U218/A/8, CCCA. The Coopers' Society levied each member 1s. to help institute the Council of Action. The British Labour Party had already set up a Council of Action in 1920 as an anti-war movement.

¹⁰ *CE*, 7, 18 Nov. 1921; ITGWU Cork branch minutes, 29 May 1921, TU-IT, CCCA; *LG*, Nov. 1920.

¹¹ *CE*, 31 Aug., 15, 23-26 Sept. 1921; RIC CI for Cork ER, MR for Sept. 1921, CO 904/116, UCC. The 3s. a day cut was to be done in three instalments: 1s. from 12 September 1921, 1s. from 12 November 1921 and 1s. from 12 January 1922.

¹² *CE*, 5 Jan., 14 May.

¹³ *New Way*, Aug. 1919; *CE*, 24 Aug.-2 Sept. 1921; Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway Board minutes, 1 Sept. 1921, C  ras Iompair   ireann (CI  ) Archives, Heuston Station; Emmet O'Connor, *A Labour History of Waterford* (Waterford: Waterford Trades Council, 1989), p. 167.

¹⁴ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 102-103; *Freeman's Journal*, 21 September 1921; *Irish Times*, 12, 13 Sept. 1921.

¹⁵ *CE*, 19 Sept. 1921; *Irish Times*, 20 Sept. 1921; *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Sept. 1921.

¹⁶ Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway Board minutes, 6 Oct. 1921, CIÉ archives, Heuston Station.
¹⁷ *CE*, 14 Oct. 1921.
¹⁸ Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway Board minutes, 20 Oct. 1921, CIÉ archives, Heuston Station.
¹⁹ *CE*, 4, 5 Nov. 1921; *Voice of Labour*, 19 Nov. 1921.
²⁰ Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway minutes, 10 Nov. 1921; Cork, Blackrock & Passage Railway minutes, 14 Nov. 1921, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station; Cork & Macroom Direct Railway minutes, 23 Nov. 1921, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station.
²¹ *CE*, 17, 24 Nov. 1921.
²² IESFTU REC minutes, 7 Oct. 1921; IEIU REC and National Executive Committee minutes, 28 Oct., 16 Nov. 1921, Technical Engineering and Electrical Union (TEEU) archive, 6 Gardiner Row, Dublin.
²³ *Irish Times*, 25 Nov. 1921; *CE*, 26 Nov. 1921.
²⁴ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 102-103.
²⁵ *Irish Times*, 7, 14 Jan. 1922.
²⁶ *CE*, 28 Jan. 1922.
²⁷ *Voice of Labour*, 3 Dec. 1921.
²⁸ *CE*, 3, 5, 7 Dec. 1921. *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Dec. 1921. When the labourers' families are included, 4,000 were affected.
²⁹ *CC*, 5 Dec. 1921.
³⁰ *Irish Times*, 8 Dec. 1921; *Irish Independent*, 8 Dec. 1921. Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway minutes, 6 Dec. 1921, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station. The following was the arbitration court's terms of reference:

1. The reasonableness or otherwise of the 6s. cut initiated by the companies on 16 August.
2. The reasonableness or otherwise of the 12.5 per cent cut to the shopmen's bonus.
3. The viability of wage increases for railwaymen in Cork.
4. What, if any, part of the above reductions or increases should be implemented

³¹ *CE*, 8 Dec. 1921.
³² IEIU REC and National Executive Committee, 16 Nov., 31 Dec. 1921, 16 Feb. 1922, TEEU archives, 6 Gardiner Row; Pádraig Yeates, 'Craft workers during the Irish Revolution, 1919-1922', *Saothar*, no. 33, 2008, pp. 18-19.
³³ *Irish Times*, 13 Dec. 1921; *Irish Independent*, 10, 12 Dec. 1921.
³⁴ 'The Carrigan Award', file no. 3594, GSWR archive, IRRS.
³⁵ McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 249-250.
³⁶ *Irish Times*, 30 Dec. 1921.
³⁷ Pádraig Yeates, *A City in Civil War: Dublin, 1921-24* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan), p. 8.
³⁸ *CE*, 22 Nov., 9 Dec. 1921; *Irish Bulletin*, 8 Dec. 1921. These clerks were organised by the ITGWU and not the ICWU.
³⁹ *CE*, 30 Nov., 7 Dec. 1921; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1921, LAB 34/39, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.
⁴⁰ Lahiff, *Industry and Labour in Cork*, p. 210; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 10 Dec. 1921, U217/A/4, CCCA.
⁴¹ *CE*, 3, 6, 7, 16 Jan., 2 Feb. 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Jan. 1922; IMTA Cork branch minutes, 2, 30 Dec. 1921, SM629, CCCA. A Cork branch of the Irish Tailors' and Tailoresses' Union was founded in August 1920. Its foundation was met with hostility from the ASTT and the new union incurred allegations of poaching. See *CE*, 4 Aug. 1920; ILPTUC executive committee minutes, 20 Sept. 1920, ILHM.
⁴² IMTA Cork branch minutes, 9 Feb., 4 Mar., 26 Aug. 1920, SM629, CCCA.
⁴³ *LG*, Sept., Oct. 1920. The log rate was agreed on 15 March 1920 between the tailors and their employers but did not come into effect until September 1920. The 'log' was a piece-cum-time system that dated from the 1830s. It was defined as 'the printed statement of times allowed for making garments . . . agreed upon between employers and employed. The number of hours allowed to a garment multiplied by an agreed price per hour fixes the remuneration to be given to the workman'. This definition comes from the 1893 Royal Commission on Labour and is cited in Cronin, *Country, Class or Craft?*, p. 30.
⁴⁴ *Irish Times*, 12 Jan. 1922; *Workers' Republic*, 21 Jan. 1922; *CE*, 21 Jan. 1922. The cut in dockers' wages was done in two reductions of 6d. a day: the first from 1 February the other from 1 March.
⁴⁵ *CE*, 13 Apr., 24 May 1922, 27 Aug., 15, 16 Nov. 1923; *Distributive Worker*, Aug. 1923; IUDWC national executive committee minutes, 12 Nov. 1923, Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House.
⁴⁶ *CE*, 8 Apr., 4, 19 July, 3 Aug. 1922; *Cork Constitution*, 11 Apr. 1922; NUVB, *Joint Quarterly Reports and Journal*, Jan.-May. 1922, MSS.126/VB/4/1/1, MRC, UW.
⁴⁷ *CE*, 27 May, 21 June 1922.
⁴⁸ IMTA Cork branch minutes, 19 Sept., 11, 14, 23 Nov. 1922, SM629, CCCA.

- ⁴⁹ The vanmen's working week was fifty-one hours. The *Examiner* reported that some earned as much as 95s. weekly. See *CE*, 21 Oct. 1922.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10 Jan. 1923. The cut would be implemented in two instalments: 1s. a day cut at once and another 1s. a day in April.
- ⁵¹ *Irish Independent*, 13, 23 Jan. 1923; *Workers' Republic*, 20 Jan. 1923.
- ⁵² *CE*, 15, 17 Jan. 1923; *Irish Independent*, 17 Jan. 1923.
- ⁵³ *CE*, 9 Nov., 21 Dec. 1920, 22, 23 Jan. 1923; *Irish Independent*, 15 Jan. 1923.
- ⁵⁴ *CE*, 18-20 Jan. 1923; *Manchester Guardian*, 20 Jan. 1923; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 112.
- ⁵⁵ *Workers' Republic*, 27 Jan., 3 Feb. 1923.
- ⁵⁶ *Irish Independent*, 1 Feb. 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 2, 3 Feb. 1923; *Voice of Labour*, 10 Feb. 1923.
- ⁵⁷ *Workers' Republic*, 3 Feb. 1923; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 105.
- ⁵⁸ ITGWU REC Minutes, 19 Oct., 2 Nov., 1921, Liberty Hall Archives; *CE*, 7 Nov. 1921.
- ⁵⁹ *Voice of Labour*, 23 Dec. 1922. The proposed reductions were to take place via three instalments: 10s. in January 1923, 5s. in February and 3s. in March.
- ⁶⁰ ITGWU, *Annual Report for 1923*; Devine, *Organising History*, p.131; *Freeman's Journal*, 4, 8 Jan. 1923; *CE*, 5 Jan. 1923. The employers' proposed 16s. reduction was 8s. immediately, 5s. in February and 3s. in March; the ITGWU's proposed reduction would take place in three instalments: 5s., 2s. and 1s.
- ⁶¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Jan. 1923; *Irish Independent*, 22 Jan. 1923; *Irish Times*, 23, 27 Jan. 1923.
- ⁶² The quarantining of Limerick was made possible by the notorious Defence of the Realm Act 1914, the original target of which were public opponents of the Great War. For a thorough account of the Limerick Soviet see Liam Cahill, *Forgotten Revolution: Limerick Soviet 1919* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1990).
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- ⁶⁴ David Lee, 'The Munster Soviets and the Fall of the House of Cleeve', in David Lee and Debbie Jacobs (eds.), *Made in Limerick: History of Industries, Trade and Commerce*, vol. 1 (Limerick: Limerick Civic Trust, 2003), pp. 295-300; Mike Milotte, *Communism in Modern Ireland: The Pursuit of the Workers' Republic since 1916* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1984), p. 33; Emmet O'Connor, *Reds and the Green: Ireland, Russia and the Communist International* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2004), p. 32. They differed from the Bolshevik soviets as they were often organised with the local trades council as the base rather than unorganised workers.
- ⁶⁵ Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland*, p. 70.
- ⁶⁶ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, p. 255.
- ⁶⁷ *Voice of Labour*, 12 Apr. 1919, cited in *ibid.*, p. 186.
- ⁶⁸ *CE*, 6 Feb. 1923; *Irish Times*, 6 Feb. 1923; *Workers' Republic*, 10 Feb. 1923.
- ⁶⁹ ITGWU, *Annual Report*, 1923.
- ⁷⁰ Cited in O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 105-106.
- ⁷¹ *CE*, 6-8 Feb., 19 Feb.-1 Mar., 5-7 Mar. 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Feb., 1 Mar. 1923; *Irish Independent*, 15 Feb. 1923; D.R. O'Connor Lysaght, 'The Rake's Progress of a Syndicalist: The Political Career of William O'Brien, Irish Labour Leader', *Saothar*, no. 9, 1983, p. 54.
- ⁷² *CE*, 1, 6-8, 15-17, 21, 27, 28 Feb., 1, 14 Mar. 1923.
- ⁷³ *CE*, 18-23 Apr. 1923; *Manchester Guardian*, 18 Apr. 1923; Devine, *Organising History*, p. 136.
- ⁷⁴ Letter from E.A. Neale to Traffic and Works Committee, 31 May 1923, file no. 3900, GSWR Archive, IRRS; *CE*, 1, 2, 5 June 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 1, 5 June 1923. The strikers included shedmen, coalmen, steam-raisers, cleaners and about twenty-five men in the goods and passenger departments, but not drivers or firemen. The three suspended men were named Messrs Condon, Delaney and Callanan.
- ⁷⁵ See *CE*, 6 Mar. 1923 for a letter from John Reardon, CEF secretary, claiming that deep wage cuts were necessary in many trades in Cork. It compares wages in Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Limerick, Waterford, Sligo, Mallow, London and Scotland.
- ⁷⁶ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 103; *Manchester Guardian*, 5 July 1923.
- ⁷⁷ *CE*, 13 July 1923. The cuts would take place on 16 July, on 15 October and on 1 January 1924.
- ⁷⁸ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 76.
- ⁷⁹ *CE*, 13, 17, 20 July 1923; Devine, *Organising History*, p. 137.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 19, 28 July, 2 Aug. 1923.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 23, 28 July, 11, 15 Aug. 1923.
- ⁸² *Irish Worker*, 10 November 1923; *ibid.*, 31 July, 1, 2, 4 August 1923.
- ⁸³ *Distributive Worker*, Sept. 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Aug. 1923.
- ⁸⁴ De Róiste diaries, 18 Aug. 1923, U271/A/49, CCCA.
- ⁸⁵ *CE*, 17, 23, 28, 30 July 1923.
- ⁸⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Aug. 1923; *Irish Independent*, 20 Aug. 1923. The unions had previously expressed a willingness to accept some reductions if the employers brought down prices and the cost of living. See *CE*, 21 July 1923.

- ⁸⁷ Cork Employers' Federation, 'Report of the proceedings of the conference held on 14 August 1923 at the Imperial Hotel', MP 593a, Boole Library, UCC. On the dismissals questions, the CEF wrote to the UDWC and asserted that 'the employers' will also exercise their undoubted rights to decrease the number of their staffs or employ any person as the state of their business may dictate'. See *Distributive Worker*, Sept. 1923.
- ⁸⁸ *Voice of Labour*, 25 Aug. 1923.
- ⁸⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 21, 23 Aug. 1923; *CE*, 24 Sept. 1923; Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 16 Dec. 1922, 13, 30 Jan., 18 Aug. 1923, U217/A/5, CCCA. The master printers had originally sought a 12s. diminution. The 8s. decrease was undertaken in three stages: 3s. February, 2s. 6d. from April and 3s. from June.
- ⁹⁰ *CE*, 23 Aug. 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Aug. 1923.
- ⁹¹ Cork Corporation minutes, 24 Aug. 1923, CP/CO/M/14, CCCA; *CE*, 24 Aug. 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Aug. 1923.
- ⁹² Linehan, 'The Development of Cork's Economy and Business Attitudes', p. 66; *Irish Independent*, 29 Aug. 1923.
- ⁹³ John M. Regan, *The Irish Counter-Revolution, 1921-1936: Treatyite Politics and Settlement in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999), p. 238; Aodh Quinlivan, *Philip Monahan, A Man Apart: The Life and Times of Ireland's First Local Authority Manager* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2006), p. 59; de Róiste diaries, 10 June 1923, U271/A/49, CCCA.
- ⁹⁴ Arthur Mitchell, *Labour in Irish Politics*, pp. 186-191; Niamh Puirseil, *The Irish Labour Party, 1922-73* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007), pp. 16-18; O'Connor, *James Larkin*, p. 76; *Manchester Guardian*, 1 Sept. 1923; *Irish Times*, 31 Aug. 1923. The *Irish Times* alleged that the 19 August incident at a funeral – where drivers of hearses were ordered off their cars – contributed to the Labour Party's poor result in Cork. See *CE*, 20 Aug. 1923.
- ⁹⁵ For an account of the Waterford strike, see Emmet O'Connor, 'Agrarian unrest and the labour movement in County Waterford, 1917-1923', *Saothar*, no. 6, 1980, pp. 40-58. See also Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society*, pp. 138-141. For an account of Irish employers' 1923 assault on wages in a national context, see Devine, *Organising History*, pp. 130-142.
- ⁹⁶ A figure of 8-10,000 is stated in *Irish Times*, 31 Aug. 1923. O'Connor claims that about 6,000 were locked out. O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 108. In Waterford, over 3,000 were locked out or on strike. See O'Connor, *A Labour History of Waterford*, pp. 192-194.
- ⁹⁷ Cork Harbour Board minutes, 20, 29 Aug., 3, 5, 10, 19 Sept., 21 Nov. 1923, PC/1/53, CCCA.
- ⁹⁸ *CE*, 4 Oct. 1923.
- ⁹⁹ *Irish Times*, 30 Aug. 1923.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 30, 31 Aug. 1923.
- ¹⁰¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Oct. 1923.
- ¹⁰² *CE*, 23 Oct. 1923.
- ¹⁰³ *Voice of Labour*, 15 Sept. 1923; INPDATU national executive minutes, 26, 28 Aug., 12 Sept. 1923, TU/1017/1/5, NAI.
- ¹⁰⁴ *CE*, 6-15, 21 Sept. 1923; *Irish Times*, 12, 15 Sept. 1923.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Irish Times*, 25 Sept. 1923.
- ¹⁰⁶ Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping, *Annual Report for 1923*, B619/B/2/4, CCCA; Charlie McGuire, *Roddy Connolly and the Struggle for Socialism in Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008), p. 86.
- ¹⁰⁷ *CE*, 28 Sept. 1923.
- ¹⁰⁸ William T. Cosgrave, *Dáil Éireann Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 5, 25 Sept. 1923; Free State government minutes, 25 Sept. 1923, PEC/G2/2, NAI. The employers had already been urged to cut of living when a government-appointed commission of inquiry into food prices, which had been set up that spring, concluded in August that prices were too high in Cork. Having initially not been represented on the commission, the CTC refused to give evidence to it. See *CE*, 10, 16, 17 Feb., 3, 23, 28 Mar., 15 Aug. 1923.
- ¹⁰⁹ *CE*, 29 Sept. 1923.
- ¹¹⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Sept. 1923; *CE*, 1 Oct. 1923; *Distributive Worker*, Nov. 1923; Cork Employers' Federation, *Cork Trades Disputes 1923* (Cork: Guy & Co., 1923), MP 593b, Boole Library, UCC, p. 25.
- ¹¹¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 2, 5 Oct. 1923.
- ¹¹² J. Anthony Gaughan, *Alfred O'Rahilly, II: Public Figure* (Nass, Kingdom Books, 1989), p. 210.
- ¹¹³ *CE*, 8 Oct. 1923.
- ¹¹⁴ CEF, *Cork Trades Disputes*, p. 10.
- ¹¹⁵ De Róiste diaries, 10 Oct. 1923, U271/A/49, CCCA.
- ¹¹⁶ Cork Chamber of Commerce minutes, 7 Oct. 1923, B619/A/01/05, CCCA; Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping minutes, 13 Dec. 1923, B619/B/1/5, CCCA.
- ¹¹⁷ William Cosgrave, *Dáil Éireann Debates*, vol. 5, 10 Oct. 1923; Free State government minutes, 28 Sept. 1923, PEC/G2/2, NAI.
- ¹¹⁸ *CE*, 16, 20, 23 Oct. 1923; *Irish Times*, 25 Oct. 1923.

- ¹¹⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Oct. 1923.
- ¹²⁰ *CE*, 19 Oct. 1923.
- ¹²¹ *Irish Times*, 20, 24, 26 Oct. 1923.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*, 27 Oct. 1923.
- ¹²³ *Irish Independent*, 31 Oct.-3 Nov. 1923; *Sunday Independent*, 4 Nov. 1923. *CE*, 31 Oct.-3 Nov. 1923.
- ¹²⁴ *CE*, 5, 9 Nov. 1923; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 112-113.
- ¹²⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 9, 10, 13 Nov. 1923; *Irish Worker*, 17 Nov. 1923.
- ¹²⁶ CEF, *Cork Trades Disputes*, pp. 8-22; *Workmen's Register*, 1913-24, BL/BC/MB/334, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA; *A.E.U. Monthly Journal and Report*, Jan. 1924
- ¹²⁷ ITGWU, Annual Report, 1923; Devine, *Organising History*, p. 131; *Irish Times*, 29 Nov. 1923; CEF, *Cork Trades Disputes*, p. 8; *CE*, 1 Aug. 1923.
- ¹²⁸ City of Cork Steam Packet Co., salary book for 1921-24, U370/F/194; City of Cork Steam Packet Co., wages book for 1921-24, 19, 26 Oct. 1923, U370/F/244, CCCA. The cut for watchmen was originally 6s. Hourly overtime rates were also cut from 2s. to 1s. 9d.
- ¹²⁹ City of Cork Steam Packet Co., carmen's wages book for 1924-32, 21 Nov. 1924, U370/F/240, CCCA.
- ¹³⁰ *Irish Times*, 29 Nov. 1923; *CE*, 15, 29 Nov., 1, 3, 4 Dec. 1923; Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 14 Nov., 11 Dec. 1923, TU/1/37, CCCA.
- ¹³¹ Devine, *Organising History*, p. 141. See also Éamonn Wall, 'Memories of Connolly Hall', *Liberty*, Oct. 1972; and Liam Beecher, 'Cork's role in ITGWU growth over the years', *Liberty*, Oct. 1975.
- ¹³² O'Connor, *A Labour History of Waterford*, p. 193.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 194
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁵ Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 15, 17, 21 Aug., 4, 24 Oct., 11, 14 Nov. 1923, TU/1/37, CCCA.
- ¹³⁶ INPDATU national executive minutes, 28 Oct., 28 Nov., 2 Dec. 1923, TU/1017/1/5, NAI; Callan, *Painters in Union*, pp. 156-157, 160-161; IUDWC national executive committee minutes, 29 Aug., 21 Sept., 3, 17 Oct., 12 Nov. 1923, Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House.
- ¹³⁷ ITGWU, *Annual Reports*, 1922, 1923; Payment books of the ITGWU, Ms. 7,271, ITGWU Papers, NLI.
- ¹³⁸ Cork Harbour Board minutes, 14 Nov. 1923, PC/1/53, CCCA; *CE*, 15 Nov. 1923, 3, 7 Jan. 1924; letter from Captain Slocock to Fred Cronin, 18 Dec. 1923, Ms. 49,526/28/7, Fred Cronin Papers, NLI.
- ¹³⁹ *CE*, 19, 22 Jan. 1924.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Northern Whig*, 8 Feb. 1924. For the pay rates proposed by the companies, see *Irish Independent*, 1 May 1924.
- ¹⁴¹ *Irish Independent*, 3 May 1924.
- ¹⁴² *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Jan. 1924; *Irish Independent*, 27 May 1924. The companies immediately rejected the RCA's July 1923 application.
- ¹⁴³ *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Jan. 6, 8, 28 Feb. 1924; *ibid.*, 23 Jan., 8, 28 Feb. 1924.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Mar., 26 Apr.- 9 May 1924; National Union of Railwaymen, *Irish Railway Agreements, 1919-1925* (London: Co-operative Printing Society Ltd, 1925), pp. 180-192.
- ¹⁴⁵ 'History of the Union in Ireland', MSS. 127/NU/OR/3/59, NUR archive, MRC, UW; McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 305-306.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 22, 26, 29 May, 2, 6 June 1924; *Irish Independent*, 27, 30 May, 2, 6 June 1924; award of the Irish Railway Wages Board, 4 June 1924, LAB 83/2367, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.
- ¹⁴⁷ *CE*, 7 Jan., 1, 4, 29 Feb., 26 Mar., 24, 28 May 1924.
- ¹⁴⁸ R.M. Fox, *Jim Larkin: The Rise of the Underman* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1957), p. 160.
- ¹⁴⁹ *CE*, 28 May 1923; Devine, *Organising History*, p. 133; 'Report on Irish unions, 1925, Ms. 57/6/5, Comintern Papers, McClay Library, QUB. A report sent to the Comintern in 1925 alleged that Cork had a branch of Larkin's union with about 200 members that operated secretly underground, but this seems highly unlikely.
- ¹⁵⁰ *CE*, 21 Jan. 1922, 21, 27 June, 9 July 1924; Cork Operative Society of Masons and Bricklayers minutes, 23 May, 8 July 1924, TU/1/37, CCCA; ITGWU Cork branch minutes, 5 June 1921, TU-IT, CCCA; ILPTUC executive committee minutes, 29 July 1921, ILHM.
- ¹⁵¹ *CE*, 7, 8, 14, 26, 29 July 1924; *Sunday Independent*, 6 July 1924; *Freeman's Journal*, 7 July 1924.
- ¹⁵² *CE*, 9 Aug. 1923, 16 Aug., 25 Nov., 5, 15 Dec. 1924.
- ¹⁵³ The first undertaking of its kind by Irish Labour, the James Connolly Labour College was founded in 1919 as an explicitly working-class educational institution. It provided lectures and courses in economics, history, law, public speaking and general studies.
- ¹⁵⁴ O'Connor, *Reds and the Green*, pp. 16-92; Emmet O'Connor, 'True Bolsheviks? The Rise and Fall of the Socialist Party of Ireland, 1917-21' in George Boyce & Alan O'Day (eds.), *Ireland in Transition, 1867-1921* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 209-222; *Watchword of Labour*, 20 Dec. 1919, 3-13 Mar. 10 July, 2-23 Oct. 1920. The SPI split into three factions: The Socialist Party of Ireland; the Workers' Communist Party led by Roddy

Connolly, son of James; and the Communist Labour Party led by Seán McLoughlin, a former president of the Socialist Party who had partaken in the Easter Rising.

4

Class Conflict in Derry, 1917-21

Like the national movement, in early 1917 Derry Labour began its most forceful period of agitation. Unlike most Irish cities, Derry's economy, with its shipbuilding and shirt industries, benefited from the First World War. The war enhanced Derry's importance as a city, which boosted Labour's bargaining power. The successful unionisation of previously unorganised sectors, most notably the shirt operatives, was the second factor that empowered Labour. Inflation was the primary cause for the spread of unions. Fittingly, 1917 began with local milk cart drivers threatening to strike against the recently imposed penny per quart on new milk.¹ By July 1918, the government estimated that the cost of living had increased by 74 per cent for working-class families in Britain since July 1914. Labourers suffered most as their living costs had gone up by 81 per cent while a craftsman's life was 67 per cent more expensive.² As with other Irish cities, militancy gathered pace in 1917-18 and peaked in 1919-20 when wage increases surpassed inflation. The war of independence made Derry's politics more communal than ever. Employers and Unionists exploited the tensions to combat Labour, proletarian unity and the ITGWU.

Derry Labour in 1917

Local class tensions that had been mounting since 1914 came to a head in early 1917. The British Government tried to diffuse class conflict by arbitrating disputes, but employers remained as unscrupulous as ever. For example, refusal to implement a Committee on Production award for metal craftsmen led to a strike of shipyard engineers from 7-13 April. Government arbitration gave the engineers a lesser increase, though shipyardmen were excluded.³ On 16 June, fifty boot and shoe workers downed tools when their employers did not grant them a war bonus of 10s. These factories, where wages ranged from 24s. to 29s., epitomised employer unscrupulousness. Workers there had received a bonus of only 1s. in the pound since 1914, even though the price of boots and shoes had increased by 25 per cent. After a few days of strike, most firms yielded and gave a 6s. increase.⁴ By now, the NAUL had established itself as the chief vehicle through which workers – especially manual labourers –

could channel their grievances. By March 1917, it had four local branches, two of which were in the city: one for shipyardmen and one for distillery workers, pork curers, gasworkers and bleachers (no. 112). Four months later, no. 112 also had sections for labourers and warehousemen.⁵ Table 4. 1 outlines some of the union's agitation that year.

By July 1917, the average price of retail and wholesale food had risen to 104 per cent above 1914 levels.⁶ Consequently, unrest continued to deepen, and class conflict moved into a more contradictory phase. Although strikes and lockouts were becoming much more common, they had become notably less violent. The use of scabs was not as prevalent and, when used, they did not experience the violence and intimidation their predecessors had. Nor was there the same level of state interference on the side of the employers. In August, a pork curers' strike (whose wages ranged from 24s. to 34s.) for a 4s. increase was called off when the men pusillanimously accepted their employers' arguments that trade condition did not justify such a claim.⁷ But this submissiveness was not representative of the working class. From 26 July to 16 August, the builders' labourers were on strike for an hourly rate of 7d., their wages being 22s. and 24s. Having dismissed an offer of 5½d, they accepted a 5¾d. rate until May 1918.⁸

The factory girls were also starting to assert themselves. The year ended with a wage dispute at Hogg's (whose operatives were the worst paid in Derry) and a strike of 400 girls at the Ebrington factory.⁹ With its shipyard and shirt industry, both of which were relevant to the war effort, Derry stood to gain from government arbitration. In December 1917, the ASTT put in a claim for a 15 per cent rise. Under Ministry of Labour arbitration, timeworkers were awarded 12½ per cent with pieceworkers 10 per cent.¹⁰ By the year's end, Derry Labour had finally achieved something that had eluded it for over twenty-five years: successful organisation of the factory girls. The girls were unionised with remarkable speed. In May 1917, they had still been unorganised; by December, however, McCarron's union had a monopoly on them. Its 'factory workers' branch' now had 3,354 souls, a 1,577 per cent increase in just twelve months. Of the 7,852 women the ASTT recruited in the UK in 1917, 3,154 of these were in Derry.¹¹

Table 4. 1: Increases Secured by the NAUL, 1917

Workers	Increase	Date
Bacon & ham curers	2s. for men and 1s. for boys.	First quarter
Shipyardmen	5s.	First quarter
Gasworkers	6d.	Feb.
Gasfitters	2d. an hour	July
Red-leaders ¹²	6s.	Second quarter
Shipyardmen on Admiralty work	6d. a day	Second quarter
Shipyard helpers	12½ per cent bonus & 1s. 6d. per night	Second quarter
Gasfitters	9d. hourly rate & a fifty-four-hour week (from sixty)	July
Distillery workers	3s. for men and 2s. for boys	Aug.
Seed merchant labourers	5s.	Aug.
Firemen (gasworks)	2s. 7d.	Aug.
Labourers (gasworks)	2s. 6d.	Aug.
Bleach workers	4s.	Autumn
Distillery workers	3s. for men and 2s. for boys	Autumn

Source: NAUL, quarterly reports for 1917, TU/GENERALC/1/22, Working Class Movement Library (WCML).

Derry Labour in 1918

As prices continued their upward climb in 1918, there was a significant growth in the number of labour disputes. Class conflict was quickly adapting to reflect this new era of mass unionisation of workers across economic sectors in a milieu of mass inflation. At the shipyard, there were short strikes for increases by platers' helpers and labourers at the beginning of January, and of platers and riveters in the middle of it. The month ended with a daylong strike of shop assistants at J.J. Pollock and Co. for better pay and recognition of their union.¹³ The latter was obtained and the former was left to negotiation.¹⁴ In late February, Pollock's staff struck again after they had been refused the 20 per cent (7s.) raise given by four other firms. At the same time, a brief strike over work practices occurred at W.G. O'Doherty's shop.¹⁵ The other firms' assistants threatened sympathetic strike if Pollock's did not concede. The strike typified how inclusive Labour had become when the public was treated to 'the novel spectre of well-dressed young men and women' distributing leaflets. Indeed, the strikers went further than their union could condone when they set upon a manager on his way home.¹⁶

The dispute ended in early March when the firm conceded increases averaging 25 per cent (3s. 6d. to 10s) and the union's minimum wage scale.¹⁷ For this, the Shop Assistants received extensive plaudits from the ITGWU in its weekly newspaper, *Irish Opinion: The Voice of Labour*. It was the 'generosity of the local members of the Union', that had enabled

‘all the strikers to receive in strike pay the full amount of their ordinary wages’. In the absence of an ITGWU Derry branch, it told the shop assistants to spread their union as ‘there should be no more strikes in Derry . . . if your fellow workers organise as you have done and fight when forced to do so in the unity of the ‘Prentice Boys.’¹⁸ When the British won a 5s. increase and the 12½ per cent bonus for metal craftsmen, the ITGWU was similarly cheerful. It commended the NAUL for getting increases for meal and flourmill workers.¹⁹ The Tyneside union was leading the working-class charge and was growing accordingly. In May, it took over the newly formed Derry Butchers’ Association and immediately pressed for a lessening of hours.²⁰ Disgruntlement was particularly rife in the bakeries. In February, arbitration gave bakers an additional 6s. 6d. and upped jobbers’ pay to 7s. daily. Breadservers got a 35s. minimum but labourers and apprentices received no improvement. Sir Robert Anderson – Derry’s Unionist mayor and a prominent shirt manufacturer who owned hosiery and knitting factories in Derry and Gweedore – was the arbitrator.²¹ Still unhappy, the men ceased work on 24 June. Labourers desired an extra 10s. and packers 15s. Both also wanted better conditions and a ban on nons. The strike concluded five days later when the wages question was submitted to arbitration, which awarded the men 4s. 6d. in September. The nons also agreed to join the bakers’ union.²²

The summer of 1918 was one of discontent for the Derry’s beleaguered proletariat. The bricklayers struck from 6 to 10 May for a 1s. 2d hourly rate, which the plumbers also pursued. The strike led to bricklayers, carpenters and joiners getting a raise and a 3s. bonus from 1 May.²³ The carrying trade had been in dispute since 1917 when the employers reluctantly gave a 4s. increase. In May 1918, a request for another 8s. was refused. A settlement was reached seven days later when the carters accepted 6s., giving them 20s. more than what they had in 1914.²⁴ The shipyard was the scene for 1918’s largest strike when 350 riveters, platers and caulkers secured an increase after downing tools.²⁵ Although plentiful in number, none of the summer strikes lasted more than five days. The intensity of the class tensions is unsurprising given the economic context. In August, the shirt factory operatives claimed that their pay had gone up only 10 per cent since the war began while the cost of living had gone up by 114 per cent.²⁶ Derry’s waterside workers were at the heart of Labour militancy. They demanded equality with British dockers and receive the Committee on Production’s May award. The Committee had ruled that Derry dock workers should receive a 5s. increase, with casual men getting another 1½d. per hour. The Derrymen rejected this and, on 28 August, resolved to strike for the Belfast award. On 31 August, they aborted the stoppage pending arbitration.²⁷ On 2 October, the unions expressed their new-found confidence at a meeting presided over by

Logue. They passed a resolution demanding the forty-four-hour week and authorising themselves to 'adopt any action they may consider necessary' to enforce this.²⁸

The death of McCarron

On 10 October, disaster struck Derry Labour. A German U-Boat torpedoed the *RMS Leinster* drowning more than 500 people. On his way to an ASTT meeting, James McCarron was one of those who perished.²⁹ Tributes to McCarron transcended class and politics and came all sections of Derry society.³⁰ A fund was established to erect a permanent memorial to him.³¹ But the ASTT did not allow tragedy to disturb its mission. Despite losing its most able Irish official, it pursued an increase for the factory workers. On 8 November, its claim was submitted to the Committee on Production, which issued increases.³² Against the advice of the Merchant Tailors' Federation, Derry's master tailors refused to implement the award. Consequently, a tailors' strike commenced on 11 November. The men returned to work on 3 December when the employers gave way and applied the award.³³ In December, shirt workers were awarded increases via arbitration. But pay was still low in the staple industry by the war's end: earnings averaged 18s. per operative.³⁴ In late 1918, the ASE pushed for the higher Belfast rate, which it did not attain. Nevertheless, it got another 7s., making rates in Derry within 2s. of those in the northern capital. By January 1919, the ASTT Derry branch had secured a wage 32s. 6d. higher than August 1914.³⁵

'Respectable' radicals – white-collar militancy

Such was the militancy that even lower-middle-class workers were forcefully pushing for improvements and were willing to strike if necessary. In late 1918, the IAWU demanded a wage 20s. above pre-war levels and a reduction of hours to fifty-six in all Irish asylums. In response, the Derry Lunatic Asylum's committee of management, of which Logue was a member, upped its employees' bonuses.³⁶ In mid-January 1919, there was an even more extraordinary manifestation of the zeitgeist. Doctors employed by the Board of Guardians publicly threatened to strike if their annual salary was not augmented. The dispute was resolved when an additional £40 a year was granted on top of the £20 they had been awarded in late 1918.³⁷ Medical militancy stemmed from the extra hours they had to put in treating patients of the Spanish Flu.³⁸

The war years were conspicuous for the diversity, regularity and combativeness of the separate wages' movements. But from early 1919 it was possible to speak of a single 'wages' movement' that incorporated all workers irrespective of political loyalties. Between 1914 and 1917, the pattern of industrial conflict had reflected war needs consequent to the evolution of

bargaining power. Workers in economic sectors relevant to the war effort, notably shipyard craftsmen, dominated strikes until 1917. From 1919, however, industrial conflict was more diffuse and involved everyone from the docker to the doctor. Shipyard militancy had been a defining feature of British Labour during the war years. It was driven by the introduction of machinery that diminished skill, degenerated apprenticeships and downgraded the tradesman's privilege. With the backing of the Ministry of Munitions, employers were increasingly exploiting the labour of apprentices, women and semiskilled men, who could be paid below the craft rate. Consequently, craftsmen heretofore conservative were radicalised.³⁹

Derry and the 1919 'Belfast soviet'

The most significant Labour struggle of this period was the campaign for the forty-four-hour working week. On 25 January, 40,000 engineering and shipbuilding workers in Belfast struck unofficially for it. The unrest spread to the Belfast Corporation employees, giving the strike committee control over the power supply which allowed it to issue a permit system, prompting journalists to refer to it as the 'Belfast soviet'. The strike was the greatest in Irish history and was almost general throughout Belfast. It lasted for three weeks and directly and indirectly affected 60,000 workers at its height. The strike committee included Catholics and Protestants, nationalists and Unionists, united in struggle.⁴⁰

On 3 February, Derry officials of the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades oversaw a meeting of workers in the Guildhall to discuss what the local response should be. Thomas Cassidy, the Derry-born Irish organiser for the Typographical Association and ITUC chairman, advised caution, arguing that any action would have to be national. But a national Labour movement did not exist. Most Belfast Protestants were overtly hostile to the ITUC because it was now openly identifying with Sinn Féin. Besides, the hours' movement was born in British shipyards, not Irish ones. Metal unions in Belfast, and to a lesser extent in Derry, wanted little to do with Dublin. Afraid of the ramifications of sympathetic strike, the meeting voted overwhelmingly not to support Belfast after boisterous exchanges. Instead, it decided to ballot local workers on a forty-four-hour movement. The meeting also rejected a resolution demanding the implementation of the forty-four-hour week by 1 May with no pay cuts.⁴¹ Regardless, events moved too quickly for the Derrymen. Alarmed by this dabble in 'Bolshevism', Dublin Castle sent up troops to crush the strike, leading to its collapse. Inertia had cost Derry Labour an opportunity. Herein was its dilemma in a nationalist-majority city: the embrace of radicalism left it open to association with revolutionary socialism and republicanism, which it was ill-prepared to deal with. Throughout 1919, Derry Labour's actions

did not alert the authorities. The police were confident that the city's 'ample' employment would fend off any revolutionary working-class consciousness. Shortly after the Derry gathering, the ITUC endorsed a national movement for the forty-four-hour week, a minimum wage of 50s. and a general increase of 150 per cent on pre-war wages. In contrast to the rest of nationalist Ireland, Derry Labour was slow to adopt this goal.⁴²

The Transport Union in the Maiden City

On 8 January 1919, a decade after its foundation, the ITGWU opened a branch in Derry. James Houston, a former organiser for the MEA in Belfast, was its first secretary. The branch (no. 179) initially catered for employees of the city's four cinemas.⁴³ Derry was a vital component of the union's drive into Ulster from June 1918 when it had only three northern branches. Led by Peadar O'Donnell, an ex-Donegal INTO county secretary, the number of ITGWU branches in the province grew to ten by the end of 1918.⁴⁴ Born in the Rosses in the Donegal Gaeltacht in 1893, O'Donnell qualified as a primary school teacher in 1913. By 1918, he was an active trade unionist. He affiliated the INTO's Gweedore and Rosses branch to the Derry Trades Council and embarked to Scotland to organise the 'tattie hokers' – Irish migrant potato pickers. Vocally pro-Bolshevik and republican, his radicalism was too much for the INTO and he joined the ITGWU later in 1918. That October, he was appointed the union's northern organiser where he 'blazed a trail of glory across Ulster'.⁴⁵

In early 1920, Liberty Hall decided that O'Donnell should concentrate his efforts on Derry, which it believed was a solid market for recruitment. O'Donnell sometimes lodged with Edward McCafferty of the ASE (the republican secretary of the trades council) and sometimes with a Gweedore man called Sweeney who owned a bar and lodging house in Waterloo Street. Crucially, the ITGWU missed an open goal when it snubbed a chance to have the city's dockers and carters on its books. In contrast to 1909, the NUDL men were willing to join if it could bring McNulty, still its secretary, with them. O'Donnell agreed to this condition but Liberty Hall did not, and the men stayed put. How had the dockers fared under Sexton? Exceptionally, Derry's port was never decasualised. On the other hand, many dockers enjoyed the freedom of casualism and opposed a register of workers for fear it would be used to monitor them and blacklist militants. The NUDL obtained a closed shop on the quays, with union men given priority of employment. It also controlled the manning and allocation of men to tonnage squads.⁴⁶ Casualism accentuated dockside hierarchies: the better paid stevedores and grain porters were virtually immune from it. But mechanisation had diluted the 'craft' of 'skilled'

dockers (grain porters, coal trimmers etc.) which impressed on them the necessity of common action within the industry.⁴⁷

Relations between the ITGWU and the trades council were cold from the start and the union was refused affiliation. The council even changed its rules to stop the Transport Union from joining. Derry's conservative Labour-nationalist establishment viewed the trades council as its domain and lacked the revolutionary zeal of O'Donnell and his generation. On one occasion when O'Donnell was negotiating with employers, a group of trade unionists, including Logue, burst into the room and denounced the ITGWU as interlopers.⁴⁸ But it wasn't all gloom. In February, the branch won increases at the Opera House, making wages 70s. for operators, 40s. for permanent men, 21s. for stagehands and 14s. 6d. for checkers. O'Donnell had threatened the manager with sabotage of a show if the staff were not granted increases.⁴⁹

Nemesis: unrest continues to grow

In 1919, Derry Labour faced an unprecedented level of industrial strife as class conflict engulfed Britain and Ireland. On 25 January, the NAUL took out the tramwaymen, who earned a miserly 15s., for a 10s. improvement. The strike collapsed on 3 February when the City of Derry Tramway Company folded. The men had to find work elsewhere. The city had lost its tram service for good.⁵⁰ The British Government could do little to stem the tide of proletarian discontent. 'It certainly looks as if the ancient goddess of Greek literature Nemesis is assuming the form of vast labour trouble to deal out retributive justice to Mr. Lloyd George and his Cabinet of reactionary and anti-democratic influences', declared the *Journal* on 31 January.⁵¹ Whether by divine providence or the contradictions of capitalism, class conflict continued to deepen. There was also discontent on the railways. The companies were loath to implement the eight-hour day and did so without paying overtime. The Derry RCA warned of trouble if they persisted.⁵² Demands for improved wages remained the key driving force of Labour belligerency. Employers, however, remained as intransigent as ever, giving Derry two of its most serious strikes of the era.

Table 4. 2: Threatened strikes in Derry, 1917-20

Workers/Union	Date	Demand	Outcome
Typographical Association	Jan. 1917	Wage increase	3s. increase
Bakers & breadservers ⁵³	Dec. 1917	10s. increase	Modified increase
Typographical Association	Nov. 1918	Wage increase	50s. wage
Pork curers	May 1919	15s. increase	6s. increase
butchers' assistants	May 1919	Wage increase	10s. increase
Slaughterhousemen	May 1919	Wage increase	Extra 1s. per head
Butchers' assistants	Sept. 1919	Wage increase	6s 6d. increase, making wages 40-75s.

Source: *DJ*, 1917-20.

The 1919 platers' and carters' strikes

The first of 1919's many major strikes took place at the shipyard. On 27 January, platers and riveters downed tools against a wage decrease. The employers, who had initially agreed not to cut pay, claimed the reduction was necessitated by the lessening of hours from fifty-four to forty-seven.⁵⁴ On the third day of the strike, 900 NAUL shipyardmen met and voted by a four-fifths majority not to strike in sympathy. On the same day, the platers' helpers also resumed work.⁵⁵ The strike became entangled in the conflict between nationalists and Unionists and instilled into the strike the sectarianism that Labour had done its upmost to avoid. The *Sentinel* reported that on 14 February Protestants were greeted with shouts of 'Up Dublin!' and 'Up Sinn Féin!' upon entering a meeting of apprentice platers. At this point they left and decided to resume work because they now regarded the strike as political. Three days later, things took an ugly turn when these workers were physically attacked during their lunchbreak by strikers. The *Journal* strongly repudiated any political motives for the strike.⁵⁶

Although the *Journal* was less hostile to Labour than the Unionist press, it was prone to pronouncements every bit as reactionary. One of its 'correspondents' warned workers of a 'particularly dangerous attempt that is being made by strangers' to seize control of and use the unions 'for their own selfish ends regardless of the higher interest of the workers'. This element was not only 'avowedly revolutionary' but promulgated the 'unsound doctrines of socialism and syndicalism'. More egregious was its open hostility to religion. The goal was not the 'material betterment of the working classes', but 'the establishment of a paganistic regime in which the sanctions of law ignored and even the Ten Commandments subverted to the

gratification of personal ambition and the creation of a tyrannical domination under which minorities would not have a semblance of freedom'. The *Sentinel* praised the *Journal*'s tirade.⁵⁷

Neither paper need have worried. One of Irish syndicalism's defining features was its lack of hostility to religion, which contrasts starkly with the attitude of Spanish, Italian and French syndicalists. In Italy and Spain, where the Catholic Church had enormous influence and economic power, syndicalists were fiercely hostile to religion, especially Catholicism. In both places, the move towards capitalism was led by a weak and ineffective liberal bourgeoisie. Accordingly, Italian and Spanish syndicalism had decidedly anarchist flavours, a movement that despised not only landowners but also their protectors in the Catholic Church. French and American syndicalists had a similar view of the Church as a tool of the established order.⁵⁸ There are unique historical reasons for Irish syndicalism's absence of anti-clericalism:

... whereas on the continent the Catholic Church was allied with the great Catholic landowners and Catholic governments, in Ireland the great landowners were Protestant. Whereas on the continent the rising middle class had to fight for power and influence against a semi-royalist reaction that was allied with the Church and accordingly tended to seek popular support around a program of anti-clericalism, in Ireland the Church supported the middle class against the Protestant Ascendancy and the British.⁵⁹

The platers' strike ended on 3 March. It had encompassed eighty platers and more than 300 others who had been thrown out of work because of it. Trevisa Clarke, the Liverpool-born managing director of the North of Ireland Shipbuilding Co., had taken a hard-line. Clarke was a tough employer with an autocratic style. He prosecuted the apprentices for breach of contract under the 1875 Employer and Workmen Act and threatened to close the yard. Some were convicted of assault. Clarke made sure that local wages were lower than in the Belfast yards, where labourers' rates were well below cross-channel levels.⁶⁰ His shipyard was a hornet's nest of industrial conflict. In January, a judge had commented that 'ca'canny', a Scottish term for a type of industrial sabotage best described as 'poor work for poor pay', was rumoured to be rife in the yard. Five months later, a shipyardman stood trial for assaulting an apprentice caulker for 'working too hard'. Under syndicalism's influence, sabotage had become a common feature of class conflict in Ireland. Its greatest practitioners were members of the ITGWU.⁶¹ That industrial sabotage was taking place in Derry demonstrates that syndicalism did penetrate, however mildly, its Labour movement. Sabotage was an integral part of syndicalist tactics of direct action and was adopted as official policy of the CGT in 1897 and the IWW in 1910. It

was also practised by the CNT in Spain from 1919-23. Slowing down production, working-to-rule, producing poor quality work and, in some cases, destroying machinery were all considered legitimate actions aimed at hitting company profits.⁶²

On 23 March, Derry's carters struck when their employers refused a demand for improved wages. They wanted the Master Carriers' Association to enforce an award of the Committee on Production giving an extra 7s., bringing wages to 51s. The carters were well supported. The dockers came out in sympathy, claiming that the merchants' refusal to release coal supplies had forced their hand, and the bellmen refused to scab. The strike had dreadful consequences. Thousands were left without coal, rendering them unable to light fires or cook food in an unseasonably cold spring.⁶³ On 29 March, crowds gathered on the quays anticipating emergency rations of food and supplies from the Coal Controller. But provisions never arrived because the merchants still refused to release the coal. Extraordinary scenes ensued:

For a time the crowd eyed the coal from a distance, but soon some of the more venturesome produced bags and began to fill them. In less than half an hour there was a regular scramble, men, women, and children swarming unto the piles of coal like ants. Those returning with well-filled bags to their homes spread like wildfire the news of the raid, and gradually the crowd of raiders swelled, coming from the poorer quarters of the city. Bags, baskets, buckets, and haversacks were requisitioned to hold the coal. During a heavy hailstorm these were quickly filled, and in an incredibly short space of time there appeared on the scene trucks, donkeys carts, barrows, a lorry, and even a hackney car, all of which were sent away well laden. For several hours this extraordinary operation continued with the Harbour constables and a number of the Royal Irish Constabulary looking on. Soldiers in uniform and silver badge men were among those who filled and carried away bags.⁶⁴

After an angry confrontation, the police dispersed the crowd. The merchants' uncompromising attitude incurred for them the opprobrium of the *Journal*, which declared:

The effect of the suffering thus needlessly inflicted on thousands not connected with the strike has been to arouse indignation, and was in no small degree responsible for the recklessness displayed by the crowds at the quay on Saturday morning. . . the occurrence was regretted by many, but in the popular view ample justification was afforded by what is described as the harshness of the merchants, coupled with the impulse which cold, hunger and want inspires. As one of the strike leaders remarked, there is a limit to human endurance, and those who continue

to pill on prices and pile up profits out of the essentials of existence should take heed of the warning note that Saturday's affair conveyed.⁶⁵

On top of the coal famine, there were shortages of bread and flour because bakeries closed for want of coke. The bakers and breadservers received a week's notice. By now, carters, gas workers and builders' labourers were affected.⁶⁶ On 3 April, arbitration under Mayor Anderson and Councillor Patrick Meenan, an NUDL official, brought a return to work on the terms that prevailed before the strike pending the Committee on Production's decision on whether carters fell under the remit of its award. Seventy-five summons for larceny were issued as MacDevette & Donnell looked for compensation for the public's raid on the coal supply.⁶⁷

May Day 1919

As explained in Chapter 2, May Day 1919 was observed everywhere in Ireland except for Limerick and Belfast.⁶⁸ The prospect of Derry's working class acting in unison terrified the authorities. The trades council called on all workers to participate in the procession, but powerful forces of reaction were against it. Brigadier-General Erskine banned any procession or assembly taking place on Derry's historic walls, where the trades council proposed the workers gather. The military occupied the walls instead.⁶⁹ The Derry branch of the Ulster Unionist Labour Association (UULA) (see Chapter 8) published a statement in the Unionist press calling on all Protestant workers not to take any part in the proceedings. The demonstration, it alleged, was 'of a revolutionary and Bolshevik nature and supported by Sinn Féin propagandists', having been concocted by the party as a covert means to undermine the Union through 'the pure Labour ticket'.⁷⁰ The demonstration was also condemned by the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys of Derry who declared that it was 'conceived in a spirit of disloyalty, in accordance with the views of men who seek the disruption of the Empire and the establishment of an Irish Republic'.⁷¹ In the end, May Day was only partially observed and inevitably took on a sectarian dimension. Most shipyard workers took the day off, as did all carters, dockers, tailors and many in the trades. Most, but not all, factory girls did not go to work.⁷² Although Labour had shown its inability to deal with the Orange Card, the day was a triumph of sorts. As the *Journal* observed:

Labour can really afford to be jubilant over the happenings of the day, for that there should be such a formidable military display to prevent the organised workers of the city assembling . . . is an acknowledgement of their power . . . To have manoeuvred the British authorities . . . into such a position that they threw themselves into the arms of the Orangemen and Apprentice

Boys and prohibited any gathering on the walls was a far more useful thing at the present time than hours of speech-making could achieve.⁷³

Strikes and embargoes

Derry's increasing cost of living, which was the highest in Ireland by late 1919, continued to spur Labour agitation. In April 1919, even the *Sentinel* praised local dockers for partaking in the NUDL's national food embargo.⁷⁴ It was in the building trade, a regular scene of strikes, where the year's most protracted dispute took place. When workers announced that they wanted a 7d. hourly increase and a forty-seven-hour week (instead of fifty-five), negotiations began but produced no result. On 7 May, the joiners came out when, after conceding the hours demand, the Master Builders' Association maintained that it could not give more than 1s. 6d. The masons and bricklayers had their demands partially conceded and therefore did not join the strike. The labourers, however, struck for a 1s. 3d. rate. Shipyard joiners – who were paid a rate of 1s. 6¾d. per hour – briefly struck in sympathy and refused to work overtime until the building trade dispute was settled. The strike dragged until early July when the men accepted the shipyard rate. The labourers did not return until 17 July when they accepted 1s. hourly for a forty-seven-hour week.⁷⁵

More trouble at the shipyard

In the meantime, trouble had spread to the shipyard. Within two days of the building trade joiners ceasing work, shipyard riveters and caulkers downed tools when the company tried to decrease their wages following a reduction of hours from fifty-four to forty-seven. Then, the yard's plumbers and their helpers struck to bring their wages up to the level of other shipyard craftsmen. The drillers also left work, making 1,000 idle.⁷⁶ Clarke once again threatened to close the yard if work was not resumed within a week, alienating those who had previously sympathised with him.⁷⁷ After denouncing 'agitators who do not belong here', the *Journal* held Clarke personally responsible:

The wisdom of Mr. Clarke's often recurring threats may be questioned, and they certainly gain in neither weight nor authority launched through the columns of a Press which are used day in and day out to insult, jeer at and malign the workers. These organs have never been known to support the demands of organised labour no matter how well founded; the interest of the employer class is ever dominant with them.⁷⁸

Clarke paid off several labourers and gave the apprentices an ultimatum to resume work immediately or consider their contracts terminated. Defiantly, they chose to remain out.⁷⁹ By 2 June, some of the platers had come out in sympathy with the riveters and the imported Scottish scabs had gone home. The strikes ended shortly afterwards when the men agreed to arbitration. That month, the yard's lieu workers successfully saw off attempts to cut their pay. The final, and most prolonged, shipyard strike of 1919 was one of painters from 10 September to 8 October.⁸⁰

The height of the wages' movement, 1919-20

Though hamstrung by sectarianism, Derry workers remained militant and poised to use the strike weapon when necessary. On 27 August, sawyers and labourers at Ballintine's struck when the company refused to pay them shipyard rates for reconstruction work at the yard. The men stated that the building trade rate meant 8s. 6d. less a week. The conflict was one of the more protracted of the period, lasting until 4 October when a 4s 6d. increase was given.⁸¹ In September, a bakers' strike was submitted to arbitration, as were shipyard and dockside disputes the following month (see Appendix 5).

The zeitgeist ensured that militancy was spreading to sectors that had never experienced it before. On 13 October, Charles Denroche, organising secretary of the IBOA, visited Derry to rally bank clerks for their national strike. White-collar agitation helped to make Labour a more cohesive unit. From 22-26 November, no local newspapers were published for the first time in nearly 150 years because of a strike in the printing trade. The dispute arose when the local branch of the Irish Master Printers' Association refused to apply retrospectively to 1 July a national agreement granting 64s. for a forty-eight-hour week – an additional 8s. for those engaged in tri-weekly newspapers. Another 8s. was awarded to linotype operators, giving them 80s. Local employers argued that an increase was not warranted because they had given one of 2s. 6d. in July, giving compositors and bookbinders 60s. The strike ended when the employers conceded the printers' claim.⁸² By late 1920, local printing wages were the second highest in Ulster.

Table 4. 3: Printing Trade Wages in Ulster, 1920⁸³

Locality	Jobbing, weekly news & bi-weekly news	Evening news	Morning & tri- weekly news
Belfast	93s. 6d.	96s.	105s.
Derry	81s. 6d.	84s.	89s. 6d.
Newry	76s.	78s.	84s.

Antrim, Letterkenny	73s. 6d.	76s.	81s. 6d.
Armagh, Portadown	71s.	73s. 6d.	79s.
Strabane	68s. 6d.	71s.	76s. 6d.

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 123.

Although Irish Labour was agitating with unprecedented fervour in early 1920, it was not until that March that another strike took place in Derry. In Britain, the iron moulders had been on strike for an extra 15s. since September 1919. It soon spread to parts of Ireland where foundries were major employers (like Wexford and Belfast). While only fifteen foundry labourers in Derry partook, the stoppage had serious implications for the local economy. By 10 October 1919, the Derry foundry had suspended all its employees and over 1,000 men were made idle. The shipyard was hit particularly hard. British foundrymen were financially supported by their colleagues in Derry and by the city's dockers and carters. The strike ended on 26 January 1920 when the men accepted a 5s. increase. It involved 50,000 men directly and threw a further 25,000 out of work, making it one Britain's biggest ever strikes.⁸⁴ The wages movement continued unabated and peaked in June, the era's most socially and politically disturbed month in Derry. Some of the wages and increases sought and secured were impressive by any standard. For example, the National Union of Clerks secured average advances of 30-35s. at the shipyard, resulting in a pay scale that began at 75s. and finished at 142s. 6d.⁸⁵ Builders' labourers struck from 10-15 May for a 70s. 6d. wage (from 47s.) and won a 54s. 10d. rate via arbitration. Two months later, building tradesmen's wages were standardised with their final increase for four years. Their 'country money' was also increased to 24s. and apprentices' pay was upped by 25 per cent.⁸⁶ The improvement made them the second-best paid building workers in Ulster.

Table 4. 4: Building Trade Wages (in pence) & Hours in Ulster, 1920

Locality	B	M	C&J	S	Plmbr	Plstr	Pntr	L	Hrs
Armagh	24	24	-	-	-	-	21	-	49
Belfast	29	29	29	29	26.5625	29	-	16	44
Derry	25½	25½	25½	25½	25½	25½	25½	14	47
Portadown	24	-	23	24	-	24	21	10 & 11	49

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 9.

Wage demands remained the primary incentive for direct action. From 3-17 May, the bakeries were hit by another strike. The Bakers' Union wanted rates of 82s. 6d. for bakers and confectioners (from 62s. 6d.), 65s. for servers (from 45s.), 60s. for packers (from 45s.) and labourers (from 40s.). Wages in the Derry bakeries were poor when compared to Belfast where

bakers and confectioners earned 80s. and servers 70s. The stoppage led to a bread famine across the north-west as bakeries in Derry had agencies in Donegal. The workers insisted that all bread be baked by union labour, i.e., journeymen and not foremen assisted by employers' sons. Bread on its way to the workhouse, Nazareth House and Victoria High School was seized and presented to charitable institutions. The local infirmary had to discharge many of its patients and workhouse inmates had to subsist on biscuits alone. In total, about 50,000 were affected. The strike even reached the House of Commons when Thompson Donald, a UULA MP for Belfast Victoria, asked whether the government intended to intervene. It did. Ministry of Labour arbitration issued lesser increases and concessions (see Appendix 5).⁸⁷ Shortly afterwards, a more important strike began – the era's most consequential stoppage in Derry.

The 1920 shirt cutters' strike

As well as arbitration, the British Government responded to class conflict by expanding the number of trade boards. Between 1919 and 1920, fifteen new boards were set up for Ireland. There were nineteen by August 1920, covering 148,000 workers, the bulk of them in Ulster's textile and clothing industries.⁸⁸ Their role was to resolve disputes by providing a conciliatory means by which man and master could meet in a spirit of mutual co-operation. They frequently failed to achieve this limited function. On 12 June 1920, 286 cutters and apprentices struck for a rise of 15s. for the former and 7s. 6d. for the latter when Irish employers failed to pass on a 1d. per hour increase granted to British shirt workers on 5 May. Irish cutters earned 1s. 5d. an hour, as set by the trade board the previous September, 2d. less than their British colleagues. The wage differential had finally come to a head.⁸⁹ The ASTT had accepted the discrepancy but the United Garment Workers' Union (UGW) did not. The UGW had unionised the cutters since 1919 when it subsumed the Shirt and Collar Cutters' Union of Ireland. By mid-1920, 200-300 cutters were members of it.⁹⁰

On 17 June, the Derry trades council elected to open negotiations with the SMF to bring the dispute to an end. Its confidence was well-placed as two firms had agreed to pay the increase. But appearances were deceptive: the employers were out for blood. They claimed that as the dispute was not a local one – with Coleraine, Lisburn, Belfast, Dublin and other Irish centres affected – any settlement would have to be national.⁹¹ There was another reason for their intransigence: the long-expected employer counterattack, which started earlier in Derry than in most other Irish cities. The strike, with its luckless timing, covered the beginning of the post-First World War economic downturn. The cutters expected the profits' boom of 1919-20

to deliver a quick result. The SMF realised they would soon have an abundance of stock and took advantage of the situation. Negotiations broke down after the employers' offer of a 1d. an hour increase was rejected. Consequently, the SMF decreed a general lockout on 17 July. Between 5,000 and 8,000 women were thrown out of work and £10-14,000 in unpaid wages was being lost.⁹² Arbitration under the Ministry of Labour failed to deliver a resolution. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress in London also endeavoured to bring about an arbitrated settlement, but progress was slow and subsequent weeks of negotiations produced little.⁹³

Most of the women were members of the ASTT, whose 'Factory Branch' had 3,352 members in Derry by the end of 1919. Its general secretary, T.A. Flynn, went to Derry to resolve the crisis. Flynn was scathing about the UGW and was highly aggrieved by the position in which his union had been placed. On 2 August, he told the *Journal* that many firms had diverted work to England where UGW members were working overtime. 'Veritas', who reported the allegation, added that the strike had been precipitated for political reasons. He believed it was a plot to destroy Irish industry, claims that were also made by the *Sentinel* and the trades council.⁹⁴ A war of words that reflected the intra-Labour tensions began. In the *Journal*'s next issue, the strikers' spokesman responded to Flynn. The 'rumour' that the UGW was doing Derry work in England was, in his words, an employer-led attempt to divide the workers; by propagating it, Flynn was supporting the SMF and doing its dirty work. The spokesman urged the women to join the UGW who would pay them 10s. a week out-of-work benefit. He denied the allegation that the UGW had previously refused to accept women as members. The Garment Workers, he claimed, brought an organiser to Derry to recruit women but efforts had been frustrated 'because of the lying propaganda of people afraid of losing their grip on the girls'.⁹⁵

The factory girls were ripe for poaching as they were extremely unhappy with the ASTT's lack of financial support. In an industry where strikes seldom lasted for more than a few days, Flynn concluded that his union could not afford the expense after issuing only two weeks' strike pay – a paltry 8s. a week. Instead, it granted £1,250 to the distress fund and raised another £1,800 from its British branches. It was a meagre offer given the UGW's £2,000 contribution and what was being lost in wages. On 4 August, anger boiled over when hundreds of women besieged the ASTT's offices to demand strike pay. When no aid was forthcoming, some marched in procession to the shipyard shouting, 'up the rebels', 'up Dublin' and 'down with the shipyard'.⁹⁶ At this point, rumours that the girls were being impelled to join the UGW

provoked an intervention from Peadar O'Donnell. While praising the 'stand' taken by the cutters, he criticised the UGW for deceiving the women about British unions and urged them to join his union instead. He believed that the women were 'fed up with cross-channel unions' and expressed contempt at the English cutters' lack of support. He also attacked the trades council for its lack of solidarity with the women.⁹⁷

By now, the SMF had become more amenable to the Ministry of Labour's continuous attempts at arbitration. O'Donnell's allegation that English cutters did not support their Derry comrades was rejected by a UGW spokesman who argued that the Englishmen had no reason to strike. He averred that the cutters did not expect the women to be made idle by the strike and wrote that a 'large number of women' had told him that they had wanted to strike in sympathy but that their union had 'barred their way'. However, he agreed with O'Donnell that the trades council had done little to support the operatives but added that it had done little more to support the cutters.⁹⁸ After O'Donnell's public excoriation of it, the trades council began to help the beleaguered women. Logue announced that it had joined public efforts to raise money for them. The committee established to administer the fund included Logue; McCafferty; Charles McGrellis, local secretary of the UGW; and 'Mrs. Burke' from the Unionist Waterside. The ASTT was not represented.⁹⁹ The committee placed adverts in the local press and generated a handsome response.¹⁰⁰ The strike had soured relations between the UGW and the trades council, as the ASTT noted:

The shirt cutters (Garment Workers' Society) in the North of Ireland and Dublin came out on strike for an increase of 15s. per week. As Londonderry is the head and centre of the shirt industry in Ireland, the effects of this action at once became a matter of vital consideration. A special meeting of the Trades Council was held, at which the Executive of the Trades Council was instructed to take immediate action, with the object of referring the whole dispute to arbitration. . . They were . . . influenced by the fact that . . . the Board of Trade had already taken an active interest in the dispute, several meetings under an independent chairman having been held without result . . . A further curious fact was strongly emphasised at the Trades Council. Shirtmaking firms in Londonderry employing two-thirds of the workers had also factories in England and Scotland, and while the Londonderry workers were encouraged to strike, no dispute was allowed in the factories outside Ireland. This action was strongly condemned by members of the Trades Council, who stated that those behind the strike were not animated by a desire to increase wages, but were endeavouring to seriously destroy a native Irish industry which by sheer merit of the productions had won a foremost place in the world's

markets. Serious disturbances in the city, and its occupation by the military, hindered the Trades Council in its contemplated action. The strike was now entering upon its tenth week, and up to the present there is no evidence that those who engineered it have any real desire to promote a settlement . . . It is beyond doubt, and is, in fact, not disputed, that strike trade has been made on this side of the Channel, during the ten weeks which, up to the present, the dispute has lasted. The Londonderry Trades Council were very emphatic on this point that it was a deliberate attempt to strangle a native Irish industry in favour of English factory workers.¹⁰¹

The trades council's relief fund frightened the Unionist establishment which regarded it as a Trojan horse to induce the women to join the ITGWU. On 16 August, the UULA published the first public statement on the strike of any Unionist body:

Unionist Labour Association, City of Derry Branch. Members of this association and all Protestant workers are earnestly requested to refuse to have anything to do with the ITGWU. It preaches republicanism and is used for political purposes. We strongly urge all Unionist workers to get into and remain in their respective amalgamated unions. The attention of female factory workers is specially directed to this matter. We also beg to announce that a fund for the relief of factory workers has been established; that collectors will be out with books bearing the stamp of the Unionist Association and we earnestly appeal to our fellow citizens to respond generously. (By order).¹⁰²

It was a direct response to O'Donnell (who was negotiating with employers) and the trades council. The 'mandarins' of 'the harmless trades council', 'the mercenary cross-channel Unions' and the UULA were all of one mind when it came to the ITGWU wrote Cathal O'Shannon, editor of the *Watchword of Labour*.¹⁰³ The UULA's open sectarianism was succeeding as the strike became even more embroiled in Derry's political war. The trades council responded by describing the UULA's intervention as an attempt to divide the workers. A spokesman proclaimed that the relief fund had been distributed to anyone who needed it irrespective of religion and asked the UULA to co-operate. The *Journal* agreed with him; the *Sentinel* did not:

It is impertinent of the Derry Journal to deny the right of the UULA to issue an appeal on behalf of Protestant workers or describe it as 'an attempt to arouse sectarian animosities' . . . but for Councillor Logue there would be no need for a UULA. It was from his ruling as chairman of the Trades Council that the ULA sprang. He ruled against discussion of the Londonderry

Improvement Bill on the grounds that it was political. Yet he also ruled that conscription could be discussed as not being political. After inconsistencies like this is it any wonder that Unionist trade unionists should lose faith in the Trades Council.¹⁰⁴

The *Sentinel* condemned the ITGWU as a 'purely republican organisation' and commended the UULA's relief fund. It denounced the trades council's fund as a ploy to get Unionists into the ITGWU. Indeed, its next issue published a letter from a 'factory worker' which claimed it was nationalist workers and the trades council that introduced sectarianism:

The first to introduce religion and politics were the Catholic factory girls themselves. When I went down to the Guildhall last week to get my share of relief, the Catholic girls wanted to know what Protestants were coming there 'looking for Catholic benefit for' and they kept continually shouting 'up the rebels' and 'up Dublin'. The committee say they have distributed the money irrespective of creed and politics, but I know cases of families where there are two girls in each belonging to the Tailoresses' Society and only six shillings was given to each family.¹⁰⁵

Allegations like this were part of the wider propaganda battle waged by Unionists against nationalists. It was reprinted in a leaflet distributed among Belfast Protestants looking for contributions for their co-religionists in Derry.¹⁰⁶

On 19 August, the strike finally ended after a compromise gave the cutters an hourly increase of 1½d. By 23 August, all shirt factories had reopened.¹⁰⁷ The Derry UULA had a role in terminating the strike via its chairman, Anderson. The cutters were disappointed at not having achieved parity with Britain – and O'Donnell sought to take advantage. On 26 August, at a 'very large' meeting of the ITGWU's Derry Branch at the Guildhall, he congratulated the cutters and appealed to all shirt workers to join the ITGWU. He attacked the UGW's English membership for working throughout the Derry strike and for contributing little to strike funds, claiming that only Irish workers in Glasgow had donated generously. While he considered the strike to be 'inopportune', he claimed that his presence at the negotiating table had secured the cutters 'a few extra bob'. Never one to mince his words, O'Donnell announced that his intention was 'not to smash the cross-Channel Unions catering for the girls, but to smash every cross-Channel Union in Derry'. His bellicosity struck a chord as 'several hundred women' joined the ITGWU.¹⁰⁸ O'Donnell later claimed that they had joined on a 'sectarian or nationalistic basis'.¹⁰⁹

From its new offices on William Street, the Transport Union had come out of the strike with an enhanced popularity. The political and economic tumult provided grounds for its popularity and the girls began joining it even before they were locked out. On 14 July, Liberty Hall sent £51 to 'Derry tailoresses', £73. 10s a fortnight later and £48. 10s. a fortnight after that.¹¹⁰ The ASTT was the strike's biggest casualty. Its unwillingness to support the girls led to an exodus from it: membership of its 'Factory Branch' plummeted from over 3,300 to 200. Most joined the UGW, which emerged triumphant and gained up to 3,000 women.¹¹¹ In late August, the *Journal* advertised a meeting of the shirt and collar cutters' section of a new union: the 'Amalgamated Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union', a provisional name for an industrial union that would become the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers (NUTGW) later that year. The ASTT viewed the new union as a major threat to its existence.¹¹²

During the strike, the carters and dockers blacked the transportation of goods to and from implicated companies and backed the Protestant cutters to the end. These Catholic nationalists stood shoulder-to-shoulder with their Unionist fellow workers which left a deep impression on the cutters. The NUDL also provided financial support to the women.¹¹³ But such action was borne out of economic necessity rather than class consciousness. Derry's economy contained many 'mixed' workforces, and with such integration solidarity was not only the norm but an operational necessity. On the LLSR, Protestants stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Catholics dismissed because of their participation in the munitions embargo (see Chapter 8). On the GNR, Catholics expressed their solidarity with their Protestant colleagues by not joining the protest.¹¹⁴

Charles Desmond Greaves portrayed the cutters' strike as the moment when the Protestant working class was there to be won to socialist republicanism, only for 'reactionaries' to play the Orange Card:

the Unionist position was being . . . rapidly eroded. When a shirt-cutters' strike took place in Derry and the leadership proved ineffective the workers turned to Peadar O'Donnell. Sectarianism was at an ebb and Labour morale was at its highest since 1907 . . . at this point the reactionaries took alarm. . . Within a few days sectarian riots turned the city of Derry into a shambles.¹¹⁵

As Andrew Finlay has demonstrated, this is incorrect. The strike occurred *in the context of* inter-communal bloodshed. Following the election of a nationalist Corporation in January and the political prisoners' strike in April (see Chapter 8), violence began and continued throughout

the summer. Sectarianism was at an all-time high, not at an ebb. Apart from the ITGWU, support for the strike was lukewarm, at least until the lockout was initiated. The trades council's interpretation of the strike as an attempt to destroy an indigenous Irish industry alienated the cutters. Insofar as they did 'turn to' O'Donnell – and it is doubtful whether they did – it was because he had 'friendly contacts with one or two shirt manufacturers' that he could use to his advantage as a negotiator. Though some Unionist cutters and packers did not come out for political reasons, the strikers were motivated by economic grievances and not politics. If O'Donnell was approached, it was despite his political views, not because of them.¹¹⁶

Class conflict after the cutters' strike

The shipyard remained a major centre of class conflict. On 10 September, the plumbers and their labourers there struck for parity with their building trade colleagues. Three days later, the heater boys came out for an extra 3s. in the pound of the riveters' wages, which immediately made the latter group idle. The employment of two Belfast fitters caused several in the same department to walk off the job. When Clarke paid the two men off, the others resumed work.¹¹⁷

The next month, the ITGWU brought out its members at the Picture Palace to protest the refusal of the company's electrician to leave the ETU and join it. Seven staff members scabbed. Work was resumed when the issue was sent to the ITUC for adjudication.¹¹⁸ That month, after protracted negotiations between the INTO and the British Government, Irish primary school teachers obtained a higher scale of salaries. Men were given an initial annual salary of £170, rising by yearly increments to £370; women were given an initial salary of £155, rising to £300. Principals now had £155 to begin with and would receive £255 after annual raises, while junior assistant mistresses were to receive £110 at first, eventually rising to £150.¹¹⁹ Taking inspiration, the ASTI put forth its own demands for greater salaries.¹²⁰

In mid-November, another dispute in the baking trade erupted. The issue was the employment of three nons in a firm. When employers refused the Irish Bakers' Union's demand that the men be compelled to join it, strike was declared. The Master Bakers' Association responded by serving notice that a lockout would be in effect from 20 November. In response, the union put claims for wage improvements, a forty-four-hour week and an annual seven-day holiday.¹²¹ On 19 November, an agreement was reached. The nons agreed to join the union and the claims were put to Ministry of Labour, which gave its verdict on 6 December.¹²² Wages were now 82s. for bakers, 52s. 6d. to 57s. 6d for packers, and 47s. 6d. to 57s. 6d for labourers. Jobbers now earned 14s. a day.¹²³ The bakeries were in near constant state of industrial conflict, more so than most other trades. Before the strike was called, some breadservers sued their

employers for arrears of wages. The case was dismissed.¹²⁴ Local bakers' wages compared well with other Irish centres, as Table 4. 5 outlines.

Table 4. 5: Irish Bakers' Wages, 1920

Locality	Forehands	Singlehands	Tablehands
Cork	88s.	-	84s.
Belfast	-	90s. (day work), 96s. (night work)	-
Derry	-	-	82s.
Drogheda	-	-	74s.
Dublin	-	-	94s.
Kilkenny	-	-	68s.
Limerick	-	-	80s.
Newry	-	-	75s. 6d.
Waterford	-	-	95s.

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 161.

First Watt's distilleries strike

November brought one of the greatest labour disputes that Derry experienced in this era – a strike at Watt's distilleries. On the surface it resembled a typical industrial dispute, but its timing was important as it coincided with the slump. By late 1920, the NAUL believed its adroit ability as a negotiator had secured a standard of living for Derry's workers that was as good if not better than anywhere else in Ireland. In September (as it had done the previous May), the union pressed for a 15s. raise at Watt's; the company offered only 2s.¹²⁵ By now, the UK economy had fallen into deep recession and the employers were looking to cut wages and extend hours.¹²⁶ In return for the increase, Watt's wanted to revert to the pre-1914 fifty-six-hour week, which would add nine hours to a distillery worker's week. The NAUL rejected this and served strike notice for 23 November, but the company beat them to it and locked out 200 workers on 22 November. About 300 men were employed at Watt's and many in the ancillary trades – coopers, carters, pork curers, smithies, farm labourers – were affected as they depended on the distilleries. The lockout also left 300 shipyardmen without work.¹²⁷

By late 1919, the NAUL had appeared to consolidate its position as Derry's most popular general union. It had three city branches: one for the factories, one for the shipyard and one for general labourers. By November 1920, however, its dominance was being challenged. The ITGWU had gained a strong foothold in the distilleries and was anxious to expand after the cutters' strike. According to Anton McCabe, its membership was 350 in mid-1920, a figure

that is surely far too high. Dublin Castle, which kept a close eye on the ‘extreme’ and ‘frankly Bolshevik’ ITGWU, estimated its membership in Derry at only twenty-five in April 1920. This figure remained static until August when the fallout from the cutters’ strike caused its membership to jump to 185 members (see Table 5. 1). Its ascension in Derry alarmed the authorities. They had predicted that the Transport Union would never take off as it ‘practically represents the Labour side of Sinn Féin and for this reason does not commend itself to the Ulster people’. But in September, the union ‘made an individual canvass throughout all centres of industry’ in Derry which paid off as it acquired 160 new members. By then, it had recruited flourmill workers (including Protestants from the Waterside), distillerymen, dockers and shipyard labourers.¹²⁸

The ITGWU was now the union of choice for most Derry distillerymen.¹²⁹ At Watt’s, inter-union relations between the NAUL and the ITGWU took a nosedive when the latter refused to bring its members out on strike. O’Donnell explained that it could not do so as it was mandated by the ITUC to not engage in any sectional wages movement during the munitions embargo.¹³⁰ But the embargo was not the primary motivator for O’Donnell. He considered the railway protest to be a vindication of a supreme moral principle: Ireland’s struggle against British imperialism and a means through which the national war could be turned into a class war. If transport was brought to a complete halt, then organised Labour should step in and create a food distribution network to keep essential supplies moving, putting the revolution in the hands of people in the process, as it had planned to do during the general strike the previous April. The ITGWU had become the victim of its own ideology. It found itself caught between the wars it fought for nation and class. The NAUL, on the other hand, was not affiliated to the ITUC. Like the trades council it dominated, it was Labour-nationalist rather than republican-socialist. The employers cared little about inter-union spats and seized the opportunity to lock out both.¹³¹

Relations between the two unions had long been poor. The previous June, Michael McNaught presided over a meeting of the NAUL’s distillery (no. 112) branch which unanimously passed the following resolution: ‘that in the event of any of the section seceding from NAUL and joining the Irish Transport Workers’ Union, that NAUL members would take drastic action in dealing with such members’.¹³² McNaught, who was an undermanager at the Bogside distillery, wrote to the *Journal* and made some extraordinary allegations. He claimed that the ITGWU had put in a wage demand like the NAUL’s, only to rescind it when a Transport Union delegation met the distilleries’ management and agreed to scab on the NAUL. He further accused O’Donnell of poaching members from his union. O’Donnell refuted any

suggestion that the ITGWU had engaged in poaching or scabbing and reiterated the inseparability of the industrial and national struggles in Ireland. Furthermore, he attacked the trades council for conspiring to deport him from Derry and accused it of trying to discredit him. But before the situation escalated, a settlement was reached after a two-day conference in Belfast. The NAUL, which had reduced its claim to 7s., accepted the company's offer of 3s.¹³³

Although the lockout lasted less than a week, it had important consequences. Rapport between the NAUL and the ITGWU had been further damaged, making the possibility of a unified working class, even among nationalists, more unlikely. The clash between the two unions was symbolic of the divisions that had emerged in Derry Labour since 1917: syndicalist unions vs. non-syndicalist unions; Irish unions vs. British unions; and republican unions vs. apolitical unions. Moreover, it vividly revealed the contradictions between national and working-class interests and how the ITGWU struggled to reconcile the two, especially in the north of Ireland. Nowhere were these conundrums more apparent than in Derry. Here, conservative Labour leaders attached to British unions grappled with revolutionary changes, both political and in union organisation, in a peripheral, predominately nationalist city with a large Unionist minority. Consequently, while the unions had procured wages and hours that compared well to the rest of Ulster, and in some cases to the rest of Ireland, the forces of reaction were well-placed to counterattack.

Table 4. 6: Clerical Salaries at Watt's Distilleries, 1916-25

Date	Monthly Salary								
May 1916-Apr. 1919	15s.	40s.	£10	£16 13s. 4d.	£41 13s. 4d.				
May-Oct. 1919	£11 13s. 4d.			£16 13s. 4d.			£41 13s. 4d.		
Nov. 1919	£11 13s. 4d.			£16 13s. 4d.			£58 6s. 8d.		
Dec. 1919-Apr. 1921	£12 10s.			£20			£58 6s. 8d.		
May 1921-May 1922	£4	£7 10s.	£10 16s. 8d.	£12 10s.	£18 6s. 8d.	£25	£28 6s. 8d.	£37 10s.	£83 6s. 8d.
May 1922-May 1925	£4	£7 10s.	£12	£12 10s.	£18 6s. 8d.	£25	£28 6s. 8d.	£37 10s.	£83 6s. 8d.

Source: Salaries Book, 1916-34, D1506/1/8/1, Watt & Co. Papers, PRONI.

Chapter Notes and References

¹ DJ, 1, 3 Jan. 1917.

² O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 24. Bowley estimates that by the end of 1916, beef and mutton were on average 85 per cent more expensive in the UK than in July 1914. The price of bacon had gone up 56 per cent,

bread 73 per cent, potatoes 122 per cent, sugar 170 per cent and eggs 175 per cent. See Bowley, *Prices and Wages*, p. 44.

³ Trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1917, LAB 34/17, Ministry of Labour records, UKNA; award in arbitration between the Londonderry Engineering Employers' Association and the ASE, 30 Apr. 1917, LAB 2/113/IC3136/1917/Part2, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. The Committee on Production awarded 2d. an hour for engineers and a 20 per cent increase on piece rates for smiths. In mid-1918, arbitration engineers another 2s. per week and converted the 3s. timekeeping bonus into a war wage but did concede any increase to the smiths. See *A.S.E. Monthly Journal and Report*, July 1918, MSS.259/ASE/4/1/50, ASE collection, MRC, UW.

⁴ *DJ*, 18, 25 June 1917; NUBSO monthly reports, Mar. 1918, May 1918, TU/FOOTA/1/29, WCML.

⁵ *DJ*, 23 Mar., 18 July, 14, 26 Sept. 1917; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 15 Sept. 1917.

⁶ Bowley, *Prices and Wages*, p. 36.

⁷ *DJ*, 25 July, 6 Aug. 1917.

⁸ *Ibid*, 6 Aug. 1917; *LG*, Sept. 1917.

⁹ *DJ*, 10, 12, 14, 21 Dec. 1917; *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Dec. 1917.

¹⁰ Award in an arbitration between the Derry Branch of the SMF (Ireland) and the Derry Branch of the ASTT, 22 Dec. 1917, LAB 2/435/IC6322/2/1917, Min. of Labour Records, UKNA; *DJ*, 28 Nov. 1917, 9 Jan. 1918. Those under eighteen were awarded half of what adults got. Employers in Cork implemented the 10 per cent increase shortly afterwards. *Journal of the ASTT*, Mar. 1918.

¹¹ *DJ*, 14 May, 16 July 1917; ASTT, *Annual Report for 1917*, TU/TAILORB/1/47, WCML, pp. 80-81; *Journal of the ASTT*, Dec. 1917, June 1918, L20, WCML; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 88.

¹² Red-leaders applied red lead, a highly toxic anti-corrosive paint to protect the hull of ship against rust.

¹³ Trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1918, LAB 34/36, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; *DJ*, 16, 25 Jan. 1918; *The Shop Assistant*, 2, 9 Feb. 1918. The Shop Assistants opened a Derry branch in June 1917.

¹⁴ Harding, 'The Irish Issue in the British Labour Movement', pp. 183-184; *Shop Assistant*, 30 June, 7 July 1917.

¹⁵ *DJ*, 20 Feb., 1 Mar. 1918; *Shop Assistant*, 16, 23 Feb., 9 Mar. 1918.

¹⁶ *DJ*, 27 Feb. 1918, cited in O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 31.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 8 Mar. 1918.

¹⁸ *Irish Opinion*, 16 Mar. 1918.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 19 Jan. 1918.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 18, 25 May 1918.

²¹ Londonderry Master Bakers Association v Joint Committee of Operative Bakers, Bread Servers and Allied Workers, 21 Feb. 1918, LAB 2/69/IC1537/1918; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1918, LAB 34/36; both found in Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

²² *DJ*, 26 June, 1 July 1918; trade disputes book for selection industries in the UK in 1918, LAB 34/36, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

²³ *DJ*, 6 May 1918; *LG*, June 1918; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 32; letter from T. McGlinchey to Henry Millar, 6 June 1918, letter book no. 47, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum. Negotiations between the bricklayers and their employers had been ongoing since February before they collapsed.

²⁴ *Derry People and Donegal News*, 1 June 1918; *DJ*, 29 May, 22 July 1918; *Belfast Newsletter*, 27 Aug. 1918.

²⁵ Trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1918, LAB 34/36, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

²⁶ *DJ*, 26 Aug. 1918. The girls thus sought an advance of 2d. per hour.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 19, 30 Aug., 2 Sept. 1918; *Voice of Labour*, 7 Sept. 1918; award of the Committee on Production, 18 July 1918, LAB 2/127/1244/8A/1918, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

²⁸ *DJ*, 4 Oct. 1918; *Voice of Labour*, 12 Oct. 1918.

²⁹ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 221.

³⁰ See *DJ*, 14, 16 Oct. 1918 for a list of all of those who expressed public sympathy at McCarron's death.

³¹ *Ibid*, 21 Oct. 1918.

³² *Ibid*, 11 Nov. 1918.

³³ *Ibid*, 15 Nov., 2, 4 Dec. 1918.

³⁴ *DJ*, 5 Aug., 13 Dec. 1918. In August, the cutters had been threatened with a lockout when they sought an increase. From early October to the date of the application, women were given an extra 1½d. per hour and an extra 1d. per hour after the date of application. Under the same criteria, girls were given hourly increases of ¾d. and ½d., and outworkers were given 5s.

³⁵ *A.S.E. Monthly Journal and Report*, Dec. 1918, Jan. 1919, MSS.259/ASE/4/1/50-51, ASE collection, MRC, UW. As craftsmen, ASE members were also in receipt of 12½ per cent bonus.

³⁶ *DJ*, 25 Nov. 1918. The committee increased men's bonuses of married men to 12s. 6d. and of unmarried men to 7s. 6d. Women who had more than three years' service got 2s. 6d. and those with less than that got 2s.

³⁷ Derry Board of Guardians minutes, 4, 11, 25 Jan. 1919, BG/21/A/33, PRONI. The Board's original offer was a raise of £20 but this was rejected. The Irish Medical Association had been striving for increases since the summer

of 1918 when it sought a salary scale that started at £200 a year and increased incrementally to £300 after fifteen years' service. By 1921, the doctors still received that scale. See *DJ*, 29 July 1918, 9 May 1921.

³⁸ *DJ*, 6, 20 Jan., 3 Feb. 1919.

³⁹ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 33; Hinton, *The First Shop Stewards' Movement*, pp. 13-17, 56-100; Keith Burgess, 'The political economy of British engineering workers during the First World War', in Leopold H. Haimson & Charles Tilly (eds.), *Strikes, wars, and revolutions in an international perspective: Strike waves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 289-320

⁴⁰ For thorough accounts of 1919 strike in Belfast, see Morgan, *Labour and Partition*, pp. 148-190; and Patterson, *Class conflict and sectarianism*, pp. 92-114.

⁴¹ *DJ*, 5 Feb. 1919; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 34.

⁴² RIC CI for Londonderry MRs, Jan. 1919-Jan. 1920, CO 904/108-110, *The British in Ireland* microfilm series, Boole Library, UCC; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-fifth meeting*, 1919, pp. 44-45, NLI; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 34.

⁴³ Paul Starrett, 'The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union in its Industrial and Political Context, 1909-23' (University of Ulster: PhD, 1987), p. 332.

⁴⁴ Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Peadar O'Donnell* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), pp. 11-14; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 174.

⁴⁵ *The Voice of Labour*, 1 Feb. 1919. For accounts of Peadar O'Donnell's activity in Ulster in early 1919, including strikes at Monaghan and Caledon, see Peter Hegarty, *Peadar O'Donnell* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1999), pp. 48-55.

⁴⁶ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 22. Casual labour was the norm on the docks in many countries until the 1890s. Beginning in London in 1890 after the 1889 dockers' strike, decasualisation had been ongoing since then. See Klaus Weinbauer, 'Power and control on the waterfront: casual labour and decasualisation', in Sam Davies, Colin J Davis, David de Vries, Lex Heerma van Voss, Lidewij Hesselink & Klaus Weinbauer (eds.), *Dock Workers: International Explorations in Comparative Labour History, 1790-1970, Volume 2* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 580-603

⁴⁷ For example, the grain-chute had killed the specialised grain-porter; mechanical coaling had weakened the trimmers. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, pp. 208, 210-211.

⁴⁸ Hegarty, *Peadar O'Donnell*, pp. 65-66.

⁴⁹ *Voice of Labour*, 22 Feb. 1919. Before the increases, wages were 50s. for operators, 12s. for stage hands, 9s. for checkers and 30s. for permanent men.

⁵⁰ *DJ*, 29 Jan., 7 Feb. 1919; *Belfast Newsletter*, 8 Feb. 1919; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1919, LAB 34/37, Min. of Labour records, UKNA;

⁵¹ *DJ*, 31 Jan. 1919.

⁵² *DJ*, 12 Mar. 1919.

⁵³ The workers were members of two separate unions: the Londonderry Breadservers' Association & Allied Workers and the Irish Bakers' National Amalgamated Union. See *Londonderry Master Bakers Association v Joint Committee of Operative Bakers, Bread Servers and Allied Workers*, LAB 2/69/IC7731/1917, Min. of Labour Records, UKNA.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 14 Feb. 1919. The *Freeman's Journal* reported that 500 had gone on strike. The Ministry of Labour, on the other hand, estimated that only 136 platers had done so with a further 273 indirectly affected. Both figures seem to be grossly inflated. On 21 February, the *Journal* reported that the number of those on strike was sixty-five: forty platers and twenty-five apprentices were struck in sympathy on 29 January. This seems the most plausible figure. See *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jan. 1919; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1919, LAB 34/37, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; *DJ*, 21 Feb. 1919.

⁵⁵ *DJ*, 31 Jan. 1919.

⁵⁶ *LS*, 18 Feb. 1919; *DJ*, 19 Feb. 1919.

⁵⁷ *DJ*, 10 Feb. 1919; *LS*, 11 Feb. 1919.

⁵⁸ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 115-119.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 116. See also John Newsinger, *Rebel city: Larkin, Connolly and the Dublin labour movement* (London: Merlin, 2004), pp.

⁶⁰ *DJ*, 21, 26 Feb., 3, 12 Mar. 19 May 1919; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 28.

⁶¹ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 33. For the broader context of sabotage in Irish industrial disputes, see Emmet O'Connor, 'Active Sabotage in Industrial Conflict, 1917-23', *Irish Economic and Social History*, vol. 12, 1985, pp. 50-62.

⁶² Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 34-37; Geoff Brown, *Sabotage: A Study in Industrial Conflict* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1977), pp. 194-209.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 24, 28 Mar. 1919.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 31 Mar. 1919. The term 'silver badge men' referred to discharged, wounded veterans.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

- ⁶⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 1, 2 Apr. 1919; *Irish Independent*, 31 Mar. 1919; NAUL Executive Council minutes, 4 Apr. 1919, TU/GENERALC/2/27, WCML.
- ⁶⁷ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 34; *DJ*, 2, 4 Apr., 2, 12 May 1919.
- ⁶⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 2 May 1919.
- ⁶⁹ *DJ*, 30 Apr., 2 May 1919.
- ⁷⁰ *Derry Standard*, 30 Apr. 1919; *LS*, 26, 29 Apr. 1919. The loyalist 'No Surrender' band also declined an invitation to the march. Two other bands took part. See O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, p. 38.
- ⁷¹ *DJ*, 2 May 1919.
- ⁷² *Ibid*; *Irish Independent*, 2 May 1919.
- ⁷³ *DJ*, 2 May 1919.
- ⁷⁴ *LS*, 13 Apr. 1920; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 182. The Irish NUDL had put an embargo on the export of food on its Irish ports. See *DJ*, 16 Apr. 1920.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 21, 28 Apr., 9, 11 May, 11, 25 July, 17 Dec. 1919; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 58; letter from AGIBS Derry branch to Derry Town Clerk, 8 May 1919, letter book no. 48, Londonderry Corporation records, Tower Museum.
- ⁷⁶ *DJ*, 9, 12 May 1919; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 17 May 1919.
- ⁷⁷ *DJ*, 19 May 1919.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid*.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 28 May 1919; *Irish Independent*, 28 May 1919; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 24 May 1919.
- ⁸⁰ *DJ*, 2 June 1919; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 7 June 1919; *LG*, July 1919, p. 305; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1919, LAB 34/37, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.
- ⁸¹ *DJ*, 29 Aug. 1919; O'Connor, *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 58.
- ⁸² *DJ*, 15 Oct. 1919; *LG*, Aug. 1919; National Wages Agreement for Ireland, 14 July 1919, LAB 83/1983, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Nov. 1919; *Irish Independent*, 26 Nov. 1919; *DJ*, 24, 26 and 28 Nov. 1919; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1919, LAB 34/37, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. A special issue of the *Derry Journal* was published on 28 November to cover the dates of the strike. The July agreement applied to compositors, machinemen, linotype and monotype operators, linographic printers and bookbinders and machinerulers.
- ⁸³ The working hours for these wages are forty-eight for daywork and forty-five for nightwork.
- ⁸⁴ *Irish Independent*, 22, 23 Sept. 1919; *DJ*, 10 Oct. 1919, 14, 16 Jan. 1920; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1920, LAB 34/20, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.
- ⁸⁵ *LS*, 13 Mar., 13 Apr. 1920. For apprentices, pay began at 25s. for those aged sixteen and increased to 70s. for those aged twenty-one.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid*., 13 May 1920; *LG*, July, Aug. 1920; letter from the J. McGlinchey to Henry Miller, 8 July 1920, letter book no. 36, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum. Country money was the expense given to those working outside the city. The old allowance rate was 21s.
- ⁸⁷ *DJ*, 3-17 May 1920; *LS*, 4-18 May 1920; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 8, 15 May 1920; *Sunday Independent*, 16 May 1920; House of Commons parliamentary debates, 13 May 1920, vol. 129, col. 623, UKPP; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1920, LAB 34/38, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; arbitration award in Londonderry Master Bakers' Association vs. Derry branch of the IBCAWAU, 9 July 1920, LAB 83/394, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. The 'Bakers' Union' refers to the Irish Bakers', Confectioners' and Allied Workers' Amalgamated Union.
- ⁸⁸ O'Connor, 'War and Syndicalism, 1914-1923', p. 55.
- ⁸⁹ Submission of the Derry branch of the SMF to the Boundary Commission, 1926, MIC288/11, Boundary Commission Papers, PRONI; *LG*, Jan. 1920; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, pp. 46-47.
- ⁹⁰ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 88
- ⁹¹ *DJ*, 14, 18 June.
- ⁹² *Ibid*., 14, 16, 19, 21 July 1920; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 46; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 106.
- ⁹³ *Ibid*, 23, 28 July 1920; Trades Union Congress Parliamentary Committee minutes, 22 July 1920, MSS.292/20/6, Trades Union Congress collection, MRC, UW; Tillie & Henderson minutes, 5 Aug. 1920, T3377/1, Tillie & Henderson papers, PRONI.
- ⁹⁴ *DJ*, 2 Aug. 1920; *LS*, 31 July, 5, 19 Aug. 1920; ASTT, *Annual report for 1920*, TU/TAILORB/1/48, WCML, p. 185; Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', p. 107.
- ⁹⁵ *DJ*, 4 Aug. 1920; Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', p. 107.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid*. 6 Aug. 1920; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 46; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 106-107, 355
- ⁹⁷ *DJ*, 6 Aug. 1920; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 108.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid*. 9 Aug. 1920; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 108.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid*., 11 Aug. 1920; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 110.

- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 11, 13, 16, 18, 20 Aug. 1920; *LS*, 17 Aug. 1920. The following is an example of the kind advert the committee placed: ‘Derry and District Trades and Labour Council Appeal on Behalf of The Factory Workers. Fellow citizens, as you are aware a lock-out of the factory employees of the city has been going on for some three or four weeks, the result of which is a great many cases of distress. In making this appeal we hope that the merchants, trade societies, and citizens generally will give to the factory workers the support which they are entitled to, for they have been foremost in any good work of relieving distress.’
- ¹⁰¹ Most, though not all, of this quote is cited in Finlay, ‘Trade Unionism and Sectarianism’, pp. 109-110. The rest is taken from *Journal of the ASTT*, Sept. 1920, L20, WCML.
- ¹⁰² *Derry Standard*, 16 Aug. 1920; *LS*, 17 Aug. 1920; *Watchword of Labour*, 4 Sept. 1920; also cited in Finlay, ‘Trade Unionism and sectarianism’, pp. 111-112. The Derry UULA had been condemning the ITGWU’s influence in the city since at least June 1919. See *LS*, 21 June 1919.
- ¹⁰³ *Watchword of Labour*, 11 Sept. 1920; O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 47.
- ¹⁰⁴ *DJ*, 18 Aug. 1920; *LS*, 19 Aug. 1920.
- ¹⁰⁵ Cited in Finlay, ‘Trade Unionism and Sectarianism’, p. 115.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁷ *DJ*, 16, 20, 23 Aug. 1920; *LG*, Sept. 1920.
- ¹⁰⁸ *DJ*, 27 Aug. 1920.
- ¹⁰⁹ Quoted from an interview with O’Donnell’s in Finlay, ‘Trade Unionism and Sectarianism’, p. 121.
- ¹¹⁰ O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 47; *Watchword of Labour*, 31 July, 21 Aug. 1920; Devine, *Organising History*, pp. 103, 905; ITGWU payment books, 13, 27 July, 10 Aug. 1920, Ms. 7,269, ITGWU papers, NLI.
- ¹¹¹ Finlay, ‘Trade Unionism and Sectarianism’, pp. 89, 118, 355-356; Stewart & Hunter, *The Needle Is Threaded*, p. 173; *ASTT, Annual report for 1920*, TU/ TAILORB/1/48, WCML, p. 126.
- ¹¹² *DJ*, 25 Aug. 1920; O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 47. The NUTGW was the result of an amalgamation between the Scottish Operative Tailors and Tailoresses’ Association and the UGW. It was an industrial union ready to recruit everyone in the shirt factories.
- ¹¹³ *DJ*, 16 July 1920; Finlay, ‘Trade Unionism and Sectarianism’, pp. 105-107; O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 46-47 In an interview with Finlay, John McCorkell an apprentice cutter at the time of the strike, described the support given to the cutters by the carters and dockers as ‘marvellous’.
- ¹¹⁴ O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 53.
- ¹¹⁵ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union*, pp. 279-280.
- ¹¹⁶ Finlay, ‘Trade Unionism and Sectarianism’, pp. 105, 113-115.
- ¹¹⁷ *DJ*, 15 Sept. 1920.
- ¹¹⁸ *DJ*, 15 Sept., 15 Oct. 1920; *LS*, 14 Sept., 16 Oct. 1920; trade disputes record book for select industries in the UK in 1920, LAB 34/38, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. By January 1922, all of the electricians’ employers bar one, Thomas May’s, were implementing the agreement. The ETU wrote to the Corporation to ask to not give May’s any contracts for repair work. If the Corporation refused, the ETU’s members there would refuse to work and seek support from the Electrical Power Engineers’ Association. See letter from the ETU to Henry Miller, 20 Jan. 1922, letter book no. 50, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum
- ¹¹⁹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 21 Sept-12 Nov. 1920; *Irish Independent*, 21-Sept.-12 Nov. 1920.
- ¹²⁰ *LG*, Nov. 1920.
- ¹²¹ *DJ*, 17 Nov. 1920.
- ¹²² Ibid, 22 Nov. 1920; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 27 Nov. 1920; *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 Dec. 1920.
- ¹²³ *LG*, Jan. 1921.
- ¹²⁴ *DJ*, 10 Nov. 1920.
- ¹²⁵ Gavin, Kelly & O’Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, pp. 186-187.
- ¹²⁶ O’Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 98; O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 42.
- ¹²⁷ NAUL Executive Council minutes, 26 Nov. 1920, TU/GENERALC/2/28, WCML; *DJ*, 22 Nov. 1920; *LS*, 23 Nov 1920.
- ¹²⁸ Anton McCabe, ‘*The Stormy Petrel of the Transport Workers*’: Peadar O’Donnell, trade unionist, 1917-20 (Dublin: SIPTU, 2000), p. 18; *Watchword of Labour*, 18 Sept. 1920; RIC, Crime Department, Special Branch, Reports on the ITGWU, Apr.-Nov. 1920, CO 904/158/5, Colonial Office records, UKNA.
- ¹²⁹ *DJ*, 29 Nov. 1920.
- ¹³⁰ Ibid, 22 Nov. 1920; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-sixth annual meeting*, 1920, NLI, pp. 41-43.
- ¹³¹ Ruairi Gallagher, ‘Smash every Cross-Channel union’: Inter-trade union rivalries at Watt’s Distilleries in Derry, 1920-1921’, *Saothar*, no. 42, 2017, pp. 57-58; O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, pp. 48-49. Ruairi Gallagher and I partially collaborated on this article.
- ¹³² Cited in Gallagher, ‘Smash every Cross-Channel union’, p. 57.

¹³³ *DJ*, 26, 29 Nov. 1920. Sam Bradley represented the NAUL at the talks. As well as being the union's district organiser for Ireland, Bradley was also a Labour-Unionist councillor on Belfast Corporation and a member of both the UULA and the West Belfast Unionist Association.

5

Class Conflict in Derry, 1921-24

As the economic slump deepened in the early months of 1921, the nature of industrial relations changed. Boardroom militancy put workers on the defensive. Unlike those in the south, northern employers felt confident enough to embark on the counteroffensive. The softening of the class war in the first four months of 1921 provided an illusion of harmony as the Derry Employers' Federation prepared itself for the inevitable backlash. Labour had expected a counterassault for some time and pledged stout resistance to any return to pre-1914 wages and conditions. The ITGWU was keen to present itself as the steadfast alternative to the crumbling amalgamateds. There was some foundation for the propaganda. On 15 April 1921, Britain's 'Triple Alliance' of the Miners' Federation, the NUR and the National Transport Workers' Federation collapsed when the latter two refused to strike in support of wage cuts in the mines. A general assault on British wages was the outcome.¹ The day is mourned in Labour lore as 'Black Friday'. It demonstrated the extent to which bureaucratic, non-revolutionary industrial unionism had tamed British syndicalism.² Black Friday inspired employers across Britain and Ireland to strike while the iron was hot. In April, the Derry Chamber of Commerce held a special meeting to discuss wages and its president declared:

The year 1920 was remarkable for the unprecedented depression in trade and commerce which set in with great suddenness which set in during the autumn and affected nearly every commercial interest. It was not too much to say that on the outcome of the present miners' dispute hung the prosperity of all classes in the future. The great reduction of wages and increased working hours in other countries had placed British goods in a serious position in the world's market and unless cheaper labour could be obtained the outlook was black . . . it was to be hoped that Labour would realise the impossibility of maintaining the high wages brought about by war conditions, and the refusal of the Triple Alliance to support the miners was a favourable sign.³

It was statement of intent – a sign of things to come. The next three years were characterised by intense class conflict that exposed Labour's structural weaknesses.

The growth of the One Big Union

On 1 July 1918, the ITGWU outlined its commitment to syndicalism by publishing *The Lines of Progress*, a pamphlet intended ‘to advance Connolly’s OBU idea’ by arguing that all workers be in one union, organised into industrial sections. It declared that political and economic freedom could only be achieved in this way and not through political parties.⁴ The growth of the ITGWU’s Derry branch reflects this national aspiration. By April 1921, it had sections for municipal employees, shipbuilding and engineering workers, builders’ labourers, bottlers, distillery workers and women/girls. The women’s section celebrated May Day 1921 in style with a successful concert at the Guildhall where Irish music was played and the ‘Internationale’ and the ‘Red Flag’ were belted out. The guest of honour was Belfast trade unionist James Baird, a former boilermaker at Harland & Wolff and one of the ‘rotten Prod’ who had been expelled from the shipyards for their republican and/or Labour sympathies. At another Guildhall meeting a month later, Charles Ridgeway, a Belfast Protestant who had replaced O’Donnell in late 1920, claimed that the union was now the biggest in the shirt industry. That meeting also closed with a boisterous rendition of the Red Flag.⁵ The ITGWU also provided a social outlet for its members. In June 1921, in the syndicalist spirit of creating a proletarian counterculture, the branch organised a picnic in Buncrana for its shirt operatives. Three months later it hosted a three-day social and sports carnival in the Brandywell. By then, its membership had peaked at 315.⁶

Table 5. 1: Membership of the ITGWU Derry branch, 1920-21

Date	Membership
Apr.-July 1920	25
Aug. 1920	185
Sept. 1920	208
Oct. 1920-Mar. 1921	227
Apr.-June 1921	234
July-Oct. 1921	315

Source: RIC, Crime Dept., Special Branch reports on the ITGWU, Apr. 1920-Oct. 1921, CO 904/185/5, Colonial Office records, UKNA.

The second Watt's strike

The ITGWU's confidence was displayed most vividly at Watt's Distilleries. On 3 June, it brought out its members there against a 3s. cut and the company's refusal to recognise it. The ITGWU had 130 members at Watt's to the NAUL's forty. But the company chose to discuss the reduction with the NAUL solely, which enraged the ITGWU. The NAUL accepted the reduction because, it claimed, the distillery's closure was the alternative. In a replay of November's events but with a reversal of roles, the NAUL remained at work and was accused of scabbing by the ITGWU. Once again, Watt's took a hard-line and locked out the ITGWU. Union recognition was the real issue of contention for the Transport Union.⁷ The RIC estimated that about 200 men were thrown out of work and Ministry of Labour thought the figure to be 150.⁸

Another inter-union war of words began in the *Journal*. On 8 June, Logue expressed his conciliatory approach to the situation. He argued that in the prevailing economic environment further unemployment should be avoided by accepting the reduction, if the forty-seven-hour week remained. He also reminded the ITGWU of its failure to support the NAUL's strike in November. In a subsequent letter, Logue demonstrated his conservatism by stating that he was not opposed to wage reductions in principle, only 'unreasonable reductions'. His attachment to British Labour was evidenced by his citation of the British miners' and textile workers' recent acceptance of decreases. Ridgeway replied by stressing the ITGWU's numerical superiority and contended that the NAUL must abide by the majority decision to strike. In response, McNaught stated that the NAUL had the majority in United Distillers', a syndicate that included the Derry and Belfast distilleries.⁹ The bad blood between the two was palpable.

Like the first strike, political events were overshadowing what was happening in Derry. In November, partition had still been a prospect; now it was a reality. On 7 June 1921, during the first week of the lockout, James Craig, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, became Prime Minister of Northern Ireland after the 24 May general election returned forty Unionists to six Sinn Féiners and six nationalists.¹⁰ The fallout ensured that Ulster's sectarian tensions, which had deepened considerably since partition, seeped into the Watt's dispute. The ominous appearance of armed B-Specials (see Chapter 9) for the first time in a strike in Derry was a tangible example of this. They oversaw the passage of yeast coming from the Bogside distillery being held up by pickets. The yeast carter could safely pass through the ITGWU's pickets because the strikers were 'concentrating their energies on the few remaining men at work'. The

police also intervened when ITGWU and NAUL men physically fought outside the distillery premises after the latter were accused blacklegging. The pickets created a 'situation full of alarming possibilities' when dockers temporarily refused to handle goods from Watt's. On 9 June, the employers threatened to permanently close the distilleries unless the men returned to work.¹¹ But the strikers' resolve was hardening. They were infuriated to discover that the clerical staff had been scabbing. Clerks were mobbed and had to be escorted to their homes by the police. Warnings were given to some clerks with the chalking of their names on a distillery wall. Intimidated, they slept in the distillery to avoid further confrontation.¹²

But the NAUL was up for a fight too. On 10 June, Logue, McNaught and Sam Bradley, its Irish organiser, attended a meeting of the NAUL's executive council. It was agreed that the ITGWU's 'acts of violence to coerce our members to retrograde action on the wages question' justified financial assistance from the General Federation of Trade Unions. Seventy-six NAUL members in Derry were affected. The animosity between the two unions continued in the *Journal* but became noticeably sectarian in tone. This is evidenced by the contributions of 'Derryman', who believed that the strike was a plot concocted by both unions to move employment from Derry to Belfast. He snidely remarked that Ridgway 'comes from Belfast to preach to the workers of Derry the new religion of Liberty Hall' and that 'it would be unsafe to even attempt a discussion with a Protestant from Belfast'. Ridgway responded by claiming that McNaught was responsible for two of three occasions he was denounced as a 'Belfast Orangeman'.¹³ McNaught accused the ITGWU of 'ruining labour in Derry by splitting it up on religious and political grounds'. The NAUL, he asserted, had won a 260 per cent wage increase and a nine-hour lessening of the week since 1914. He charged O'Donnell with coming to Derry 'not to make peace between two contending parties, but rather to drive an everlasting wedge between them' when 'political and sectarian feeling was at its height'.¹⁴ It was fitting that McNaught mentioned O'Donnell, who regarded Watt's threat of closure as an example of capitalism's war on the Irish national struggle:

It is said that an effort should be made to keep the distillery going. No industry has a right to exist if it can't pay a living wage. Let the threat of a close down once intimidate the workers to withdraw a demand intelligently decided on and the working-class organisations shall cease to serve any purpose . . . But the Irish workers are up against the struggle of their lives. The Irish nation is up against the necessity to scrap old standards and get a sense of real values . . . Industries shall be shut down in Derry; Donegal is blockaded. Ireland may be blockaded. What are we to do? Beat the blockade. It's easy. Machinery to control the food produced in the

country must be summoned into being at once. Money, and money standards, must end for a big section, perhaps ultimately for all.¹⁵

The strike and the sentiments expressed by Ridgeway and O'Donnell were popular. O'Donnell was very cordially received when the strike committee brought 1,000 people on a walk to An Grianán Aileach for a day of 'health, pleasure and education' with reels, games and lectures. The 'Red Flag' and the 'Internationale' were again sung to conclude the occasion. The truce between the IRA and the British Government meant that O'Donnell could appear in public for the first time since 1920 without fear of arrest or worse.¹⁶ Despite the militant talk, the ITGWU was pragmatic at heart. With the NAUL, it entered negotiations with Mayor O'Doherty to arrange a conference with Watt's in early July. Two weeks later, the dispute was settled by mayoral arbitration. It was a technical victory for the ITGWU. While no strikers were victimised, they were re-employed on old wages for one week and then forced to accept the 3s. cut, much to the NAUL's annoyance. Moreover, Watt's did not employ all its previous workforce. Work at the distillery resumed on 28 July.¹⁷

The distillery disputes put a heavy financial toll on both unions. The NAUL's headquarters sent £306 10s. to Derry in 1921, considerably less than the £536 7s. 6d. it sent the year before. The branch's membership also decreased from 508 in 1920 to 365 in 1921. Eighty-one distillery workers joined the ITGWU during the second dispute.¹⁸ In total, Derry's distillery workers cost the ITGWU £214. 5s. In 1921, Liberty Hall remitted £638 17s. 5d. to the Derry branch, one third of which was directed to their members at Watt's, the highest yearly sum given to the Derry branch during its existence.¹⁹ The strikes heralded the demise of the once mighty NAUL.

Talk of the distilleries' closure, which the NAUL had taken seriously, was well-grounded. Production at Watt's halted in October 1921, from which point the distilleries primarily manufactured yeast. About 200 men were laid off. The last of the whiskey stock was sold in 1925, ending any hope of a re-opening. The United Distillers' Company Ltd. decided to concentrate its Irish production in Belfast.²⁰ The closure of the distilleries devastated Derry's economy and made the city even more dependent on its shirt industry. As a major employer of male labour, the distilleries had helped balance the structure of employment by acting as an equipoise to the shirt industry. As the *D.C.L. Gazette* commented in October 1930:

It is hard for one so long associated with Derry's century-old distillery in Abbey Street, to reflect upon its present derelict condition, standing there silently aloof, so to speak, in a state of sad, solemn dignity. One's memory sometimes finds it difficult to realise that less than ten years ago the place was a busy hive of prosperous industry, affording much-needed male employment locally, and holding an honoured place in Derry's commercial life. At that period anyone would have been surely derided who sought to predict that the present state of affairs would have been brought about so dramatically in such a remarkably short space of time.²¹

The counterattack intensifies

Outside the distilleries, the counterattack was equally destructive. In June, the North of Ireland Shipbuilding Co. demanded a 6s. decrease. On 24 September, 350 carters struck when employers announced an immediate 3s. reduction on their 60s. wage with a further diminution to come into effect in October. Though the employers rejected arbitration, they agreed to a conference under the mayor, who had suggested a 2s. reduction. After three days, with the assistance of the mayor and Britain's Ministry of Labour, the dispute was resolved when the master carriers agreed to arbitration. On 20 October, the 3s. cut was agreed.²² It was their first decrease for many years, as Table 5. 3 illustrates.

Table 5. 2: Wage Increases Received by Carters in Derry, 1915-20.

Date	Increase
Mar. 1915	2s.
Dec. 1915	2s.
Dec. 1916	3s.
May 1917	3s.
Nov. 1917	4s.
May 1918	6s.
Nov. 1918	4s.
May 1919	4s.
Jan. 1920	5s.
June 1920	7s.
Total	40s.

Source: Arbitration between the Londonderry Employers' Federation and the NUDL, 22 Oct. 1921, LAB 83/2449, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

Labour remained its own worst enemy and was crippled by internal divisions that facilitated the counterattack. The hostility of the local Labour establishment to the ITGWU remained intense. In September, some shipyard painters, left the Operative Painters' Society to establish a local union. When this body affiliated to the ITGWU, its members were fined and blacklisted by the Operative Painters. Against the advice of its Dublin executive, the Transport Union began organising Derry's painters the previous June and established itself in the yard by taking over the red-leaders. On 13 September, the red-leaders downed tools when the foreman refused to employ an equal number of ITGWU painters. The management also refused to recognise the ITGWU and blacklisted the union. Members of the Operative Painters were brought in as scabs and worked under police protection. On 24 September, the strike was settled when the company recognised the ITGWU. The red-leaders resumed work two days later. Some of the scabs, Ulster loyalists, initially refused to work with the ITGWU but most eventually accepted their presence.²³ This was the high-water mark for the union. In October, it exchanged its office on William Street for a more spacious hall – a former factory, at the corner of Linenhall Street and Richmond Street.²⁴

Profiteering remained a chronic social problem and there was cross-class collaboration to tackle it. Even the Chamber of Commerce condemned the practice and called on traders to reduce their prices. For this, the NUR cordially praised them.²⁵ Before that, at a meeting held on 9 September, trade unionists threatened to stop distributing milk for a week unless prices were lowered and called on the mayor to hold a public meeting on profiteering. At a second meeting held four days later, O'Donnell showed how he had not only alienated trade unionists with his radicalism but also those within the national struggle. He told those present that if they were serious about combating profiteering 'they would remain there overnight and go out next morning, seize the milk carts, take them around the city, and sell the milk at a fair price'. O'Doherty, a nationalist (see Chapter 10), immediately rejected this 'absurd' idea, but local traders were much less dismissive. The next day, butchers reduced the price of a pound of meat and grocers announced that they would also cut their prices with further reductions coming later that month.²⁶ Likewise, the Derry Milk Vendors Association caved and cut prices, though these were widely criticised as insufficient.²⁷ In response, at a meeting of the Corporation's Public Health Committee, Logue suggested that a system of public municipal dairies to sell milk at a reasonable price be instituted. His idea met fierce opposition from the Unionist councillor and arch-capitalist John McFarland. A public meeting held against profiteering on 21 October appears to be all that came of Logue's efforts.²⁸

That autumn, building tradesmen had their hourly pay decreased by 2½d, with another ½d. cut from 1 May 1922. The City of Derry Operative Plasterers' Association struck in vain from 1 May to 17 October 1921, as did the joiners from 6 May to 22 July 1921.²⁹ Lower wages were not the only malady that workers had to endure. On 10 August, the *Journal* alleged that Catholic railwaymen had been discriminated against by the LLSR as the company took back workers. It claimed that less experienced and competent Orangemen had replaced competent, experienced Catholics. The LLSR vigorously denied this charge, as did the RCA and the NUR. For a month, the *Journal's* pages entertained allegations of bigotry and subsequent rebuttals of them from the LLSR management.³⁰ But a bigger, more protracted dispute was coming for Derry railwaymen, Catholic and Protestant alike.

The railway crisis in Derry

When the British Government's control of the Irish railways ended on 15 August 1921, Derry's railway directors were as happy as any in Ireland. Boardroom militancy had not lessened during the period of control and the companies were anxious for a return to pre-1916 local bargaining, with different companies giving different pay and hours. Nationally, wages had reached 90s. for engine drivers, 65s. for guards and 43s. to 60s. for porters. The companies considered the forty-eight-hour week too rigid in times of fluctuating demand.³¹ The LLSR participated in Carrigan's arbitration tribunal, but the GNR did not because it (and the GSWR) negotiated with unions under strong duress.³² When the Great Northern tried to lengthen daily working hours to ten, it provoked a short-lived strike which included its terminus in Derry.³³ The companies were to be divided into groups depending on their financial strength and profitability, ranging from the strongest in group one to the weakest in group four. The Great Northern was placed in group one while the LLSR and the Derry sections of the Northern Counties' Committee (NCC) were put in group three. Carrigan's proposed scheme effectively abandoned standardisation. Although these findings were not the final award of the tribunal, the signs were ominous for the unions.³⁴ On 2 December, Derry's RCA branch met and rejected Carrigan's award and called on its leadership to withdraw from the arbitration process which had gained nothing for the men.³⁵ According to Henry Hunt, general manager of the LLSR since 1916, the August reduction was only one-third of what was needed. His board undertook to adopt the same brash attitude as the GNR.³⁶ Derry, it seemed, would be as impacted by the railway crisis as anywhere else.

The LLSR's apprehension was unwarranted. The NUR was willing to accept a reduction in return for a guaranteed eight-hour day. On 13 January, the local NUR declared their intention to cease work if the Carrigan award was applied. On 3 February, the No. 1 Branch (representing the Waterside station) met and condemned Carrigan for placing the NCC in group three, ensuring that its workers would earn less than other local railwaymen.³⁷ The February agreement grouped the larger railways together instead of, as Carrigan had proposed, into wealthy and less wealthy classes. Wages were fixed at Carrigan's original higher wage level. Consequently, the NCC men were granted their wish as the settlement brought them into group one.³⁸

Table 5. 3: Railway Wages in Derry as Proposed by Carrigan

	LLSR	GNR
Porters	51s.	-
Parcel porters	54s.	-
Ticket collectors	56s.	46s.
Shunters	64s.	59s.
Station foremen	64s.	55s.
Signalmen	65s.	57s.
Porters	54s.	-
Carters	51s. 6d.	-
Passenger/goods guards	50-59s.	-
Drivers	66-90s.	-
Firemen	50-63s.	-
Cleaners	24-42s.	-
Platelayers	-	43s. 6d.

Source: *DJ*, 7, 14 Jan. 1922; Sweeny, 'The Letterkenny & Burtonport extension railway', p. 114.

Class conflict outside the railways, 1922

In December 1921, skilled and unskilled workers in the bakeries had their pay lessened by 7s. and 5s. respectively by British Government arbitration. Further cuts would come into effect depending on a reduced cost of living.³⁹ But the class war was not the only one that employers were waging against workers. The *Journal* published more allegations of bigotry. In October 1921, a shirt factory, S.W. Kennedy & Co., had closed for a week, probably because of the slump. When it re-opened, the paper claimed, it only re-employed Protestants and forty Catholics were replaced.⁴⁰ The New Year brought the prospect of Derry's participation in a stoppage by Irish dockers against proposals to cut daily pay by 2s. Strike was averted when a 1s. cut was accepted by the NUDL, which was deeply resented in Derry.⁴¹

There was an intensification of class conflict that summer. The carters threatened to go on strike over wage reductions but deferred because of the mayoral intervention, who persuaded both sides to arbitration. The slump in the world economy was deepening with shipbuilding hit particularly hard. On 16 June, the North of Ireland shipyard – which had recently experienced an engineers’ strike – closed indefinitely because of an absence of orders. Hundreds were made unemployed.⁴² Proletarian solidarity was vital for avoiding the penury of unemployment, even if that solidarity was driven by economic necessity rather than altruism. On 28 May, railwaymen on the Lough Swilly left work when four of their colleagues faced demotions. After three days of strike, the company agreed not to alter the men’s positions.⁴³

September was the most disturbed month of 1922. The longstanding dispute in the carrying trade came to a head when employers issued a 5s. reduction. On 28 September, after mediation failed to produce a settlement, 250 carters were called out. A prolonged series of conferences under John Fawcett Gordon MP, secretary of the Stormont Ministry of Labour and a UULA member, ended the strike on 12 October. The carters had won an impressive victory. From 19 October, only 1s. was taken from them, making wages 54s.⁴⁴ Dockers and carters were now represented by the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers’ Union (ATGWU). The Transport and General Workers’ Union had come into being on 1 January 1922 when fourteen unions representing transport workers amalgamated. While the NUDL was not part of the initial amalgamation, it joined shortly afterwards. In Ireland, the Transport and General Workers’ Union became known as the ATGWU to distinguish it from the ITGWU after the latter union took it to court. A fierce rivalry developed between the two.⁴⁵ Carters were not the only workers to eke out minor victories. In December, asylum employees survived an attempt to cut pay. Instead, the committee of management fixed annual salaries at £40 for men and £30 for women excluding allowances. However, in January 1922 it extended the attendants’ working week from fifty-six to sixty-three, cut bonuses and sacked staff, actions that violated the spirit of the January 1920 agreement.

Table 5. 4: Pre-War and Post-War Annual Wages at the Derry Asylum

Occupation	1914 Wage	1922 Wage	Percentage Increase
Tradesman	£63 4s.	£228	270
1 st Class Attendant	£73 4s.	£171 10s.	234
2 nd Class Attendant	£61 4s.	£142	232
Nurse	£50 8d.	142 10s.	282
Assistant Nurse	£43 18s.	£124	282

Source: *DJ*, 25 Jan. 1922.

1923 – the counterattack continues

The year 1922 had been another bad one for Northern workers as the counterattack gathered pace. The worst affected, the electricians, had their pay lessened by 25 per cent while the least affected, the dockers, suffered a 7½ per cent cut. Most trades experienced a 12½ per cent decrease.⁴⁶ Greater political stability gave employers the confidence to intensify their counterattack. The railways remained in a troubled state. On 13 January 1923, the RCA held a public meeting in Derry at which T.J. O’Farrell, general secretary of the RCA’s Irish Council and a Labour Party member of Seanad Éireann, was the main speaker. He condemned the railway companies for their wages and conditions and promised a big fight for improvements in 1923. In March, the Swilly’s engineers threatened to strike against the 5s. 6d. bonus recently taken off them. Three months later, a conference under Belfast’s Ministry of Labour confirmed the reduction.⁴⁷ Derry’s first strike of 1923 took place at the beleaguered shipyard. On 27 January, apprentice platers downed tools for improved wages. They were joined by apprentice shipwrights on 19 February and by journeymen two days after that. On 23 February, apprentice carpenters joined the strike and demanded a 30s. wage, a vast improvement on their average of 12s, bringing numbers on strike to 150. On 19 March, the boys returned on old terms. The yard had been forced to close but had re-opened on 15 March.⁴⁸ In mid-April, seafarers suffered the 6s. 6d. reduction issued by the National Maritime Board.⁴⁹

Table 5. 5: Seafarers' Wages, 1922 & 1923.

Job	Monthly Vessels (1922)	Weekly Vessels (1922)	Monthly Vessels (1923)	Weekly Vessels (1923)
Ordinary seamen	120s. & 150s.	50s.	95s. & 125s.	45s.
Able seamen	210s.	68s. 6d.	180s.	62s.
Boatswains	240s.	73s. 6d.	210s.	67s.
Boatswains' mates, quartermasters & firemen	220s.	-, 71s. & 68s. 6d. respectively	190s.	-, 64s. 6d. & 62s. respectively

Source: *LG*, Apr. 1922, May 1923.

Employers were also flexing their industrial muscles in sectors protected' by the state. On 2 April 1923, the Shirtmaking Trade Board (Northern Ireland) cut wages to 7 per cent below British rates (see Appendix 11, Table A). It accepted – like its predecessor had done in 1915 – the employers' arguments that they needed to offset transport costs. By 1925, wages were 14.3 per cent lower than British rates for women and 16.1 per cent for men.⁵⁰ Serious inter-union poaching ensued from the 1923 decrease. In March, the NUTGW had sent Annie Holmes, a Leeds-born official, to Derry as a fulltime organiser to re-energise the union. The ASTT had a part-time organiser in Sarah Doherty. Holmes was experienced in dealing with trade boards and had helped organise women in Leeds, London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. Within days of the reduction, shirt and collar workers crowded into the Guildhall to rebuke the trade board, with the trades council pledging its support for the women. Logue urged all shirt workers to join the NUTGW, which had enrolled 2,000 members since the cut. Several stoppages occurred because of the reduction. The women's determination to resist was infectious and inspired the laundry workers to join the NUTGW. Laundry workers – many of whom worked in the shirt industry – were unorganised and among the lowest paid in Derry.⁵¹ The Garment Workers and the ASTT temporarily put their mutual animosity aside to jointly lobby employers and hold public meetings against the cut.⁵² Relations between both unions remained atrocious until adversity forced them to merge in 1932.⁵³

By then, most cutters belonged to the ATGWU, having left the NUTGW throughout the 1920s. The anomaly of a skilled elite joining a general union was partially due to the solidarity given to them by the dockers during the 1920 strike. However, the prospect of a mainly female union bringing women into the cutting departments – which, it was feared, would deskill the trade and undercut wages – remained an abiding concern for the cutters.⁵⁴ Derry's sexual division of labour was typical of the UK clothing industry. But shirtmaking was

different in that this division did not the result from the deskilling of a male trade. Cutting was broken down into several discrete and specialised tasks, and apprentices did not receive a complete training. The nature of cutting changed in the 1920s when deskilling became a reality. Women were regularly employed to undertake both the less peripheral, skilled parts like laying-up and putting-up, and the central, skilled part: pencilling. By 1926, 22 per cent of cutters were women.⁵⁵ Deskilling was the result of three technological innovations. One was the use of electrically powered carts to lay the cloth. The second was pencilling by means of a perforated pattern and a blue powder to mark the cloth. The third, and most significant, was subdivision into specialised jobs where apprentices were trained to be layers-up, band knife operators, pencillers or putters-up with no experience outside their job or mastery of the general trade, which gave rise to uncertainty and insecurity.⁵⁶

The death of the One Big Union

At its 1922 annual meeting in January, the ITGWU's Derry branch declared its ambition to become the largest union in the shipyard. But the picture was vastly different by the spring of 1923. Although it had a fulltime secretary in John F. Doherty, the branch went into terminal decline in 1922.⁵⁷ O'Donnell had moved to Dublin and Ridgeway, who had sided with the anti-Treatyites, had been arrested in Monaghan.⁵⁸ The sense of despondency was palpable at a special meeting held on 28 February 1923. Doherty blamed 'vested interests' hostile to the ITGWU who 'had done all in their power to crush it'.⁵⁹ Undoubtedly, it had made many powerful enemies: Unionists, the employers, the British and Northern governments, the trades council and the amalgamateds. Decades afterwards, O'Donnell claimed that the branch had also been denounced by the local Catholic clergy who, he added, were intensely anti-socialist and very influential within the nationalist community.⁶⁰ Speaking in Derry on 28 March, Ernest Bevin, general secretary of the ATGWU and the most powerful man in British trade unionism, attacked 'some of the literature and some of the stupid and foolish things done and said by the Irish Transport Union'.⁶¹ Bevin was popular in Derry because he had bargained down cuts demanded by the shippers. As per agreements reached in December 1922 and March 1923, dockers' wages were reduced by 1s. a day from 1 January 1923 and from 9 April 1923 until August 1924. After the cuts, casual dockers got 1s. 7½d. an hour while weekly men got 68s. 3d.⁶² From a pinnacle of 2s. 1½d. per ton in May 1920, coal handlers' pay fell back to 1s. 9½d. from April 1923.⁶³

By early May 1923, the ITGWU Derry branch had collapsed. From a peak of thirty-one Ulster branches (nearly 4,000 members) in April 1920, branch numbers had fallen to nineteen by 1921. In 1923, there were fourteen branches; by 1925, there were just three. The *Workers' Republic*, newspaper of the Communist Party of Ireland, blamed 'red tape and bureaucracy in Dublin' for the branch's demise, claiming that 'the whole history of the trade unions in Derry for the last six months has been a record of sabotage by Dublin of the struggles of bonny fighters who remained true to the faith'.⁶⁴

Table 5. 6: Wages at McCorkell & Co. shippers, 1917-25

Date	Wages			
	25s. 9d.	26s.	30s.	31s.
Aug. 1917	25s. 9d.	26s.	30s.	31s.
Feb. 1918	24s.	30s.	34s.	35s.
June 1918	29s.	35s.	35s. 9d.	40s.
Feb. 1919	35s.	39s.	40s.	
Apr. 1919	38s.	40s.	44s.	45s.
Aug. 1919	40s.	46s.	47s.	
Jan. 1920	45s.	51s.	52s.	
Apr. 1920	50s.	56s.	57s.	
Nov. 1920	55s.	61s.	62s.	
Apr. 1922	55s.	63s. 6d.	64s. 6d.	
May 1922	52s. 6d.	61s.	62s.	
Mar. 1923-1925	50s.	61s.	62s.	

Source: Wage Books for 1920-25, D3770/C/4/3-5, McCorkell Papers, PRONI.

The beginning of the fightback

Despite the loss of the ITGWU, Derry Labour still had fight left in it. On 2 May 1923, a strike of 300 building trade workers to counter a 1d. per hour cut was launched. Eight days later, the strike ended in victory for the men and wages were fixed until 30 April 1924. The building tradesmen had maintained their 4d. per hour differential over shipyard woodworkers. Builders' labourers – who earned the same as sawmill labourers – would have had their 39s. 2d. wage decreased to 35s. By now, shipyard labourers' earnings had been slashed to 37s. 6d., and shopkeepers' labourers' and storemen's pay had been cut down to 35-37s.⁶⁵ Remarkably, against the backdrop of falling wages across Britain and Ireland, some Derry unions were still able to obtain increases. Shipyard blacksmiths and hammermen came out for a week in mid-May when their claim for the Belfast rate was refused. The latter won a 9s. improvement.⁶⁶

Industrial relations at the LLSR remained tense. On 6 August, its clerks and stationmasters went on lightning strike for the reinstatement of two dismissed colleagues. The NUR and the ASLEF joined the RCA to bring numbers affected to nearly 300. Pay was not a concern for the RCA as clerical salaries and conditions had been standardised across Ireland into five ranks. Following intervention from Belfast, the strike was called off after three days when the company re-employed the men. Afterwards, when the Swilly tried to pay NUR and ASLEF men only half for their days on strike, another stoppage was threatened until the company relented.⁶⁷ The strike was repeated for twenty-four hours on 23 September when the RCA withdrew its labour to protest the sacking of the same two clerks. Redundancy notices were withdrawn once more.⁶⁸

On 22 September, bakery labourers, packers and vanmen struck when employers refused to recognise the labourers' union (the ATGWU), give a 40s. minimum to packers and labourers, and improve conditions. The master bakers initially refused to negotiate, but after six days they were forced to concede a 39s. minimum, four days' paid holidays and union recognition. On 20 September, the *Sentinel* apologised for falsely claiming that the men were members of the ITGWU, which, it purported, was in the middle of wreaking havoc in the Free State.⁶⁹ Labour's victories from the summer of 1923 gave a springboard from which it could launch a counteroffensive of its own, which it did for much of 1924.

1924 – the fightback

Workers in Northern Ireland had another bad year in 1923. Wages had been cut by an average of 9 per cent with flourmill workers suffering the steepest reductions (25 per cent).⁷⁰ In the Free State, 1923 had been Labour's annus horribilis. Workers had put up a dogged defence of post-1917 gains against employer encroachment. But by early 1924, proletarian militancy had been crushed in the south. The enormous number of strikes and lockouts that had engulfed Ireland throughout 1923 had stretched Labour morale and finances to breaking point. In the north, however, the pendulum had swung back in Labour's direction. By early 1924, the cost of living began to rise again. When trade did not improve, there were clamours for pay restorations across the North, including in Derry.

In early 1924, the local railway companies set out to attack hours and wages. In response, both NUR branches condemned them, demanded nationalisation of the railways, denounced the proposed 10 per cent wage cut and the pay differential between groups one and

three.⁷¹ Likewise, Derry's RCA branch, which supported the NUR, backed their executive and gave tentative support to the new machinery which it urged be utilised.⁷² On 20 May, after talks with the companies had broken down, the RCA's Derry branch demanded an immediate resumption of negotiations with a time limit. If a satisfactory settlement was not arrived at, a strike would be called.⁷³ On 23 January, NUR and ATGWU goods yard checkers and shunters at the GNR terminus struck to protest the sacking of two checkers who refused to handle tainted goods. Both unions had previously formed a joint committee to weed out all non-union labour. The trouble extended to the other local railways. The men returned to work after a week following intervention from Belfast and a conference between the unions and the GNR in Dublin. They agreed to handle all traffic upon the reinstatement of the two checkers.⁷⁴

On 11 February, 300 shipyard red-leaders, staggers and staggers' labourers downed tools for the same reason as the GNR men and for a ½d. hourly raise. The yard was kept open by scab labour. The strike ended on 23 February when Gordon persuaded the nons to join the NAUL.⁷⁵ From 25 March to 1 April, riveters and heater boys went out when the yard brought in men from Belfast in lieu of local riveters who were unemployed. Although the matter was reported to Belfast's Ministry of Labour, the riveters were persuaded to recommence work and refer all future grievances to arbitration by their union. Derry's carters pressed for a 6s. increase that would bring pay to 60s. The master carriers offered 3s. and this was accepted.⁷⁶

Table 5. 7: LLSR Shopmen's Wages, 1924

Job	Wage
Labourers, lavatory attendants, gatemen, watchmen, sweepers-up	42s.
Scrap sorters, bosh attendants, wheelers, washhouse assistants	44s.
All other assistants, machinists (grade 3), boilermen, pumicers, painters, lifters, vicemen (grade 2), fettlers, washhouse men	47s.
Machinists (grade 2), boilermakers' helpers, smiths' strikers, crane drivers, oil-gasmakers, grease makers, carriage lifters, furnacemen, stationary enginemen, covermakers	50s.
Machinists (grade 1), grinders, lorry drivers, storekeepers, vicemen (grade 1)	54s.

Source: Memorandum of agreement, 28 Mar. 1924, LAB 83/965, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

In Derry's staple employer, the ASTT sought to reinvigorate itself. But the memories of the 1920 strike loomed large in the minds of many shirt workers. The NUTGW was out to finally subsume its arch-rival. Relations between the two were so fraught that on 28 February the NUTGW called a strike at Ebrington against working with the ASTT. The week before, the Garment Workers had issued a manifesto demanding that all factory operatives join it. If they failed to do so, their work would not be handled by union labour. The ASTT condemned its competitor for this. The situation threatened to cause another major strike when the employers issued a week's notice. The RUC mobilise fifty B-Specials to protect the factories. But on 1 March, Belfast's Ministry of Labour settled the dispute and the NUTGW agreed to withdraw its manifesto.⁷⁷ The NUTGW was, at this point, the biggest union in Derry, but by 1926 it had contracted to about 2,000 members.⁷⁸ Following its near collapse after the 1920 strike, the ASTT was recovering somewhat.⁷⁹ It was hit by tragedy in 1924 when one its chief stalwarts, Con Doherty, a former nationalist councillor and a member of the boards of management for the Mental Health Asylum and the City Infirmary, died in June.⁸⁰

A storm of class conflict was brewing in the north-west. On 1 April, the Letterkenny Asylum attendants went out against a 10 per cent pay cut, the abolition of certain allowances and the employment of a non-union head attendant. The Letterkenny branch was affiliated to the Derry Trades Council. Thus, Logue and McCafferty negotiated with the asylum's management to bring about a settlement. On 17 April, the council passed a resolution condemning the management and promising the attendants its full support. By mid-May, a joint committee of the ATGWU and the NUR in Derry was blocking tainted goods from reaching the asylum and the merchants who supplied it.⁸¹ The management was ruthless. They rejected arbitration, had the entire staff sacked and replaced with those who accepted the cuts. The attendants were never re-instated. The Mental Hospital Workers' Union had been decisively defeated.⁸² But Letterkenny only presaged the class conflict that was about to engulf the major city of the north-west. Little did the unions realise that their requests for wage increases would trigger the worst industrial relations crisis in Derry's history.

Table 5. 8: ASTT Membership in Derry, 1914-31

Year	Derry Branch	Factory Workers' Branch
1914	111	100
1915	92	500
1916	85	200
1917	130	3,354
1918	125	3,464
1919	-	3,352
1920	87	200
1921	84	115
1922	65	124
1923	84	253
1924	67	700
1925	64	755
1926	64	810
1927	52	819
1928	45	770
1929	50	740
1930	47	216
1931	48	317

Source: Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', pp. 355-356.

Table 5. 9: Building Trade Wages (in pence) in Belfast, Derry and the UK, 1923.

31 Dec. 1923	Belfast	Derry	UK (average)
Bricklayers	19	17	18.8
Carpenters & Joiners	19	17	18.8
Plumbers	19.5	19	18.9
Plasterers	19	17	18.9
Painters	19	17	18.7
Labourers	12	10	14.1

Source: Isles & Cuthbert, *An Economic Survey of Northern Ireland*, p. 218.

The 1924 lockout

The first of these demands came in March from the MEA. It wanted 2s. a week more for Corporation employees other than craftsmen. The claim was rejected. The 42s. wage paid to Corporation workers was the highest minimum for unskilled labour in the city. In April, the claim was rejected again.⁸³ On 24 April, the first of many strikes occurred when the Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers struck in a dispute regarding their county money allowance.⁸⁴ Seven days later, 600 building workers downed tools when employers refused to concede an hourly rate of 1s. 7d. (2d. more). From a high of 2s. 1½d. in 1920, building tradesmen's rates had been reduced to 1s. 5d. for a forty-seven-hour week. Labourers sought

an hourly rate of 1s. 2d (from 10d.). The master builders wanted to continue the current wage for another twelve months, but this was rejected. Belfast's Ministry of Labour involved itself in the disputes. It facilitated a conference between the pork curers – who wanted a 10s. raise – and the Employers' Federation. The Ministry, through Major McConnell, also successfully persuaded the MEA to put off its strike – which was planned for 1 May – for a week to allow for mediation. But trouble was spreading like wildfire. Unrest was reported at Madden's mineral water plant because of the employment of sixteen non-union workers. A Ministry of Labour conference ended the matter when the men agreed to join the ATGWU.⁸⁵

On 2 May, thirty piecework riveters came out for an additional 10s. 6d., an extra 1s. 6d. per every hundred rivets driven. Some heater boys joined them. But after a few days, the men conceded defeat.⁸⁶ The breadservers agitated for 15s. more and the abolition of the provision requiring a security deposit of up to £30. The pork curers, who turned down their employers' offer of arbitration, lessened their demand to 5s. which three firms that were not attached to the Employers' Federation agreed to pay. Likewise, building firms not affiliated to the Federation also gave increases.⁸⁷ The next strike to strike were Gaslight Company masons, carpenters, plumbers and semiskilled workers who went out in solidarity with their comrades in the building trade. These men also wanted increases and rejected the company's guarantee to give advances the following year. The strikes did not affect the Gaslight Company as much as other firms and it could give increases of 4s. to its semi-skilled men and 3s. to its labourers. Its firemen now had an 80s. wage.⁸⁸

On 6 May, the Chamber of Commerce met to discuss the crisis and declared their solution – compulsory arbitration. Strikes, they argued, should be outlawed until an industrial court could make a definitive, binding decision on any labour dispute. Two days later, the MEA initiated its strike as the Corporation still refused to budge. It was the first strike of local authority workers in Derry for twenty-five years. Over 100 street sweepers, water supply men, ash pit cleaners, gravediggers and cemetery workers ceased work after the Corporation snubbed the MEA's proposal of arbitration.⁸⁹ However, the city's supply of water remained constant. 'Of all the strikers', declared the *Sentinel*, the gravediggers were 'the class for whom there is absolutely no public sympathy'. The MEA also had twenty-three drivers, firemen and lamplighters at the Electric Light Station. However, most staff there were members of the ETU and the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, neither of whom were part of the dispute. Trouble was avoided in the egg packing trade when counters and packers accepted minimum rates of 38s. and 44s. respectively. The NUTGW put in a request for 1d. per hour extra for

women and ½d. extra for girls, i.e., wage equalisation with Britain. On 9 May, after negotiations failed, the pork curers struck.⁹⁰ In total, 1,000-1,500 workers were now on strike.⁹¹

On 13 May, the Corporation met to discuss the MEA's strike and considered advertising for blacklegs.⁹² Two days later, the situation became catastrophic when the union called out its members at the Electric Light Station on sympathetic strike, plunging the city into darkness. But most staff there stayed put. Many factories depended on the station for power and its closure would seriously imperil the local economy, especially the shirt industry. Scabbing under police protection kept the electric service in operation, much to the SMF's relief. Some industries defied the power station's orders and worked through the night.⁹³ The crisis was devastating public life: the streets became filthy as Corporation cleaners remained out and thousands were without employment. A rumour was circulating that thousands more were soon to be rendered idle because the SMF was contemplating a lockout. Shirt firms that offered scabs to the Electric Lighting Station were blacklisted by dockers.⁹⁴ The SMF responded by giving the workers a week's notice ending on 30 May, after which the factories would close.⁹⁵ The RUC offered to protect scabs at factories that remained open and bring extra policemen from outside if necessary.⁹⁶ The Employers' Federation acknowledged the support given to it by the Northern government. An RUC report of a 19 May Federation meeting gave credence to the rumour of a lockout:

These employers anticipate that by working at the Electric Light Station they will influence the workers in the shirt factories to go on strike in sympathy with the municipal employees, and by this action they will render themselves ineligible to receive the unemployment donation at the Labour Exchange. These workers recently submitted a demand for increased pay, and the employers hope that a few weeks' unemployment without Government assistance may help to bring about a change of feeling, and that the workers may be willing to postpone their demands or perhaps assent to a reduced wage on returning to work.⁹⁷

The Federation resolved that all members should offer their services as 'voluntary workers' at the Electric Light Station, an appeal for whom had been placed in the *Belfast Telegraph* on 17 May.⁹⁸ Twelve heeded the call, all of whom were either members or part proprietors of city firms or their sons.⁹⁹

This was a labour relations crisis born in Derry. Inevitably, it became enmeshed with the political struggle for control of the city. The *Journal* placed blame squarely on the Unionist Corporation. ‘Why not arbitration?’ it asked on 23 May, its first editorial on the strike. ‘In declining to accept this proposal [arbitration] the Municipal Authority . . . behaved unreasonably. . . fair minded citizens can have no sympathy with a public body which persists in such a stubborn attitude, with consequences so appalling’. ‘On the other hand,’ it opined, ‘there can be no sympathy with any section of workers who refuse arbitration, as we understand, some of those at present on strike in Derry have done.’¹⁰⁰ Three days later, it took a harder line: ‘We wonder how far this failure is to be attributed to the obstinate attitude of the Corporation. It is undeniable that by their obduracy the majority of the members of the Council have precipitated the crisis.’¹⁰¹ The *Sentinel*, on the other hand, gave unconditional support to the Unionists:

Londonderry has the distinction – or otherwise – of being called upon at the moment to bear the burden of a larger number of strikes than probably any other centre of the population throughout the Kingdom. . . The actions of the Cemetery grave-diggers in following into idleness those aristocrats amongst unskilled workers, the municipal employees, in compelling sorrowing relatives to dig their graves to receive the bodies of their dead friends. . . the rule apparently is that the declaration of a strike is to be held sufficient to justify conduct upon which the plain man looks with horror . . . We do not suppose what such a contingency must entail to the population and the injury it must inflict upon the city would greatly trouble the gentlemen – usually from a distance – who order these strikes . . . Whatever happens . . . the excellent salaries of the strike leaders goes on.¹⁰²

It considered the MEA a serious impediment to social stability and progress:

Public opinion is so definitely opposed to the actions of the municipal employees . . . that the Corporation are being assured of support in resisting dictation regarding what wages must be paid . . . Unfortunately the promoters are for the most part strangers. It is hardly surprising that the fact of a number of strikes taking place in Londonderry, all of them sanctioned by committees in Dublin, London, or elsewhere, has given rise to the impression that the movement is being deliberately directed by interests not identified with the city’s prosperity.¹⁰³

Table 5. 10: Men Employed by Derry Corporation

Occupation	Number of men
Street cleaners and ash pit men	120
Park labourers	15
Watermen	3
Cemetery workers	30
Carters	20

Source: RUC Inspector General's report on Derry strikes, 17 May 1924, HA/5/1352, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI.

Likewise, the *Derry Standard* cheered on the Corporation and urged it to lay down a marker:

The position of the Corporation is perfectly plain. Certain classes of their workers made a demand for an increase of wages. The Council in their wisdom refused the application . . . So far as the Corporation are concerned they are now placed in a position from which they cannot recede. For if they abandon the right to conclude satisfactory arrangements with their own workers they must concede the dangerous principle that they are to have no control over their own workers but must grant whatever they demand on threat of all of the municipal services being brought to a standstill. To concede that principle would mean that there would be little necessity for a Corporation at all, for their functions would in effect be exercised by the Derry Trades and Labour Council, whose puppets the Corporation would become.¹⁰⁴

Despite the media hostility, workers continued to revolt. The *Sentinel* knew exactly who to blame. 'It is known that in more than one of the affected industries there was a strong minority opposed to the extreme step of going out. But, as frequently happens in these distracted times, it is the extremists who sway policy'.¹⁰⁵ The leaders of the MEA and the ATGWU were the primary targets of the paper's ire.¹⁰⁶

On 22 May, 350 carters struck when colleagues were dismissed for refusing to transport goods to a firm providing scabs to the Electric Station. The coal yard labourers joined the strike. That day, the Employers' Federation declared its support for the Corporation's war against the MEA. But the most serious development that day took place at the Electric Station. By then, intimidation of scabs there had led many of them to stop working. Alarmed, the Corporation decided to cut off the electrical current from 6am to 6pm a day. Workers at thirty shirt factories,

at the shipyard (which employed 900) and at several other establishments were made idle. Another 2,000 were added to the slagheap of unemployment. Some laundries and pork-curing firms defied the order and worked through the night, but the Corporation quickly halted this. The six major shirt manufacturers could produce their own power and vowed to stay open for another week.¹⁰⁷ When torrential rain hit, the uncleaned, mud-encased gully-traps were unable to prevent flooding. The trouble threatened to spread to the docks, the box factories and the bakeries. The city laundry, however, remained open. The ATGWU had tried to bring out the gas workers but failed as they were divided on the strike. Derry was spared a strike of breadservers on 24 May when they came to an amicable arrangement with the master bakers. Having watered down their claim to 10s., the ATGWU won 4s. for packers and breadservers and 3s. for labourers.¹⁰⁸

Although an additional fifty-six policemen were brought into Derry to protect scabs, government intervention from Belfast from slow. The additional police guarded the banks, the post office and Corporation property. When railwaymen were suspended for not handling tainted goods, RUC intervention brought the men back to work.¹⁰⁹ The authorities were alarmed at what had become of Northern Ireland's second city. On 23 May, Richard Dawson Bates, the Belfast government's hard-line, furiously anti-Catholic Minister for Home Affairs, mandated a curfew in Derry between 11pm and 5am. That day, Charles Wickham, inspector-general of the RUC, arrived in Derry to investigate the crisis.¹¹⁰

Logue and Sam Bradley visited Belfast to discuss solutions with Andrews, but little progress was made. Unusually, Logue had been a peripheral figure in the strikes. But even a moderate like he had been disgusted by the Corporation's behaviour. On 26 May, the Corporation met and opted not to give electric current to pork curing establishments to enable them to clear stock. In response, Logue declared that councillors were 'simply tools of the Employers' Federation' that lent themselves to 'carrying on class warfare by supporting one section of the community against another.' On 29 May, the Employers' Federation reiterated its determination to take a firm stand and refused all mediation. The next day, the SMF followed through with the seven-day notice it had issued, adding a further 6,000 to the army of unemployed. By now, 14-15,000 were without work.¹¹¹ Deepening the workers' woes, on 31 May the Court of Referees ruled that only a small fraction of those idle – those employed in factories not affiliated to the SMF or the Employers' Federation – were entitled to unemployment benefit. In an interview with the *Journal* published on 30 May, Logue endorsed the idea previously put forward by the Chamber of Commerce: the formation of an industrial

court representing capital and labour to mediate any dispute between the two, which also had the *Journal*'s support.¹¹² Another nationalist paper, the Belfast-based *Irish News*, maintained that Belfast's Labour Ministry had 'signally failed' in its major test since it was established as it was 'afraid to antagonise the members of the Corporation, whom the Government expect in the near future to support them at the polls.'¹¹³

Like the Corporation, the employers had the unwavering support of the Unionist media:

The employers in the various industries in the city are adopting an attitude of firmness and co-operation which was perhaps not expected by the strike agitators. In the past these agitators had only to stir up trouble and enforce a strike for a few days to have their way. . . employers . . . have found themselves subjected to victimisation, they have been involved in disputes and stoppages with which they had little or no concern . . . It is quite possible that the great bulk of workers who are now idle . . . have little sympathy with the methods of the strike leaders, who . . . seem to regard the unfortunate workers as so much industrial 'cannon fodder'. A great and weighty responsibility rests upon these strike agitators. They have declared this industrial warfare in Derry, and . . . they have been more and more of the men and women who follow their order to the fray.¹¹⁴

On 4 June, the wholesale houses, which employed 150 carters and drivers, closed.¹¹⁵ The unions contended from the start that the employers were using the strike as a pretext to smash trade unionism. They were right, as a member of the Employers' Federation made clear in an interview with the *Irish Independent*: 'the employers are fed up with strikes, which have become almost monthly occurrences in the city for years past, and they are determined to bring this thing through to a finish.'¹¹⁶

From 5 June, however, peace became a realistic prospect when negotiations between the trades council and the Employers' Federation began under the auspices of the mayor. The trades council had been remarkably quiet during the labour war, which had not gone unnoticed. 'We are supposed to have a Trades Council in our midst', an 'Observer' had previously commented in the *Journal*. 'So far as the average public is aware this body has been dumb.'¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the RUC was suspicious of the trades council and kept an eye on it. The suspicion was mutual as the council feared that the B-Specials were to be used as strike-breakers. Arrangements were made for the payment of unemployment benefit to more than 4,000 workers. Negotiations were arduous and nearly broke down several times. Separate talks were

taking place between the MEA and a Corporation subcommittee appointed to resolve the strike. After weeks of rejecting the idea, the subcommittee offered to submit the 2s. claim to arbitration. John Malcolm, the MEA's Belfast-based Irish organiser, turned it down. Malcolm told the subcommittee that his union would accept the Corporation's new offer of a 1s. increase provided it was made retrospective to 1 January 1924. The Corporation rejected this. By 10 June, most of the other strikes had been settled and a general return to work now hinged on the MEA and the Corporation settling their differences. Building trade workers were given 1d. per hour from 1 September. The agreement pertained until 30 April 1925. Plumbers, however, were not included as they already had the 1s. 7d. rate and therefore did not feature in the strike.¹¹⁸

Finally, on 11 June, after a prolonged conference, settlements were reached in the other disputes. The war was over. Work was resumed the following day. The municipal employees were given an extra 1s. a week until 31 March 1925. Their union accepted this because it was anxious not to see any others not connected to their dispute suffer. The retrospective payment would be met by the MEA, not the Corporation. The pork curers also obtained a 1s. increase, making wages 50s. For both, a sliding scale of 1s. for every corresponding rise or fall in cost of living would dictate future pay. Some curers were not re-employed and had to be financially supported by the NAUL. The Ancient Guild's country money dispute also ended in compromise. The carters, factory operatives and electrical workers – who had no wage claims but whose idleness was contingent on workers who did – could now resume work. There was to be no victimisation. On 13 June, the new curfew was officially lifted and the old one reinstated.¹¹⁹ Bates was impressed by the RUC's handling of the strike as little police assistance was needed.¹²⁰

Despite the General Federation of Trade Unions' support, the labour war took a huge financial toll on the unions. The NUTGW gave £2,000 to the struggle. About 2,000 shirt factory workers were still not unionised and thus received no strike pay.¹²¹ The Garment Workers had ensured that no work from Derry was undertaken by its British members.¹²² The Court of Referees 31 May ruling had caused outrage and the unions immediately contested it. The NUTGW's 1924 annual conference, held in London on 8 June, passed a resolution that strongly condemned it. The decision was reversed in late June and by early July £2,000 worth of unemployment benefit to 1,600 shirt factory women had been paid out.¹²³

Life in Derry had been immiserated. The indignity of citizens having to dig their own graves to bury the dead and the filthy, flooded streets were stark reminders of what had become of the Maiden City. The *Journal* estimated that over £45,000 in wages had been lost.¹²⁴ The

Unionist press was in no doubt what Derry could learn from its plight. To the ‘dupes’ of the agitators, the *Sentinel* had a firm message:

the lesson of the strike will not be entirely missed if they should bring home not to the strikers along but to trade unionists generally a sense of the mischievous activities of their representatives on the look-out for notoriety.¹²⁵

In a subsequent condemnation of the MEA, whose conduct it believed ‘amounted to an attempt to hold the business of the city to ransom’, the paper affirmed:

It was said in the usual talk of the agitators that the Corporation, in resisting the demands of the employees, were ‘fighting the battle of the Capitalists’, and so forth. The truth is that the Corporation conceded the advance mainly owing to the pressure put on them by the ‘Capitalists’, who were more anxious to see the factory workers again earning money than the strikers.¹²⁶

Though less vituperative, the *Standard* expressed similar sentiment:

The wiser trade union leaders have begun to realise that the strike weapon is a double-edged sword, which often injures more severely those who wield it than those against whom it is directed, and accordingly they hesitate to lift it unless as desperate last remedy. In Derry the strike weapon seems to have been taken up without any attempt to count the cost or the consequences. But if the experiences now gained of the use of this weapon in Derry are taken to heart they city may be saved an outbreak of strikes and sympathetic action for a long number of years to come.¹²⁷

Labour after the lockout

The strike was a draw. Labour had gotten a portion of its demands and had shown great courage and resolve throughout against the odds. Long-term victory, however, lay with the employers. While they had not crushed trade unionism, they had disempowered it by brute force. Though Labour liked to publicly demonstrate its strength, as it did on 1 August when Ernest Bevin visited Derry again, it had suffered a huge setback and was neither as confident nor as assertive after the lockout.¹²⁸ Employer hegemony was assured. But Derry workers retained some fighting spirit. From 24 October, permanent dockers got a 3s. advance, giving them a 68s. 3d. wage. The docks were the scene of the year's final improvements: in December, the ATGWU secured better overtime rates and two hours off the week to forty-four for tonnage dockers in the cross-channel trade.¹²⁹

In September, a strike was threatened when the master bakers employed a man with whom the ATGWU refused to work. The situation was diffused when it was referred to a conciliation board.¹³⁰ The growth of the AGTWU as the union of choice for labourers is synonymous with the decline of the NAUL from 1921. Shortly after the lockout, the NAUL, MEA and the National Union of General Workers merged to become the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. The new union was central to Derry's last labour dispute of 1924. It began on 20 October at the Opera House when the ATGWU refused to work with a member of the General and Municipal Workers. The stoppage lasted over a month and led to the dockers going out on sympathetic strike. It was settled in late November when the man in question agreed to join the ATGWU.¹³¹ The situation risked becoming much more serious when an ATGWU man threatened to cut off electricity to the Opera House by stopping coal supplies to the electrical station. A similar threat was issued by a Corporation employee who told the Opera House that he could have the fuse of their electrical current drawn. The Corporation subsequently sacked the man after an inquiry into the matter.¹³²

October delivered a decisive blow to Derry's working class. That month, after many years of strikes and financial struggle, the troubled North of Ireland Shipbuilding Company finally closed its doors for good. Once again peripherality was Derry's Achilles heel as Swan Hunter gave preference to their home shipyards. It was intended to re-open the yard when conditions improved but this never materialised. Hundreds were made destitute. The shipbuilding industry had recently come through a depression and many smaller British shipyards had closed with the larger yards consolidating their position.¹³³ The closure of the shipyard and the distilleries rendered Derry a single-industry city. The shirt factories and their

auxiliary industries of box-making, hosiery, laundry and cloth-finishing now employed about three-quarters of the workforce. Having peaked at 8,000 in 1919, numbers in the shirt industry severely contracted over the coming years as War Office contracts ceased. However, by 1924 the industry was recovering, and numbers had climbed back up to 4,500.¹³⁴

In 1918, Logue had publicly defended northern Labour from ITGWU criticisms. Far from being conservative and parochial, unions in Ulster had ‘in a large measure succeeded’ and secured a standard of living that could ‘compare favourably with any part of the United Kingdom’. Although politically divided, he believed that northern class consciousness was strong and, as a result, Ulstermen would soon ‘fully realise’ their strength.¹³⁵ The counterattack showed his optimism to be wildly misplaced because wage militancy did not easily translate into class consciousness in divided Ulster, but it did have some impact. From 1921-23, employers across the North had done much to rescind Labour’s gains since 1917. But their confidence had gotten the better of them, resulting in the 1924 crisis. In its aftermath, Derry Labour entered another prolonged period of quiescence as the employers cemented their authority with the blessing of the young Unionist state. This time, however, there would be no revival of fortunes.

Chapter Notes and References

¹ O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 42-43.

² Emmet O’Connor, ‘Old Wine in New Bottles? Syndicalism and ‘Fakirism’ in the Great Labour Unrest, 1911-1914’, *Labour History Review*, Vol 17, No. 1, 2014, pp. 35-36.

³ Most, though not all, of this quote is cited in, O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 43. The rest is taken from *DJ*, 20 Apr. 1920

⁴ O’Connor, ‘War and Syndicalism’, p. 58.

⁵ *DJ*, 18 Apr. 23 May 1921; RIC, Crime Dept., Special Branch, Reports on the ITGWU, Apr. 1921, CO 904/158/5, Colonial Office records, UKNA; letter from Charles F. Ridgeway to Sir Henry Miller, 4 Apr. 1921, letter book no. 50, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum.

⁶ *DJ*, 24 June, 9, 30 Sept. 1921; RIC, Crime Dept., Special Branch, Reports on the ITGWU, May-Sept. 1921, CO 904/158/5, Colonial Office records, UKNA; O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 48.

⁷ *DJ*, 3, 6 June 1921; *LS*, 4 June 1921.

⁸ RIC CI for Londonderry, MR for June 1921, CO 904/115, *The British in Ireland* microfilm series, Boole Library, UCC; Trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1921, LAB 34/39, Min. of Labour records, UKNA

⁹ *DJ*, 8, 15, 20, 22 June 1921; Gallagher, ‘‘To Smash Every Cross-Channel Union’’, pp. 58-59.

¹⁰ Brian Walker (ed.), *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1918-92* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1992), pp. 45-47.

¹¹ *DJ*, 6, 8, 10 June 1921.

¹² *Ibid*, 13, 15 June 1921.

¹³ Gallagher, ‘‘To Smash every Cross-Channel Union’’, p. 60.

¹⁴ *DJ*, 22 June 1921; *ibid*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 17 June 1921. This quote is largely, though not entirely, cited in O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 49

¹⁶ O’Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 49; Hegarty, *Peadar O’Donnell*, pp. 96-97.

¹⁷ *DJ*, 13, 25, 27 July 1921; *D.C.L Gazette*, July 1924, Diageo Archive. The *D.C.L Gazette* was a magazine distributed between employers and employees of Distillers' Company Limited. I am grateful to Ruairi Gallagher for this information.

¹⁸ NAUL, 'Annual Reports and Financial Statements for 1920 & 1921', TU/GENERALC/1/25-26, WCML; RIC, Crime Dept., Special Branch, Reports on the ITGWU, Sept. 1921, CO 904/158/5, Colonial Office records, UKNA; Gallagher, 'To Smash Every Cross-Channel Union', p. 59.

¹⁹ ITGWU, *Annual Report for 1921*; Gallagher, 'To Smash Every Cross-Channel Union', p. 59; ITGWU Payments Book, Ms. 7,270, NLI.

²⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Oct. 1921; Bielenberg, 'The Watt Family', pp. 16-25; Mitchell, *The Making of Derry*, pp. 118-125; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, pp. 186-189. The United Distillers', Belfast-dominated parent group to which Watt's belonged, was formed in 1902 when the two Derry distilleries merged with the Irish Distillery Ltd. and Avoniel Distillery to form a syndicate. It had terminated its Irish operations by 1929

²¹ Cited in Gallagher, 'To Smash every Cross-Channel Union', p. 61.

²² *DJ*, 3 June, 26, 28 Sept., 21, 31 Oct. 1921; arbitration between the Londonderry Employers' Federation and the NUDL, 22 Oct. 1921, LAB 83/2449, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. The master carriers had originally sought a 7s. cut

²³ ITGWU REC minutes, 22 June 1921, SIPTU archives, Liberty Hall; *Freeman's journal*, 24 Sept. 1921; *DJ*, 26, 28 Sept., 3 Oct. 1921; *Irish Independent*, 27 Sept. 1921; RIC, Crime Dept., Special Branch, Reports on the ITGWU, Sept. 1921, CO 904/158/5, Colonial Office records, UKNA. The Operative Painters' Society refers to the National Amalgamated Society of Operative House and Ship Painters and Decorators

²⁴ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 49.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 28 Sept., 3 Oct. 1921

²⁶ Hegarty, *Peadar O'Donnell*, pp. 97-98; RIC CI for Londonderry, MR for Sept. 1921, CO 904/116, *The British in Ireland* microfilm series, Boole Library, UCC; *ibid*, 12, 19, 28, 30 Sept. 1921.

²⁷ *DJ*, 28 Sept., 3, 31 Oct. 1921.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 12, 19, 24 Oct. 1921.

²⁹ *LG*, Oct. 1921, Jan. 1922; annual returns of the City of Derry Operative Plasterers' Association, 1921, COM/76/11, Department of Commerce records, PRONI; *LS*, 7 May, 21 July 1921. The City of Derry Operative Plasterers' Association was founded on 4 December 1917. Its membership fluctuated from a high of thirty-two in 1920 to a low of twelve in 1923. It affiliated to the trades council in 1919. In 1918, it gave £2 to support the tailors' strike and in 1920 it gave £5 to the shirt factory women. On 8 September 1924, the Association dissolved and became the Derry branch of the National Association of Plasterers, Granolithic and Cement Workers, a British union. See annual returns of the City of Derry Operative Plasterers' Association, 1918-24, COM/76/11, Dept. of Commerce records, PRONI.

³⁰ *DJ*, 10, 12, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31 Aug., 5 Sept. 1921; *Derry Standard*, 12 Aug. 1921.

³¹ Gribbon, 'Economic and Social History', in Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland: VI*, p. 350.

³² McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 239-246.

³³ *Irish Times*, 30, 31 Aug. 1921; *DJ*, 31 Aug. 1921.

³⁴ Quoted in McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', p. 245; *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Sept. 1921.

³⁵ *DJ*, 5 Dec. 1921; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Dec. 1921.

³⁶ LLSR minutes, 5 Sept., 19 Dec. 1921, 14 Jan. 1922, D2683/AA/10, PRONI.

³⁷ *Irish Independent*, 10-16 Jan. 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jan. 1922. *DJ*, 16 Jan, 6 Feb. 1922

³⁸ *Irish Times*, 10 Feb. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 11 Feb. 1922; NCC minutes, 23 Feb. 1922, NCC draft minute book, 1917-22, UTA/12/AC/4, UTA records, PRONI.

³⁹ *LG*, Jan. 1922; arbitration award in Londonderry Master Bakers' Association vs. Derry branch of the IBCAWAU, 29 Dec. 1921, LAB 83/394, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁴⁰ *DJ*, 9 Jan. 1922.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 18, 20, 23 Jan. 1922; *LG*, Mar. 1922.

⁴² *DJ*, 29 May, 2, 16 June 1922; *A.E.U. Monthly Journal and Report*, June 1922, MSS.259/AEU/4/6/2, AEU collection, MRC, UW.

⁴³ *DJ*, 31 May, 2 June 1922; LLSR minutes, 16 June 1922, D2683/AA/10, PRONI; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1922, LAB 34/40, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁴⁴ *DJ*, 4, 20, 27, 29 Sept., 2, 6, 11, 13 Oct. 1922; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1922, LAB 34/40, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. The employers wanted the 5s. reduction done in two instalments: half from 25 September and half from 1 November.

⁴⁵ For an account of the leadup to the foundation of the Transport and General Workers' Union, see Ken Coates and Tony Topham, *The history of the Transport and General Workers Union* (London: Blackwell, 1991). For a

review of the union's history in Ireland, see Matt Merrigan, *Eagle or cuckoo?: the story of the ATGWU in Ireland* (Dublin: Matmer Publications, 1989).

⁴⁶ *DJ*, 19 Dec. 1921, 4, 16, 25 Jan., 20 Mar., 19 June, 18 Dec. 1922; *Report of the Ministry of Labour for the Year 1922* (Belfast: HM Stationary Office, 1923), pp. 12-13.

⁴⁷ *DJ*, 15 Jan., 28 Mar. 1923; *Belfast Newsletter*, 16 Feb., 21, 28 Mar., 20, 24, 25 Apr., 1, 5, 7, 10, 15, 16 May, 6 June 1923; LLSR minutes, 28 Feb. 1923, D2683/AA/10, PRONI; *Report of the Ministry of Labour for the Years 1923-1924* (Belfast: HM Stationary Office, 1924), p. 10. Engineers at the Great Northern, NCC and Belfast and Co. Down railways struck for three months against the reduction.

⁴⁸ *DJ*, 23 Feb. 1923; RUC IG reports on strikes at the Derry shipyard, 24 Feb., 20 Mar. 1923, HA/5/1250, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1923, LAB 34/41, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁴⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Apr. 1923; *LG*, May 1923.

⁵⁰ K.S. Isles & Norman Cuthbert, *An Economic Survey of Northern Ireland* (Belfast: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1957), p. 225.

⁵¹ *DJ*, 30 Mar., 9, 23 Apr. 1923; *Irish Independent*, 24 May 1923; *Garment Worker*, May 1923, L13, WCML.

⁵² *Journal of the ASTT*, Dec. 1921, L20, WCML; *DJ*, 2, 4, 7, 14, 23 May, 8 June 1923.

⁵³ Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', p. 356; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 50. The resulting union was called the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

⁵⁴ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 50-53; Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 126-133, 195-206.

⁵⁵ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 215, 217. The 1926 UK census returned 345 cutters: 269 men and 76 women.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 211-213.

⁵⁷ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 50; *DJ*, 16 Jan. 1922.

⁵⁸ Devine, *Organising History*, p. 108.

⁵⁹ *DJ*, 2 Mar. 1923.

⁶⁰ Finlay, 'Trade unionism and Sectarianism', p. 123. O'Donnell made this claim in a 1983 interview with Finlay.

⁶¹ *DJ*, 30 Mar. 1923

⁶² *Belfast Newsletter*, 16, 29 Dec. 1922; *The Record*, Apr.-June 1923, MSS.126/TG/193/1/2, TGWU collection, MRC, UW; agreement regarding dockers' wages at ports in Northern Ireland, 26 & 27 Mar. 1923, LAB 83/2574, Min. of labour records, UKNA. The employers had originally sought a 4s. a day diminution. See *LG*, May 1923, p. 180.

⁶³ At the outbreak of the First World War, these rates were 9d. per ton. By the war's end, they had reached 1s. 1d. See Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 202.

⁶⁴ *Workers' Republic*, 5 May 1923; correspondence regarding delegate conference, Oct. 1923, Ms. 27,065(1), ITGWU Papers, NLI; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 174; ITGWU, *Annual Reports*, 1918-25. The *Workers' Republic* was the weekly of the tiny Communist Party of Ireland, formed in October 1921 from the old Socialist Party of Ireland.

⁶⁵ *DJ*, 21 Mar., 7 May 1923; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 60.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 May, 1 June 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 21 May 1923; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1923, LAB 34/41, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-13 Aug. 1923; LLSR minutes, 5 July, 22 Aug., 28 Sept., 24 Oct. 1923, D2683/AA/10, PRONI; *Irish Independent*, 6, 10 Aug. 1923.

⁶⁸ *DJ*, 24, 26 Sept. 1923; *LS*, 25 Oct. 1923.

⁶⁹ *DJ*, 21 Sept.-1 Oct. 1923; *Derry Standard*, 19, 21, Sept. 1923; *LS*, 20, 22, 25 Sept. 1923. Employers across the Free State launched a major assault on wages, beginning in the summer of 1923 and culminating that Autumn with numerous, lengthy strikes across the economy. The ITGWU was the main victim of the employers' conduct and it for this reason that the *Sentinel* referred to it.

⁷⁰ *Report of Ministry of Labour for Years 1923-1924*, p. 12.

⁷¹ *DJ*, 23 Jan. 1924.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 28 Jan., 29 Feb. 1924.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21, 23 May 1924.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 11, 25 Jan.-1 Feb. 1924.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 13, 15, 20, 22, 25 Feb. 1924; RUC IG reports on strikes in the Derry shipyard, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 26, 29 Feb. 1924, HA/5/1250, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI.

⁷⁶ *DJ*, 14, 31 Mar., 2 Apr. 1924; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 5 Apr. 1924; RUC IG reports on strikes in the Derry shipyard, 31 Mar., 3 Apr. 1924, HA/5/1250, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1924, LAB 34/42, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

- ⁷⁷ *DJ*, 27, 29 Feb., 3 Mar. 1924; RUC Inspector General report on shirt factory strike in Derry, 1 Mar. 1924, HA/5/91, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI; agreement between the ASTT and the NUTGW, 1 Mar. 1924, LAB 83/1549, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.
- ⁷⁸ *DJ*, 2 Apr. 1924; Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', p. 132.
- ⁷⁹ ASTT, *Annual reports for 1921-24*, TU/TAILORB/1/48-49, WCML; *Journal of the ASTT*, June 1924, L20, WCML.
- ⁸⁰ *Journal of the ASTT*, June, Sept. 1924, L20, WCML.
- ⁸¹ *Irish Independent*, 2, 5 Apr. 1924; *DJ*, 14, 18, 21 Apr. 1924; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 17 May, 16 Aug. 1924; Damien Brennan, *Irish Insanity, 1800-2000* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 75.
- ⁸² *Freeman's Journal*, 15, 16 Apr. 1924; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 19 Apr., 17 May, 16 Aug. 1924; *Irish Independent*, 16 Dec. 1924; *Donegal Democrat*, 26 Dec. 1924, 18 Dec. 1925.
- ⁸³ *DJ*, 14 Mar., 23, 25 Apr. 1924.
- ⁸⁴ Letters from Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers Derry branch secretary W Hanaway to General Secretary Owen Hynes, 3 Mar., 15, 22, 29 Apr. 1924, 1097/29/12, NAI; Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers executive committee minutes, 30 Apr. 1924, 1034/2, NAI; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1924, LAB 34/42, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.
- ⁸⁵ *Irish Independent*, 1 May 1924; *DJ*, 2 May 1924; Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers executive committee minutes, 20, 30 Apr., 5 May 1924, 1034/2, NAI.
- ⁸⁶ RUC Inspector General's reports on the strike in the building trade and threatened strikes in Derry, 2 May 1924, HA/5/1352; RUC Inspector General's reports on strike of riveters in the Derry shipyard, 2, 6, 9 May 1924, HA/5/1250, both found in Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI.
- ⁸⁷ *DJ*, 5 May 1924; *Irish Independent*, 7 May 1924.
- ⁸⁸ Londonderry Gas Co. minutes, 4 Apr., 2 May, 6 June 1924, D3806/1/4, PRONI; *DJ*, 23 May 1924.
- ⁸⁹ *DJ*, 7, 9 May 1924; Londonderry Gas Co. minutes, 4 Apr., 2 May, 6 June 1924, D3806/1/4, PRONI.
- ⁹⁰ *Derry News and Donegal People*, 3 May 1924; *DJ*, 9, 12 May 1924; *LS*, 15 May 1924; NAUL executive committee minutes, 9 May 1924, TU/GENERALC/2/31, WCML.
- ⁹¹ *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1924.
- ⁹² *Derry People and Donegal News*, 17 May 1924; *DJ*, 14 May 1924.
- ⁹³ *DJ*, 16 May 1924; *Freeman's Journal*, 17 May 1924; *Irish Independent*, 24 May 1924.
- ⁹⁴ *DJ*, 19, 21 May 1924.
- ⁹⁵ *Irish Independent*, 24 May 1924.
- ⁹⁶ RUC Inspector General's reports on the strikes in Derry, 17, 23 May 1924, HA/5/1352, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI.
- ⁹⁷ RUC Inspector General's report on the strikes in Derry, 21 May 1924, HA/5/1352, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI. Employers had long been anxious to exploit the prevailing circumstances for their own gain. In February, Tillie & Henderson's dispensed with its employees that were not weekly wages earners due to the proposed liquidation and reconstruction of the company. See Tillie & Henderson minutes, 24 Feb. 1924, T3377/1, Tillie & Henderson papers, PRONI.
- ⁹⁸ RUC Inspector General's report on the strikes in Derry, 21 May 1924, HA/5/1352, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI; *Belfast Telegraph*, 17 May 1924.
- ⁹⁹ *Irish Independent*, 2 June 1924.
- ¹⁰⁰ *DJ*, 23 May 1924. See chapter for an analysis of Derry Corporation during this period.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 26 May 1924. See the *Journal's* 2 June 1924 editorial for another condemnation of the Corporation.
- ¹⁰² *LS*, 10 May 1924.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 24 May 1924.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Derry Standard*, 26 May 1924.
- ¹⁰⁵ *LS*, 20 May 1924.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 31 May 1924.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 23 May 1923; *Irish Independent*, 24 May, 2 June 1924.
- ¹⁰⁸ *DJ*, 26 May 1924; RUC Inspector General reports on the Derry strikes, 9, 10, 17, 21, 23 May 1924, HA/5/1352, Min. of Home Affairs, PRONI. Even summer fishing at Buncrana was seriously impacted by what was happening in Derry.
- ¹⁰⁹ RUC memo on Derry strikes, 27 May 1924, HA/5/1352, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI; *DJ*, 30 May 1924.
- ¹¹⁰ *DJ*, 26 May, 2 June 1924; ministerial order of curfew, 23 May 1924, HA/5/937, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI. Northern Ireland had been under a 12am-5am curfew since 6 April 1923. Bates issued these curfews under the authority granted to him by the notorious Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Act 1922.
- ¹¹¹ Letter from S.H.E. Parr to Major J. Watson, 23 May 1924, COM/13/1/54, Department of Commerce records, PRONI; *DJ*, 28, 30 May 1924.
- ¹¹² *DJ*, 30 May, 2 June 1924; *Irish Independent*, 31 May 1924.

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- ¹¹³ *Irish News*, 26 May 1924.
- ¹¹⁴ *Derry Standard*, 4 June 1924.
- ¹¹⁵ *DJ*, 2, 4 June 1924; *Irish Independent*, 4 June 1924.
- ¹¹⁶ *Irish Independent*, 3 June 1924.
- ¹¹⁷ *DJ*, 2, 6 June 1924.
- ¹¹⁸ *DJ*, 6, 9, 11 June 1924; RUC Inspector General's report on the Derry strikes, 23 May 1924, HA/5/1352, Min. of Labour records, PRONI; NAUL executive committee minutes, 20 June 1924, TU/GENERALC/2/31, WCML.
- ¹¹⁹ *DJ*, 13 June 1924, *Irish Independent*, 12, 13 June 1924; *Freeman's Journal*, 12, 13 June 1924; *LG*, July 1924; trade disputes record book for 1924, LAB 34/42, Min. of Labour records, UKNA. The pork curers got their 1s. increase on 17 October. They received another 1s. on 18 November, making wages 51s., before experiencing a 1s. cut in April 1925. Corporation employees' wages were upped by 1s. in April 1925 which was taken back three months later. See *LG*, Jan., May, Aug. 1925.
- ¹²⁰ Ministerial order of curfew, 13 June 1924, HA/5/937, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI; various memos contained in HA/5/1352, Min of Home Affairs records, PRONI.
- ¹²¹ *DJ*, 13 June 1924; GFTU management subcommittee minutes, 28 May, 11, 25 June 1924, GFTU/2/84, Bishopsgate Institute.
- ¹²² *DJ*, 11 June 1924; *Irish Independent*, 3 June 1924.
- ¹²³ *DJ*, 30 June, 7 July 1924.
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 13 June 1924.
- ¹²⁵ *LS*, 3 June 1924.
- ¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 14 June 1924.
- ¹²⁷ *Derry Standard*, 13 June 1924.
- ¹²⁸ *DJ*, 4 Aug. 1924.
- ¹²⁹ Letter from G.F. Gillespie to Ernest Bevin, 3 Dec. 1924; memorandum of agreement reached between the Burns & Laird Lines Ltd., Belfast Steamship Co., 11 Oct. 1924. Both are found in the file Londonderry Dockers, 1923-1946, MSS.126/TG/RES/D/49/1, TGWU collection, MRC, UW. See also Transport and General Workers' Union, *Annual Report and Balance Sheet for 1924*, p. 28, MSS.126/TG/1154/3, TGWU collection, MRC, UW; *The Record*, Nov. 1924-Jan. 1925, MSS.126/TG/193/1/4, TGWU collection, MRC, UW; *The Record*, Dec. 1924, Jan. 1925, MSS.126/TG/193/1/4, TGWU collection, MRC, UW.
- ¹³⁰ *DJ*, 3, 8 Sept. 1924.
- ¹³¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Oct. 1924; *ibid*, 3, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 28 Nov. 1924; *LS*, 25 Nov. 1924.
- ¹³² *DJ*, 19 Nov., 3 Dec. 1924; *Belfast Newsletter*, 24 Nov., 3 Dec. 1924.
- ¹³³ *DJ*, 20, 22 Oct. 1924. O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 51; Hassan, *Thunder & Clatter*; . The shipyard had been steadily culling jobs by the time of its closure. Just a few years before, it employed about 1,500.
- ¹³⁴ Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 190; Andrew Finlay, 'The Cutting Edge: Derry Shirtmakers', in Chris Curtin, Pauline Jackson & Barbara O'Connor (eds.), *Gender in Irish Society* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1987), p. 88.
- ¹³⁵ *Voice of Labour*, 7 Sept. 1918; citation is from O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, p. 41. See *Voice of Labour*, 31 Aug. 1918 for Cathal O'Shannon's article on northern Labour, which prompted Logue's response.

6

A Comparative Analysis of Class Conflict in Cork and Derry, 1917-24

Syndicalism

Nothing crystallised the fundamental divisions within Irish Labour more than the proliferation of syndicalism in the south, and the lack of it in the north, from 1917. Irish syndicalism was the logical conclusion of Larkinism's organisational revolution in an era of mass inflation, international turmoil and anti-imperialist struggle. Its success led to an evolution of tactics, with sympathetic strikes escalating into general action, and of strategy, with industrial unionism developing into the One Big Union. Syndicalism impacted every union, but its influence was reflected most strongly in ITGWU, followed by the IDAA/IUDWC and the NUR. Though few ITGWU members considered themselves syndicalists, revolutionary ideas percolated down from the leadership to a rank-and-file that subscribed to syndicalism's methods rather than its aims. As Darlington adduces in his comparative analysis of twentieth century syndicalism in America, Britain, France, Italy, Spain and Ireland:

Even in the ITGWU, the least formally ideologically syndicalist-committed of the bodies within this comparative study, the general revolutionary union and direct action philosophy and orientation of Larkin, Connolly, O'Brien and other national leaders would appear to have been absorbed to a greater or lesser extent by most members.¹

Syndicalism inspired unions to go beyond the economic sphere and create a proletarian counterculture. In 1919, the ITGWU asked members to view it 'as a social centre, round which they can build every activity of their existence, and which, wisely used, can be made to remedy all of their grievances'.² Having adopted the co-operative idea from the NUR, ITGWU members established a co-op in Cork in 1917.³ The counterculture was evident in both Cork and Derry: May Day parades were organised by the trades councils, socials and sports days were held and co-operatives were launched. But it was only in the southern city that

syndicalism penetrated so deeply to inspire soviets, industrial occupations and takeovers, the waving of red flags, a Labour Party, praise for the Bolsheviks and talk of a 'Workers' Republic' or a Co-operative Commonwealth'. In July 1922, Cork's trades council became the more inclusive Cork Workers' Council in solidarity with such ideas.⁴ Neither city saw the dissemination of radical newspapers as occurred elsewhere in Ireland. Nationally, 1919 was the *ne plus ultra* of the syndicalist years. The ITUC adopted a socialist programme, complete with a 50s. minimum wage and the forty-four-hour week. It also considered establishing an Irish Workers' Union inclusive of all sectors.⁵ But if syndicalism had such a profound influence over Irish Labour, why did it have a far greater hold in Cork than in Derry?

Industrially, Irish syndicalism was a southern solution to southern problems. While Labour faced many of the same obstacles in Ulster, they were not deep enough to warrant a syndicalist organisational revolution. 'Syndicalism made a big impact on Ireland because it was less industrialised, had a less developed system of conciliation and arbitration and relatively militant employers, and was a marginal area of trade unionism within the United Kingdom, neglected by the British trade unions'.⁶ This neglect had serious consequences. Between 1905 and 1912, Irish food prices rocketed by 25 per cent while unemployment soared to 20 per cent.⁷ While there was not necessarily a *direct* link between economic deprivation and radicalism (as in France and Britain), Irish labourers – like their counterparts in the US, Italy and Spain – were undoubtedly attracted to the ITGWU's syndicalist rhetoric of class war.⁸ Thus, material conditions – poor industrialisation and a predominantly unskilled labour force – provided the basis for Irish syndicalism, which is reflected by its north-south geographic divide. A similar divide for similar reasons existed in the US and Canada.

Unlike the south, Ulster craftsmen had no need of an alliance with labourers to secure their bargaining power. Moreover, the link between sectarianism and craft exclusiveness militated against the development of class politics in divided Ulster. But there were also structural reasons for Derry Labour's alignment with Britain. The shirt factories were typical of industries created by Ulster's nineteenth-century textile boom. Like Belfast's linen mills, the shirt factories created a sociology of production far removed from anything that existed Leaside. They generated their own subcultures based on acute hierarchies of grade, religion and sex. Men monopolised the more comfortable cutting departments while women toiled on the factory floors as operatives. Though divisions of labour based on sex were not unique to Ulster, sectarian divisions were. The cutters were overwhelmingly Protestant and operatives overwhelmingly Catholic. At Derry's shipyard – which employed men only and where

approximately two-thirds were highly-skilled, highly-paid workers – the same sectarian division existed: tradesmen were largely Protestant and labourers chiefly Catholic. Craftsmen could establish effective bargaining power via the powerful, well-resourced amalgamateds that dominated the British yards, linking Derry's trade-union culture to Britain and Belfast and not to the south. The shipyard gave Derry a craft elite of the metal trade that was concentrated, sizeable and strong, and conscious that its prosperity was contingent on the labourers' weakness. The dispersed nature of craft unionism in Cork ensured that tradesmen were more supportive of the mobilisation of the unskilled because it helped them assert their own industrial muscle.⁹

The origins of Derry's rejection of syndicalism had its genesis in its 1909 rejection of Larkin's most enduring legacy, the ITGWU. Unlike Cork, Derry only participated in the first of Irish Labour's three stages of modernisation (new unionism). Its split from Larkin, after two years of embracing him, was a pivotal moment in the history of its working class. Larkinism, and later syndicalism, demanded separate Irish unions. It was this, more than its militancy, that antagonised Derry's conservative, Labour-nationalist trade-union establishment. The mental decolonisation of Irish Labour initiated by Larkin did not reach Derry in any meaningful way until the ITGWU set up shop in 1919, by which time the British had cornered the market. Local officials of these unions like Logue and McCarron strove for a united movement where Catholic and Protestant could link arms as workers. But how could this be achieved given the city's demographics and the depth of its religious and political divisions? Though it spoke a radically inclusive language, Unionist propaganda ensured that the ITGWU never brought on board more than a handful of Protestants during its time in Derry. Sectarianism was the primary reason for the stunted development of syndicalism in the north, giving northern radicals an unenviable task that Labour in Cork did not have to deal with. Given the socio-political context, that syndicalism influenced Derry Labour at all, however mildly, was extraordinary. The remarkable thing about northern trade unionism is how little, not how much, it was influenced by sectarianism.

Ulster had a fractured society, tormented by religion and politics . . . These diversities were pressed together into a single economy with, for the most part, mixed workforces. . . people coped with the density of difference by compartmentalising their mentalities and adjusting the response code in each. That learned behaviour made it easier to detach the trade unions from sectarianism, though the separation could never be complete. In a society in which religion

mattered ubiquitously, including in the workplace and the unions themselves, sectarianism invariably curbed solidarity. . . behaviour was determined simply by an instinct to survive.¹⁰

These mixed workplaces were centres of a single, Anglo-centric trade unionism. When the shirt factories and shipyard boomed during the First World War, work was plentiful for both Catholics and Protestants who worked together in the sectarian peace that the war had created. Trade-union attempts to avoid sectarianism detached them from politics which ensured that militancy was less likely to mature into radicalism in Derry than in Cork. It was enough that nationalists and Unionists could unite on wages and conditions.¹¹ British unions, rather than republican or loyalist ones, offered an attractive and enduring resolution to the conundrum of sectarianism: a willingness to be wage militant while simultaneously parking the Ulster question. It was a strategy that Unionists found particularly appealing. It was only when these unions failed to deliver on wages in 1920-21 – concomitant to the height of the war of independence – that the Transport Union got its chance to shine. But even in these revolutionary years, the ITGWU struggled to dislodge its non-syndicalist British rivals. Its peak membership of 315 was a small number for a nationalist-majority city at a time of republican insurrection. Partition and the Irish revolution's swing to the right helped to kill the radicalism that had helped to fuel the union's growth across Ireland, including Derry, leading workers to drift back to the amalgamateds. The Derry branch stood little chance when the counterattack was launched and it declined steadily throughout 1922 and collapsed in 1923.¹² In Cork, where all but the most conservative unions backed the republic by 1920, the ITGWU went from strength to strength from 1917, swallowing up its smaller rivals on its quest to become the One Big Union.

The ITGWU's brief stint in Derry suggests that the era's Connollyites were not naïve about the problem that working-class Unionism posed for both Labour and the republic. Unlike many southerners, O'Donnell, Ridgeway and O'Shannon – all Ulstermen who had spent time in Derry – recognised the Ulster Protestant's ability to be paradoxically wage militant and politically conservative. They were convinced that Protestants could be won over to the Republic if it was a workers' republic: only socialism could transform class consciousness into anti-imperialism. But their argument failed to recognise the rational basis for cross-class Unionist homogeneity. Protestant workers did better, at least in the short-term, by embracing sectarianism as doing so maintained an economic superiority over Catholics that reinforced a psychological feeling of communal superiority.¹³ British unions were happy to uphold this

inequality and to park the national question, which was good enough for most Protestants. Mental colonisation meant that this was enough for most nationalists too. The result was a tenuous unity across the sectarian divide masked by the veneer of class rhetoric: a provincial, insular movement whose foremost goal was to track cross-channel wage levels.¹⁴ That syndicalism took hold so strongly in Cork and not in Derry demonstrates that a homogenous, united proletariat did not exist in Ireland, even among nationalists.

The wages movements

The First World War was a war of two halves for workers in both cities. The first half was characterised by mounting class tensions as food shortages, inflation and profiteering eviscerated workers' incomes. This provoked an upsurge of class consciousness that laid the foundations for syndicalist militancy. As a Larkinite movement, Cork Labour spent 1914-16 rebuilding from the 1913 lockout. Derry's ships and shirts put it in a better position to benefit economically from the war. Industrial regulations imposed from 1915 had a far greater impact in Derry than in Cork and its workers took advantage of the new environment. With lucrative War Office contracts, the shirt factories and the shipyard dominated industrial conflict there until 1917. Accordingly, Derry had more disputes than its larger Munster counterpart in this first half. In contrast, from October 1914 to April 1917 class conflict in Cork resembled that of the Larkinite days: Labourers largely called stoppages. They did so under the umbrella of the ITGWU, which seized the initiative after its re-establishment in the city and became the biggest union by 1917. The NAUL did the same in Derry. The inflationary spiral equally motivated workers in both cities to seek redress. The employers' response – offering war bonuses – was the same. Societal distinctions laid the foundation for syndicalism, the most vivid manifestation of the divergence of northern and southern Labour. Cork's embrace of syndicalism set its wages movement on course for a more impressive record than Derry, especially for labourers. Syndicalism gave Cork Labour an unprecedented cohesion and unity that began in late 1916 with the reunification of the trades council, heralding an era of proletarian self-assertion. To understand the dynamics of the wages movement in both cities, it should be divided into three subperiods: 1917-19, 1919-20 and 1921-24.

The first subperiod was characterised by the explosion of class tensions and the consequent reinvigoration of militancy. Like the rest of Ireland, from 1917 Derry Labour spread from its traditional bases to include women, assistants and clerks. White-collar

militancy was one of the period's defining features in both cities that aided the coherence of the wages movement. The assistants' gains were nothing short of magnificent. For example, the wages of Cork's drapers' assistants jumped by 220 per cent between July 1917 and late 1920. Even more extraordinary was the shop assistants' experience. Between February 1918 and late 1920, their pay expanded by an astonishing 640 per cent, resulting in a tremendously improved standard of living even when mass inflation is accounted for (see Appendix 9).

The organisation of women was one of Derry Labour's most significant achievements during these years. The rapid expansion of union membership on the shirt factories floors from mid-1917 undermines the argument that poor organisation of women before this was primarily due to Labour misogyny.¹⁵ The truth is more complex and multifaceted. Men wanted women to organise because it strengthened their hand. Women would have organised sooner but for a lack of incentive and employer hostility. However, sexism clearly existed in the factories. The cutters' opposition to sharing a working environment, or even a union, with women was primarily motivated by their desire assert a separate, male identity. This raises the question of whether gender, rather than skill, politics or religion, was the main dividing line in the industry, even within the unions that organised it. These unions reflected Derry's complex, contradictory gender dynamics. 'After all, in 1920 the Derry branch of the UGW was exclusively composed of men, most of them Protestants, who embarked on the strike with no apparent thought for the conditions of their female colleagues, Protestant and Catholic alike, or for the effects which the strike might have on them'. However, the UGW was overwhelmingly female in the rest of the UK. Plus, during the strike the cutters publicly rejected allegations that his union refused to accept women as members in Derry and actually urged them to join.¹⁶ Cutters conceded that women could work as layers-up, putters-up and pencillers, but not as band knife operators, a job that supposedly expressed the trade's inherent masculinity.¹⁷ Though undoubtedly an inhibitor, sexism was not an insurmountable barrier to a stronger wages movement in the factories. The cutters' yearning to protect craft privilege motivated their behaviour as strongly as gender did, proving that Labour could not easily or quickly replace a craft consciousness acquired over decades with a class one.¹⁸

From 1914-16, wage increases lagged inflation; from 1916, however, wages began to rise faster. Militancy was precipitated by price increases and a spirit of radicalism ushered in by revolutionary fervour at home and abroad. The improvements sought were typically 3-5s. a week in both cities with workers usually getting about half of their demands; they rarely obtaining them in full. Nevertheless, the results were impressive. By early 1919, the unions

appeared to be winning the class war as wage gains overtook price rises, thus improving workers' living standards. The era of subsistence wages, which had prevailed since the Industrial Revolution, had ended. Employers were more obstinate in granting decreases in hours. The pre-1917 standard week of fifty-four to sixty hours had been in place since the 1890s. But progress was made here too, and hours began fall dramatically. The fifty-hour-week was the norm in the Cork trades by the war's end. Derry would have to wait until the second stage of syndicalism to see progress on this front.¹⁹

The scale of the increases augmented from 1919 as worker militancy intensified. In Cork, this was facilitated by the republican insurrection. The destruction of British authority helped to create a climate in which a new, more egalitarian society appeared possible. Attempted proletarian revolutions across Europe also inspired Cork and Derry Labour in this respect. But it was Cork that led the way in militancy. The number of strikes, and the threat of them, rose exponentially in 1919, more so than in Derry. So did wage claims, as applications for an additional 10-20s. a week, and sometimes as high as 25s., became commonplace in both. Workers still generally failed to get all their demands, but unions were now obtaining most of them, giving major gains. By the onset of the slump, both Cork and Derry Labour had much to be proud of. Since January 1919, most sectors had seen considerable improvement in living standards. In real terms, Cork labourers' wages were 25 per cent better by 1920 than their pre-war value, reaching a high of 60 per cent better by 1921. In both cities the trades showed a smaller enhancement. Cork's coopers and building craftsmen, for example, saw their standard of living improve by about 10-15 per cent. Though some classes of printers in Cork suffered a marginal decline in the value of their earnings, most made sizeable gains. It was fitting that the city's unskilled gained the most from Labour's struggles. Without the labourers' unionisation and support, no group could have improved their lot to the extent to which they did.²⁰

Labour activism peaked in Derry in 1919; in contrast to Cork, the number of strikes in Derry decreased greatly in 1920. But Derry Labour was starting from a lower base. Come the slump, wages – especially those of labourers – were inferior in most sectors, significantly so in many cases. Herein lies another difference between the two movements: syndicalism promoted greater unity between trade and spade which allowed the latter to prosper. Deindustrialisation and technological development led to the numerical growth of transport and white-collar workers that accentuated this convergence. Mechanisation reduced the number of 'labour aristocrats' and transferred this group's centre of gravity from the pre-industrial crafts to the

metal industries, which Cork lacked. Derry contained some modern industry like its shipyard, a major male employer where the labour aristocracy was reinforced rather than dismantled.²¹

In both cities tradesmen's wages were about double that of their labourers in 1914. But by early 1921, the ITGWU had reduced this disparity to 65-75 per cent in Cork. An analysis of the building trade is particularly illuminating here. By the downturn, the pay gap between labourer and craftsman in Derry's building trade was still at 1914 levels; in Cork, it had been reduced to 25 per cent. From 1917, changes in technology and the nature of work galvanised Cork's tradesmen to put aside their traditional hostility to the labourers and joined with them to advance their own bargaining power through militant action. Carpenters, for example, witnessed a 153 per cent growth in pay between 1917 and 1920. Even after the 1923 lockout, their wages were 121 per cent above pre-1917 levels. In Derry, where building trade wages had been lower than in Cork, the improvements were even more astonishing. From early 1919, craft rates exploded and climaxed in August 1920 when they were over 6 per cent higher than what prevailed in Cork.²² In total, building artisans' wages in the northern city rose by 177 per cent from 1917-20. They were one of the few groups in Derry to secure better pay than their Cork counterparts. Why was this? Building tradesmen went from being one of Derry's most conservative workers to some of their most militant. The answer is unclear, but it may lie in the shipyard, not the building trade. Wages in the former were always close to the latter. The shipbuilding boom during the war forced upwards the wages of workers whose trade straddled both shipbuilding and construction (carpenters, joiners, plumbers etc.). With no such point of reference, Cork's building tradesmen lacked such a bargaining chip to push for higher pay.

Even more remarkable was the scale of the increase received by builders' labourers in Cork, who experienced 273 per cent pay improvement. Their post-lockout wage was 216 per cent better than in 1917. These achievements are even more extraordinary given that builders' labourers had seen their pay advanced by only 3s. between 1902 and 1917, and tradesmen only ¼-½d. an hour more. Builders' labourers in Derry won a peak that was 43 per cent less than their Cork equivalents. In 1925, Cork's builders' labourers' earned a wage 55 per cent higher than the Derry rate. In both cities Labour was even more successful on hours than on wages from 1919-21. Unlike Cork, in early 1919 most craftsmen in Derry still worked a fifty-four to fifty-five-hour week. But over the following two years these hours were cut to a norm of forty-six to forty-eight (forty-seven being the most common), allowing leisure time to become a reality for working-class families, vastly upgrading their quality of life.²³ However, like the

national movement, Labour in both cities largely failed to obtain the forty-four-hour week coveted by the unions since February 1919.

Table 6. 1: Wage Growth in Cork, 1912-21 (1900=100)

Year (Dec.)	Coopers	Compositors	Building tradesmen	Brewery labourers	Builders' & Public Authority labourers	Cost of living index ²⁴
1912	100	111	104	105	106	-
1913	100	111	104	-	111	-
1914	108	116	109	130	117	127
1915	108	116	109	135	-	158
1916	117	116	109	150	167	202
1917	125	126	145	180	194	225
1918	167	138	153	200	222	252
1919	225	182	227	255	278	257
1920	269	206	274	350	348	310
1921	269	230	274	350	-	-

Source: Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 214.

Table 6. 2: Builders' Labourers' Hourly Wages in Cork, 1917-24

Date	Builders' Labourers & Carmen	Scaffold-Makers
Jan. 1917	4 ² / ₃ d.	5 ² / ₃ d.
Apr. 1917	6 ¹ / ₂ d.	7 ¹ / ₂ d.
Apr. 1918	9d.	10d.
Apr. 1919	11 ¹ / ₂ d.	1s. ¹ / ₂ d.
Nov. 1919	1s. ¹ / ₂ d.	1s. 1 ¹ / ₂ d.
Jan. 1920	1s. 4d.	1s. 5d.
May 1920	1s. 8d.	1s. 9d.
Nov. 1923	1s. 5d.	1s. 6d.

Source: LG, 1917-21; CE, 1917-24

Table 6. 3: Builders' Labourers' Wages in Derry, 1900-25

Date	Wage
1900	15s.
1905	14s. 2d.
1913	15s.
Jan 1917	22s. or 24s.
Aug. 1917	25s. 10d.
Jan. 1920	47s.
May 1920	54s. 10d.
May 1923	39d. 2d.
June 1924	43s. 1s.

Source: LG, 1893-1925; DJ, 1917-25; O'Connor, 2: Larkinism and syndicalism, p. 32.

The slump accentuated the differences between Labour in Cork and Derry: different patterns of conflict arose in response to similar economic, but significantly different political, circumstances. The biggest difference was the employers' response. Ulster's relative political stability enabled the counterattack to begin sooner in Derry. By mid-1921, unions were firmly on the defensive. In the interim, the establishment of a six-county statelet dominated by the Unionist Party, many of whom were large capitalists overtly hostile to Labour, aided the counterattack. Sectarianism incapacitated Derry Labour's capacity for resistance and heightened tensions with the south, leading to Derry becoming isolated from Britain and the rest of Ireland.²⁵ Over the next two years, the confidence of Derry's employers in asking for bigger cuts grew with the restoration of political stability. The unions' response was increasingly feeble. The cuts sought grew from 3s. in June 1921 (at Watt's), to 6s. in August (on the railways) to 13s. 8½d. in September (in the building trade). Similar decreases were demanded throughout 1922. It was in the building trade where the most aggressive pushback came and where Labour's fightback was weakest. By November 1922, the master builders had shrunk craftsmen's rates by a staggering 33s. 4d. a week. An attempt to decrease pay by another 3s. 9d. a week in May 1923 was a step too far and was defeated. Labourers suffered less than half the cuts that tradesmen endured, in contrast to Cork where the master builders reduced the pay of both by 3d. an hour.

In Cork, the political turmoil of 1921-23 prevented employers from cutting wages on incremental basis. The consolidation of the Treaty settlement in 1923 encouraged them to attack wages in one swoop, provoking a titanic showdown. Cork's employers had wanted cutbacks like those enforced in Derry, but militancy forced them to make concessions. Building tradesmen would have been reduced to Derry rates were it not for the inter-union solidarity demonstrated in the autumn crisis, the swansong of syndicalism. In Derry, the staggered, earlier implementation of cuts meant that the pendulum had swung back in favour of the unions by 1924. Dreading a return to 1919-20, the Derry Employers' Federation sought to nip this Labour revival in the bud. Given the bosses' tenacity, the outcome of the 1924 lockout – 1922 wage levels – was quite an achievement for Labour.²⁶ Though the roles were reversed, Derry's 1924 crisis had a similar outcome to 1923 in Cork: settlements based on 50 per cent compromises. But both crises exhausted Labour. It was only in Derry where the lockout became a concerted effort to smash the unions. Class relations reminiscent of pre-1917 days returned to both cities after the crises because Labour had been massively disempowered.

The trades councils

Syndicalism's transformation of Labour was reflected in the CTC. After re-unification, the atmosphere of mutual suspicion that had characterised relations between Cork's two trades councils was replaced by one of class-conscious, proletarian unity. Most unions had been affiliated to one of the old councils, but there was still room for expansion. The reunited council was branching out from the manual sectors to white-collar groups. By October 1917, the chemists' assistants, Poor Law Union employees, the RCA and the INTO were all affiliates.²⁷ By the year's end, the Irish Automobile Drivers' and Mechanics' Union (IADAMU) and the Shop Assistants had joined. In May 1918, it received another boon when the coopers re-affiliated.²⁸ By May Day 1919, nearly every union was affiliated to the council. The NFWW was its most recent affiliate. But there was still room for growth. The ASTI joined that October, the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers in September 1921 and the IEIU in May 1922. In July 1922, the council renamed itself the Cork Workers' Council to reflect the new reality.²⁹ From 1919-24, it claimed a membership of 10,000, an unprecedented figure. However, labourers remained underrepresented in the leadership positions.³⁰

In 1916, Derry Trades Council also reformed to reflect the rebirth of militancy. The Derry Trades and Labour Council was reconstituted on 25 March 1916, having been disbanded in late 1911. The following unions attended its inaugural meeting: ASCJ; ASTT; ASE; NUR; the IDAA; the Postmen's Federation; the NUDL; the Typographical Society, of which Logue was still a member; the Shirt and Collar Cutters' Union of Ireland; and two branches of the NAUL. Logue was elected chairman and Dealtry P. Thompson, of the Typographical Association, secretary.³¹ Its activities were identical to other trades councils, including Cork: supporting affiliates in industrial disputes, running 'buy-Irish' campaigns, agitating for cheaper rent and better housing for working-class families, reducing unemployment, promoting educational opportunities for workers and, later, struggling against profiteering and high food prices.³² The advance of working-class consciousness was reflected in the council's steady growth. Affiliated unions grew from fifteen in June 1916 to twenty-three the following month – a record membership of over 2,000 – and to twenty-eight by October 1917. By May 1917, the agricultural labourers had become 'enthusiastic members.' Thirty-three unions attended the council's 1918 annual general meeting. The addition of 'Labour' to its title was symptomatic of its growth. Like its Leaside equivalent, many new affiliates were from non-manual sectors like teachers, clerks and asylum attendants. In spring 1918, the NFWW joined the council. That June, the Gweedore and Rosses branch of the INTO and the National Association of

Discharged Soldiers and Sailors followed suit. Formed in early 1917, the Association consisted of working-class men who had fought in the war but had since been discharged. It cultivated links with the Labour movement before severing them in 1919 when it moved sharply to the right. It merged into the British Legion in 1921.³³

By mid-1920, the Derry Trades Council's remit had extended beyond the city boundaries to the suburbs, west to Letterkenny, south to Strabane, and to farms and rural employment in between. Reflecting its regional status, it renamed itself the Derry and District Trades and Labour Council. While southern trades councils were in the process of dropping the 'trades and labour council' from their titles in favour of the more inclusive 'workers' council', their Ulster counterparts were less likely to do so. Impressive as the Derry council's growth was, its reported membership of 10,000 from 1919 to 1921 and 12,000 in 1922 is surely incorrect.³⁴ The council had notable membership omissions that prohibited it from being as representative as the CTC. From 1920-23, major unions like the ITGWU, Shop Assistants, NUBSO, Ancient Guild, Cabinetmakers, Coachbuilders/NUVB, NSFU and Shipwrights were not affiliated. The RCA had left by 1921, the ASTT by 1922 and the IADAMU by 1923. The NAUL, NUDL, ATGWU and the building trade unions formed the backbone of council affiliates throughout.³⁵

By 1918, the main players in the Derry Trades and Labour Council were Logue, who was still president; A.C. Aitken, a boilermaker and council vice-president; McCafferty, its secretary; and John Limerick, its treasurer. Its leadership remained alternated little over the coming years. Logue remained president until his death in August 1925 and McCafferty remained secretary until 1921 when other commitments forced his replacement by J. McMullan. The vice-presidency saw more regular change with George Hegan holding the position from 1919-20 and Christopher Oxford of the IAWU holding it from 1921-22.³⁶

Table 6. 4: Presidents of the CTC, 1917-25

Year(s)	Name	Occupation
1917-18	Patrick Lynch	Tailor
1918-20	Éamonn O'Mahony	Railway Clerk
1920-23	George Nason	Coachbuilder
1924-25	Richard Anthony	Linotype Operator

Source: CE, 1917-24.

Table 6. 5: Secretaries of the CTC, 1917-25

Year(s)	Name	Occupation
1916-17	John Good	Railwayman
1917-19	Thomas Twomey	Carpenter
1920	Michael Hayes	Painter
1921	John Fitzgibbon	Draper's Assistant
1922-25	George Duncan	Lithographic Printer

Source: CE, 1917-24.

A major difference between the two councils was Cork's greater role as an industrial relations mediator which, because of Dowling, grew exponentially from 1917.³⁷ The Capuchin, who became a patron of the council shortly after his arrival to Cork, was elected CTC honorary president on 7 September 1917. His involvement in working-class affairs was so popular that on 4 May 1919 a stained-glass window was unveiled in his honour at Holy Trinity Church and a commemorative dinner held that evening in the Victoria Hotel. The window had been donated to the church by the trades council in 1918. At the dinner, Dowling – a Freeman of Cork since 21 June 1918 – was presented with a scroll by Éamonn O'Mahony, the RCA official who had replaced Patrick Lynch as council president. It had embossed on it the council's minutes of the meeting that elected Dowling honorary president.³⁸ Like its Derry counterpart, the CTC was not a radical organisation, much less a revolutionary one. Resolving industrial disputes on terms partially favourable to workers and avoiding strikes remained its primary concern. When strikes did erupt, arbitration was sought, and compromise accepted. The trades council was involved in most of the strikes, disputes and wage claims that the city experienced from 1917-20. From February 1919, it was happy to subcontract arbitration to the Cork Conciliation Board.

At the CTC's 1922 annual general meeting, Dowling outlined his vision for industrial relations in Cork:

As one who has been brought into intimate contact with the ideals of the workers and the sentiments of employers, you expect my opinion as to how the present deplorable tragedy could be ended. It can only be ended by a fusion of the interests of capital and labour. I bitterly deplore irresponsible declarations made by individuals that tend to widen the breach between capital and labour. It is unchristian and unpatriotic to foment discord and arouse animosity between those two great forces, on whose fusion depends the social advancement of individuals and the economic progress of our country.³⁹

His speech was warmly received by the delegates and applauded by the *Examiner*.⁴⁰ In a lecture delivered at UCC on 26 November 1919, he had warned against the pernicious influence of ‘extremists’ and ‘agitators’ who advocated the ‘fallacy of socialistic principles as a panacea for present-day abuses in the relations between capital and labour’. Equally critical of the complacency of ‘the privileged classes who enjoy a monopoly of the wealth of the world’, he declared that only a proper application of *Rerum Novarum* could end the perseverance of class conflict.⁴¹ The Capuchin’s message of class harmonisation had long been shared by Cork Labourites anxious to put his words into action. Syndicalism only momentarily ameliorated the conservatism of a Labour movement that reflected Ireland’s deeply traditional, Catholic society. The strength of religious sentiment among workers guaranteed that Marianism formed a much bigger component of the CTC’s ideological armoury than Marxism. In contrast, clerical involvement in Derry Labour was virtually non-existent and its trade council was anxious to stress its apolitical, secular nature to avoid sectarian ruptures. With no such concerns, the CTC could freely engage with the religious faith of most of its members.

Dowling was emblematic of an evolution of the Catholic Church’s views on the social question. The clergy had underestimated popular resentment of wartime inequality and hardship and had failed to put forward a realistic alternative to industrial strife. No longer was inequality considered inevitable and a reinterpretation of Church teaching took place through a clerical discourse that was more public than in the past. Priests were now more likely to sympathise with workers and condemn employer rigidity and greed. However, policy remained fundamentally conservative and never deviated from *Rerum Novarum*. The scale of the unrest forced clerics to develop a response to socialism (attacks on which softened and became less frequent). Profit-sharing, co-operation and other types of mutualisms based on private property were all proposed as alternatives to the status quo, especially in 1920 and 1921. Moreover, the Church propounded little of the ferocious anti-communism that characterised it between 1930 and 1965. However, clerics were simply putting up with tendencies of which they were still deeply suspicious. Most priests were sons of the rural middle class – farmers and shopkeepers. Though friendly towards the Church and its progress on the social question, Labour rejected clerical denunciation and censure on issues of class conflict, internationalism and Bolshevik Russia. However, it never developed an anti-clerical attitude and there were few attacks on hostile clergy. For instance, Liberty Hall only regarded Dowling’s condemnations of ‘socialist agitators’ as tiresome and self-important. Only with the conservative settlement of 1923 did the Church re-establish its authority over Labour, at which point Labour was happy to oblige.⁴²

Syndicalism's elevation of a working-class counterculture had an impact on the CTC, though to a lesser extent than in Derry. In conjunction with UCC, the CTC began to offer evening education courses for workers.⁴³ On 4 November 1919, Cork Corporation established the Cork Profiteering Committee which had trades council representation. Its remit was to campaign against and bring attention to exorbitant prices charged by shopkeepers. The committee lasted until 1922 and proved a thoroughly ineffectual organisation that made no tangible impact.⁴⁴ The Derry council made a greater effort to give its members something beyond the paradigm of industrial relations and satisfy more than economic needs. In October 1918, it set up a literary committee to establish a workers' library. Cassidy called it 'the most important step that has ever been taken by organised Labour for the advancement of the workers of the city'.⁴⁵ Like the ITUC, the First World War bequeathed to the Derry council an expanded role. This led to its assistance in the establishment of a local co-operative movement in October 1917 and a local Food Control Committee a month later.⁴⁶ Railwaymen were instrumental in forming co-operatives in the city the following year.⁴⁷ Throughout the syndicalist period, the Derry Trades Council reflected Labour's growing sense of itself as a social, as well as industrial and political, movement, and did so with greater gusto than Cork. On 19 December 1919, it held a well-attended Christmas dance at the Guildhall and marked May Day 1920 with a day of athletics for men and women at the Brandywell.⁴⁸

The republican revolution sparked a growth of nationalism within the ranks of the Derry council that alienated Unionists. In response, trades council leaders tried to maintain unity by pursuing independent Labour politics. Hence, the Derry Trade Council's absence from the 1920 local elections in which the CTC had been heavily beaten by the ITGWU-Sinn Féin joint-ticket. In March 1924, the Derry Trades Council sent delegates to discuss the Belfast Labour Party's proposal to form the Labour Party of Northern Ireland. The ITUC was not involved in this initiative, symbolising the wide political divergence that now existed between northern and southern Labour.⁴⁹ By the following year, Derry workers were ready to pursue class politics once more, 'the hatchet was buried between Orange and Green'.⁵⁰ The trades council sponsored the Northern Ireland Labour Party, which contested all Derry wards in the 1926 local elections. Candidates in the mainly Catholic wards were returned unopposed but none were elected in the predominantly Protestant wards.⁵¹

Nationalism had a vastly different impact on the CTC. By late 1920, the council was far more concerned with politics than the wages movement. Thus, it was poorly prepared for the employers' counteroffensive. One of the most striking facets of the 1923 Cork lockout is

the trades council's lack of involvement in it. It is symptomatic of the council's insignificance in 1923 that its most irate remarks had nothing to do with the lockout. Rather, they related to the government's reduction of teachers' salaries and the old-age pension.⁵² The CTC struggled to play a meaningful role in Cork's political and industrial life for the remainder of the decade, a microcosm of Labour's national fate. To make matters worse, shortly after the 1923 lockout the ITGWU and the Distributive Workers left the council, seriously harming its representativeness. As a result, it reverted to its craft-union character of old. In 1927, one delegate complained that 'the position between the skilled and unskilled workers in Cork is deplorable.'⁵³

Throughout the syndicalist era, the Derry Trades Council remained a conservative and ineffectual organisation. Its belated action during the cutters' strike reflected its mistaken, nationalistic view that the strike was part of a British scheme to undermine Irish industry. Its absence from the 1924 strikes illustrates how meaningless the slump had made the institution. A flirtation with mild brands of syndicalism and leftism had ended. The rise and fall of the Derry Trades Council can be adduced by its appearances in the local public directory, *The Derry almanac, North-West directory, and general advertiser*. Having featured in it from 1920-23, in 1924 its place was taken by the UULA which was, fittingly, situated underneath the Londonderry Employers' Federation.⁵⁴

Chapter Notes and References

¹ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, p. 48

² Cited in O'Connor, 'War and Syndicalism', p. 58.

³ O'Connor, *A Labour History of Waterford*, pp. 140-141.

⁴ *CE*, 22, 24 July 1922.

⁵ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, pp. 8-9; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-fifth annual meeting*, 1919, pp. 44-45, 61-65, NLI; Charles McCarthy, *Trade Unions in Ireland, 1894-1960* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1977), pp. 44-49. For example, see *CE*, 3 July 1919 for a report on a sports day held by the IDAA.

⁶ O'Connor, 'Old Wine in New Bottles?', p. 35.

⁷ Holton, *British Syndicalism*, p. 28; Henry Pelling, 'The Labour Unrest, 1911-1914', in *Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 150; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, p. 56

⁸ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 56, 95-104; Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968); Dick Geary, *European Labour Politics: From 1900 to the Depression* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

⁹ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 168-171; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, p. 41; Gallagher, 'Edwardian Derry', pp. 99-104.

¹⁰ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, p. 53.

¹¹ *Ibid*; McCarthy, *Trade Unions in Ireland*, pp. 42-43.

¹² O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, p. 41.

¹³ Joseph J. Lee, *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 5.

¹⁴ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, pp. 53-54.

- ¹⁵ For an example of this argument, see Henry Patterson, 'The Irish Working Class and the Role of the State, 1850–2016', in Eugenio F. Biagini & Mary Daly (eds.), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 145–160.
- ¹⁶ Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', pp. 129–130.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 222, 224, 225, 319.
- ¹⁸ O'Connor, 2: Larkinism and Syndicalism, pp. 52–53; *ibid*, pp. 206–227, 327; Henry Patterson, 'The Irish Working Class and the Role of the State, 1850–2016', in Eugenio F. Biagini & Mary E. Daly (eds.), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.
- ¹⁹ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 211–214.
- ²⁰ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 211–212.
- ²¹ Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, pp. 283, 290–295.
- ²² *Report of an enquiry by the Board of Trade into working-class rents and retail prices, together with the rates of wages in certain occupations in industrial towns of the United Kingdom in 1912*, p. 294; *LG*, June 1917–Sept. 1920.
- ²³ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 212–214; O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland*, p. 94.
- ²⁴ Derived from Bowley, *Prices and Wages*.
- ²⁵ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 99–100.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 101.
- ²⁷ *CE*, 11 May, 25, 26, 27 June, 17 July, 31 Oct. 1917; Borgonovo, *Dynamics of War and Revolution*, p. 163.
- ²⁸ *New Way*, Jan. 1918; Cork Coopers' Society minutes, 15 May 1918, U218/A/8, CCCA.
- ²⁹ *CE*, 2 May, 13 Oct., 4, 15 Nov. 1919, 12 Sept. 1921, 13 May, 24 July 1922; *Watchword of Labour*, 8 Nov. 1919.
- ³⁰ *Reports of the twenty-fifth to thirtieth annual meetings of the ILPTUCs*, 1919–24, NLI.
- ³¹ *Derry People and Donegal News*, 9 Dec. 1911, 1 Apr. 1916; *ibid*, 27 Mar. 1916. Neither the NSFU nor the Boilermakers' Society could attend but supported the reformation of the trades council.
- ³² Reports of several trades council meeting found in *DJ*, 1917–25.
- ³³ Ibid., 5 June, 10 July 1916, 14 May, 10 Oct. 1917, 12 Apr., 10 June 1918; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 31; *Woman Worker*, Mar. 1919. A Derry branch of the National Association of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors was founded in February 1918. Logue presided over its inaugural meeting. See *DJ*, 18 Feb. 1918.
- ³⁴ ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-fifth annual meeting*, 1919, p. 162, NLI; *Report of the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the ITUC*, 1920, p. 158, NLI; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-seventh annual meeting*, 1921, p. 227, NLI; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-eighth annual meeting*, 1922, p. 267, NLI; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 32–33.
- ³⁵ For a list of affiliates to the Derry Trades Council from 1920–23, see Appendix 13.
- ³⁶ *DJ*, 11 Apr. 1919, 13 Apr. 1921; *LS*, 27, 29 Aug. 1925; *Irish Independent*, 26, 31 Aug. 1925.
- ³⁷ The CTC continued to mediate demarcation disputes between craft unions, especially in the building trade. In early 1919, for example the CTC helped to resolve a conflict between stonemasons and stonecutters in the building of a wall at Grenville Place. See Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 13 Dec. 1918, 14, 28 Jan., 21 Feb. 1919, TU/1/37, CCCA.
- ³⁸ *CE*, 22 June 1918, 5 May 1919; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 79. See Curtin-Kelly, *An Ornament to the City*, pp. 115–117 for the text of the embossment.
- ³⁹ *CE*, 18 Feb. 1922.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 27 Nov. 1919. *Rerum Novarum* was an 1891 Papal Encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII (1810–1903) that enunciated the Catholic Church's teachings on the rights and duties of capital and labour under capitalism. It supported private property and class reconciliation, and denounced both socialism and unfettered capitalism.
- ⁴² O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 76–80. See also Emmet Larkin, 'Socialism and Catholicism in Ireland', *Church History*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1964, pp. 462–83; Joseph A. MacMahon, 'Catholic Clergy and the Social Question, 1891–1916', *Studies*, No. 70, 1981, pp. 263–288; and John Henry Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland, 1923–1970* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1971). For an account of the Church's anti-communism, see Emmet O'Connor, 'Anti-communism in twentieth-century Ireland', *Twentieth Century Communism*, Vol. 6, No. 23, Mar. 2014, pp. 59–81.
- ⁴³ *CE*, 5 Oct. 1918, 1 Feb. 1919.
- ⁴⁴ *CE*, 5 Nov. 1919, 7, 14, 28 Jan., 4 Feb., 7 June, 24 Aug., 7 Sept, 22 Nov. 1920, 10, 17, 29 Oct., 28 Nov. 1921, 27 Feb. 1922.
- ⁴⁵ *DJ*, 4 Oct. 1918.
- ⁴⁶ *DJ*, 10 Sept., 10 Oct., 5 Nov. 1917, 21 Oct. 1918.
- ⁴⁷ *New Way*, Mar. 1918; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 48; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 31; McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', p. 13.

⁴⁸ *DJ*, 10 Sept., 10 Oct., 5 Nov. 1917, 21 Oct. 1918, 22 Dec. 1919, 8 May 1920; 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 31-32. Logue and Thompson were the trades council's representatives on the Food Control Committee.

⁴⁹ *DJ*, 14 Mar. 1924; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 179.

⁵⁰ *Irishman*, 12 May 1928, cited in Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', p. 60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61; Graham Walker, 'The Northern Ireland Labour Party, 1924-45', in Donal Ó Drisceoil and Fintan Lane (eds.), *Politics and the Irish Working Class, 1830-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 231-232. For histories of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, see Aaron Edwards, 'The Northern Ireland Labour Party and Protestant working-class identity', in Busted, Neal & Tonge (eds.) *Irish Protestant Identities*, pp. 347-357; Graham Walker, 'The Northern Ireland Labour Party in the 1920s', *Saothar*, Vol. 10, 1984, pp. 19-30. See also Graham Walker, *The politics of frustration: Harry Midgley and the failure of Labour in Northern Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

⁵² *CE*, 10 Nov. 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Nov. 1923.

⁵³ Cited in Luke Dineen and Liam Cullinane, *The Cork Council of Trade Unions* (forthcoming publication), p. 88.

⁵⁴ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 51.

Section II: Revolution and Reaction in Cork and Derry, 1917-24

7

Cork Labour and the Irish Revolution, 1917-23

Labour's amiable relationship with the republicans was one of its defining features during the War of Independence. Rapprochement between the two movements began in July 1915 when United Trades and Labour Council representatives attended the funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan-Rossa. On 11 May 1916, the District Trades Council appealed for clemency 'to those concerned in the tragic and deplorable events of Easter week' and strongly condemned its leaders' execution. The CEF had previously convened a special meeting to 'humbly convey to His Most Gracious Majesty the King the expression of unfailing loyalty.' The UTLC was conspicuous by its muteness on the rebellion.¹ A rapid growth in separatist sentiment among the Irish working class was a by-product of the Rising. From 1918-21, Irish Labour played a vital supporting role in the republican struggle. From 1921, however, Labour's relationship to nationalism was less clear. The ambiguity was reciprocated and defined relations between the two movements for decades thereafter. Cork Labour was a microcosm of this ideological journey.

The food crisis, 1917-18

As war raged in Europe, inflation and food shortages produced revolutionary or semi-revolutionary situation in many countries. John Borgonovo has written at length about Cork's wartime food crisis. Accordingly, it is necessary only to further examine Labour's involvement in it. Despite initial ideological reticence, in early 1917 the British government introduced price regulations and created a Minister of Food Control to combat profiteering and food scarcity. Nevertheless, shortages of food and exorbitant prices remained a feature of wartime life. In September 1917, after much nationalist campaigning, the government established the Irish Food Control Committee. However, it had no Labour representation, much to the CTC's ire.² The trades council called for the formation of food depots across the city with every trade unionist contributing 1s. to this end.³ Two months later, the Corporation founded the Food Control Committee to monitor shortages and profiteering. The IPP, which controlled the

committee, allocated no seats to Sinn Féin and only one to the trades council, provoking the latter to boycott it. The food crisis contributed to the growth in friendly relations between the republican and Labour movements. On 28 December 1917, John Good, Denis Houston and Cathal O'Shannon (a Cork-based ITGWU organiser since July 1917) attended a Sinn Féin conference on the crisis. It established a food preservation committee.⁴ On 18 January 1918, a public meeting was held to inaugurate the 'People's Food Committee'. Good, O'Shannon and Patrick Lynch were committee members from the start. With the support of Good's NUR branch, the committee established a potato depot and moved aggressively against the exportation of food. It spurred direct action from the Corporation which established its own food depot in March, collapsing the committee. With some justification, the ITGWU's *Irish Opinion* newspaper subsequently deemed the Cork People's Food Committee to be a 'local soviet in embryo'.⁵ More significant, however, was the commonality of interests that now existed in the minds of many local trade unionists between the Labour and republican struggles, as April 1918 would demonstrate.

The 1918 anti-conscription strike

Cork Labour's biggest and most efficacious protest during this period was not about wages or conditions. Rather, it was its implementation of the ITUC's one-day general strike on 23 April 1918 to oppose the imposition of conscription in Ireland. This 'semi-revolutionary' stoppage was a resounding success. It was unprecedented for an Irish strike and brought commercial life in Cork to a standstill.⁶ 'Cork's trade unions moved into the vanguard . . . shops and factories closed, trains and trams were idle, pubs shut their doors, and the harbour fell silent'.⁷ About 30,000 attended the largest protest in Cork's history. They listened to anti-conscription speeches from trade unionists and Dowling before signing an anti-conscription pledge. Always in touch with the prevailing mood, Dowling boldly declared that:

there is a power that controls the destinies of a nation that has to be reckoned with . . . that power is that of the workers. . . the force that builds up a nation's prosperity, and carries on its industry and commerce. The workers are the final and determining power on which rests the decision of any government in enforcing laws, and your presence, workers . . . is eloquent proof of your determination to resist the imposition upon you of a serfdom.⁸

A separate meeting was held for women at the City Hall where they pledged not to perform the job of any conscripted man. During the crisis, O'Shannon and Tomás MacCurtain brokered an amalgamation between the tiny ICA Cork branch – which was founded in July 1917 – and the Irish Volunteers.⁹ Crossover between the ITGWU and militant Irish nationalism was strong in Cork. In 1917, the authorities reported that the union was 'in close touch with the Irish volunteers.'¹⁰

The trades council and the 1918 general election

The conscription crisis had further reinforced the growing Labour-republican alliance in Cork. Thus, by late 1918 working-class attention remained firmly focussed on the national question, especially after the First World War ended on 11 November. On 10 October, tragedy had struck the CTC when Patrick Lynch, heading to an ASTT meeting, went down with the *Leinster*.¹¹ His death opened the way for Éamonn O'Mahony, a republican and RCA official, to become council president. The CTC's AFIL-orientated leadership of Michael Egan, Patrick Murphy and Alderman Jeremiah Kelleher, disparagingly referred to by O'Mahony and other Labour-republicans as the 'old gang', was dealt a heavy blow by Lynch's death.¹²

The republicanisation of the CTC, which had been ongoing since late 1917, accelerated as republicans were now poised to take control. The historic 1918 general election illustrates the extent to which republicanism now permeated Cork Labour. In the autumn of that year, O'Shannon had been approached by Sinn Féin to stand for the party as its second candidate in the Cork City constituency. He declined, citing his primary allegiance to the Irish Labour Party whose position on the election was still undecided. Liam de Róiste was selected instead.¹³ While de Róiste was no socialist, rank-and-file trade unionists opposed a separate Labour candidate entering the race. De Róiste observed that there was little proletarian class consciousness in Cork. He believed that nationalism had a far greater hold over workers than class consciousness and that most would vote for Sinn Féin over Labour.¹⁴ As O'Mahony revealed to him, 'everyone as far as I can judge . . . is against a fight between Labour and Sinn Féin'.¹⁵ De Róiste predicted that the CTC would split into republicans and constitutional nationalists if a Labour candidate was put forward.¹⁶

Hence, republican efforts to mobilise their trade unionists proved unnecessary as the Labour Party abstained from the election. It was a decision that cost them dearly. Having deferred to Sinn Féin, Labour received nothing in return. The 1918 Representation of the

People Act meant that the working class was now about three-quarters of the electorate. Prominent CTC members were central to the republican campaign. Trade-union leaders spoke at fifteen of the eighteen Sinn Féin election meetings.¹⁷ At one such rally, John Good proclaimed that ‘Labour and Sinn Féin were one and the same thing’. At the same meeting, de Róiste, in the most Bolshevik of rhetoric, told the crowd that ‘the day had come when the working classes would have power in the government of the country’. Later, Good announced that only a Sinn Féin victory could deliver the coveted ‘workers’ republic’. No trade unionist spoke at any IPP rally or played any role in its campaign.¹⁸

The motor permits strike

The outbreak of the war of independence in January 1919 turned working-class attention to the national struggle as never before. Inevitably, throughout 1919 the fight for independence occupied the minds of Irish workers, even amid unprecedented class conflict. As the war intensified across Ireland, the British government issued a decree, known as the Motor Permits Order, stipulating that from 29 November 1919 motor vehicles could only be utilised with a permit. The order was designed to assist the authorities to monitor private transport, through which arms were being carried. The IADAMU refused to apply for permits and called its members out on strike. As one member put it, the order would force his union to co-operate with the authorities and turn it into a ‘semi-spy organisation’. They received unequivocal support from the trades council. Apart from uniting motor trade unions, Labour’s opposition to the order was deepening its commitment to national independence. Cork’s IADAMU branch successfully petitioned the Harbour Board, the Board of Guardians and the Corporation to hold a rally against the order at the City Hall on 28 November. Over 200 people attended the meeting. A committee was formed to co-ordinate opposition, a deputation from which was well-received by the CTC, which strongly backed the protest.¹⁹

By early 1920, however, the strike began to dissipate. By 6 January, it was reported that there was a ‘tendency to apply for permits.’ On 8 February, the strike was called off by the IADAMU executive, though it persisted in Cork a few more days.²⁰ The strike demonstrated the potential power that Labour could exert. At the 1920 ITUC annual conference, James Hickey reported that his union, the NUDL, had completely stopped motor traffic in Cork. Likewise, Richard Anthony claimed that the Cork printers were ready to support the strike by any means necessary but were halted by their national executive.²¹

Across Ireland, republican involvement in the motor permits strike appears to have been minor and, where it did occur, a product of local initiative rather than national endeavour. Like the conscription strike before it and the April 1920 strike and the munitions embargo after it, the motor permits stoppage stemmed from Labour initiative and retained an independent character. It was Irish Labour's first instance of direct support for the republicans. The deepening of republican sentiment within Cork Labour continued and helped to advance working-class interests. By subverting British institutional authority in Ireland and establishing rival institutions of state, the republicans undermined the legitimacy of heretofore recognised authority. Additionally, the IRA's armed campaign crippled state agencies of power, especially the military and the police. The revolutionary nature of the independence struggle and its popular support further radicalised proletarian agitation, even if the republicans were slow to reciprocate.²² British attempts to portray Sinn Féin as a Bolshevik front organisation were regarded by local republicans as a reincarnation of the absurd German Plot. De Róiste believed it was a ploy to get 'Bishops and moneyed men on the British side'.²³

Cork Labour and the 1920 local elections

While Cork Sinn Féiners were no crypto-Bolsheviks, local trade unionists were no less enamoured by them. The republicanisation of Cork Labour peaked in the municipal elections of 15 January 1920. The British government had introduced proportional representation to Ireland to undermine republican electoral success. In Cork, as in other parts of Ireland, the ITGWU publicly nailed its republican colours to the mast by running on a joint ticket with Sinn Féin. The coalition contested all districts and won thirty seats out of a possible forty-nine, giving them a four-seat majority on the Corporation. The trades council ran twelve candidates in five districts for the Labour Party, three of whom – Kelleher, Egan and John Murphy – were elected. Little was new in the CTC's manifesto. It ran on a programme that offered a class analysis of Irish society, promising medical treatment for children, provisional of school meals, scholarships, direct labour on public works and trade-union rates for Corporation employees.²⁴ Day, Kenneally and Good were among the Labour republicans while Sir John Scott and Alderman Richard Beamish, both Unionists, were elected for the pro-establishment Commercial Party.²⁵

But the trades council had proven itself to be as politically irrelevant as ever, even in this radicalised political climate where the potential for proletarian advances was never greater.

As de Róiste noted, 'Labour, official or otherwise, has done very badly. These elections clearly show that the appeal to a war between classes is not a very moving one in Ireland'.²⁶ But the results contradict this assertion. Nationally, Labour had its best ever municipal election and returned 324 candidates. Sinn Féin returned 422, compared to 213 nationalists and 297 Unionists. Labour secured one-quarter of the vote, second only to Sinn Féin, which secured one-third of it.²⁷ Craft union constitutional nationalism lingered in Cork's Labour movement. The ITGWU had wanted the trades council's nominees to take a republican pledge, much to the annoyance of the Typographical Association which refused to fund the campaigns of such candidates.²⁸

Labour and Lord Mayor Tomás Mac Curtain

The next great show of Labour support for the republic emanated the new Sinn Féin-ITGWU Corporation. On 21 March, at a special meeting convened to condemn the murder of Lord Mayor Tomás Mac Curtain by the RIC, the trades council passed the following resolution:

That we, the Cork and District Trades and Labour Council, representing the organised workers of Cork, place on record our abhorrence of the dastardly murder by the enemies of Ireland of revered Lord Mayor, Alderman Tomás MacCurtain; and that we tender to Mrs. Mac Curtain, family and relatives our sincerest sympathies, and that we call on all workers, wherever possible, to cease work to-morrow to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of the late Republican Lord Mayor of this city, whom all Ireland to-day mourns.²⁹

The one-day general strike in Cork was duly observed by all council affiliates.³⁰ The trades council had acted on its own initiative. This was a localised action not called by the ITUC. Although Cork Labour had long supported nationalist political causes, this strike was its first independent act of direct solidarity with the republicans. Across Ireland, the most significant industrial actions all had strong republican dimensions; gone were the days when Labour's sole expression of republicanism was its participation in the annual Manchester Martyrs commemoration.³¹

The April 1920 general strike

It is indicative of Irish Labour's political transformation that its biggest protest of the era was another political action: the general strike called by the ITUC on 13 April 1920 for the release of republican hunger-strikers at Mountjoy Prison and Wormwood Scrubs.³² The strike, which lasted for two days, was a resounding success. Like April 1918, Cork was brought to an industrial and commercial standstill. 'Not a shop is open. The trams are off the street . . . Even the hackney cars are off the stands. Railway termini are closed. Ships at the quayside are there untouched . . . all schools are on 'holiday'. Solicitors' offices are also closed and the business of the Cork Quarter Sessions Court had to be adjourned for the day'.³³ As Róiste noted, 'the stoppage was even more complete than during the anti-Conscription crisis . . . the postal officials also ceased work'.³⁴ Even some bakers and breadvan drivers struck despite being ordered not to. A mass meeting of workers under trades council supervision was held at the City Hall where George Nason – a vehicle builder and current council president – promised Labour's utmost support for the republicans.³⁵

The munitions embargo

Though not as comprehensive as the April 1920 strike, the era's most momentous Labour endeavour was another political action: the embargo on the transportation of military forces and munitions by Irish railwaymen and dockers. It began at Dublin's North Wall on 24 May. Two days later, two of Cork's NUR branches (Nos. 1 and 3) resolved to bring the embargo to Leaside. The same meeting passed a resolution criticising their national executive for not backing the action and called on the ITUC to direct it. That the NUR now obeyed Congress rather than its own national executive is indicative of both the depth of its republicanism and the alienation of the Irish NUR from their executive. On 23 May, the Cork NUR had demanded greater autonomy from London and an additional 20s. for their members, the same claim that had been put forth in Britain. Dockers joined the embargo on 5 June when they refused to unload barbed wire from a ship and to raise Brian Boru drawbridge to allow it to pass.³⁶ The military unloaded munitions ships over the coming weeks.³⁷ In late July, a strike was averted on the tramways when certain workers agreed to contribute to the fund established to aid the railwaymen, having previously refused to do so.³⁸

The national embargo lasted until 21 December and crippled the British government's attempts to counter the IRA insurgency.³⁹ The strike was loudly championed by the CTC which raised funds for the 1,200 victimised railwaymen. The council had sent about £300-400 a week to Dublin to sustain the battle. In July, the council accused the ASE of blacklegging and undermining the struggle when its members at Victoria (now Collins) Barracks continued to repair military vehicles. By now, Labour had no qualms about acting as a republican auxiliary body. The growth of republicanism among workers meant that notions of class consciousness, trade union agitation, political independence and anti-militarism all became deeply intertwined. Cork Labour increasingly viewed its struggle as a matter of politics rather than industrial relations.⁴⁰

The growth of Irish unions

Given the political context and their industrial grievances, it is not surprising that Cork workers were drifting towards Irish unions with a republican philosophy. The ITGWU was not the only beneficiary of this. By 1920, most Irish artisans were still affiliated to British craft unions with little understanding of or sympathy for their Irish members. They were hostile to what they considered to be political actions like the motor permits strike and the munitions embargo. In January 1920, the executive of the ASE – Britain's largest craft union – rescinded its support for the boycott of motor permits and other unions soon followed suit. Consequently, on 9 May 1920 craft workers gathered in Dublin's Abbey Theatre to launch a new Irish union for the trades: the Irish Engineering, Shipbuilding and Foundry Trades Union (IESFTU).⁴¹ It aimed to represent fitters, turners, patternmakers, engineers, blacksmiths, machinists, brass finishers, iron and brass moulders, electricians, boilermakers and allied workers. It immediately embarked upon setting up a Cork branch and one was reported by 1 July. On 9 August, the branch was formally launched at a public meeting at which Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney spoke.⁴² The IESFTU had been formed with the goal of uniting all Irish artisans into a 'One Big Union'. For this reason, it received republican sponsorship from the beginning. It quickly became a powerful craft union and took over members from many of the amalgamateds.⁴³

In August 1920, labourers at the Passage West Dockyard seceded from Ben Tillett's Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union – its only Irish branch – to join the ITGWU on 'national grounds'.⁴⁴ The ITGWU had long targeted this union, which had expanded its operations in Cork since 1917. Although both unions had taken joint action in

March, by June the British union was complaining of the ITGWU's 'unfair activities' and its use of 'political propaganda to make our men secede'.⁴⁵ However, when amalgamation took place, Tillett's union was magnanimous:

We do not begrudge the other Union the success of its effort to get the men to transfer; we have no animosity in our hearts; on the contrary, we hope the Irish workers will progress industrially.⁴⁶

Likewise, by 1920 the Shop Assistants were very anxious to leave Ireland, with several speakers supporting a proposal to do so at that year's annual conference. However, a withdrawal was deferred for twelve months because of the political situation. As the War of Independence intensified, with reprisals and counter-reprisals becoming more common, the Shop Assistants' Union collapsed in many parts of Ireland. At the 1921 conference, a transfer of Irish membership over to the IDAA was announced. It was conducted in a very amicable fashion.⁴⁷ The IDAA was now the dominant union in the distributive trades. In the same nationalistic spirit, Cork Labour joined with Sinn Féin and the business establishment by contributing generously to distress relief funds established to aid workers who had been expelled from the Belfast shipyards in July and helped to enforce the Belfast boycott.⁴⁸

The impact of nationalism and industrial unionism on Irish Labour can be gauged by the number and nature of Congress's affiliates. In 1916, nineteen of the thirty-seven affiliates were British-based; five years later, only thirteen of the forty-two affiliates were British, representing less than 25 per cent of ITUC membership.⁴⁹ Between 1917 and 1923, eleven new Irish unions were founded by breakaways from the amalgamateds, four of which adopted an industrial union structure. The IUDWC, created from the IDAA in October 1921, was the most salient example of this endeavour and represented a partially successful venture in industrial unionism. The INPDATU's Cork branch was set up in July 1921 by about half of the local National Amalgamated Society of Operative House and Ship Painters and Decorators breaking away.⁵⁰ The rise of Irish unions shifted Irish Labour's centre of gravity from north to south.⁵¹

The ITGWU, the greatest exponents of Labour-republicanism, grew enormously in Cork throughout this period. Its expansion is significant as it was not necessarily replicated in other Irish centres despite an extremely favourable industrial and political climate. For

example, it struggled to dislodge the NUDL and other British unions in Waterford city between 1916 and 1920.⁵² Shortly after the 1920 brewery strike in Cork, the labourers opted to merge their union with the ITGWU; it already organised the maltsters.⁵³ That August alone, the Cork branch subsumed the National Union of Gas and General Labourers, the Workers' Union and the Irish National Union of Vintners' and Grocers' Allied Trade Assistants. In October 1921, it received a major boost when James Hickey joined and brought what was left of the NUDL with him. It also took over the Farriers' Society. Hickey and his union had been targets since at least February of that year. In December 1921, the ITGWU had 9,022 members in Cork city. In 1922, the Cork IAWU – which became the Irish Mental Hospital Workers' Union later that year – the Amalgamated Musicians' Union and the IADUMU all transferred. In April 1923, the NSFU branch followed suit.⁵⁴

Cork Labour and the republican courts

As they offered prompt settlements of disputes with binding arbitration, both employers and unions recognised the courts that republicans had set up to undermine British rule. They were formally established by Dáil decree in July 1920, having been operational since June 1919.⁵⁵ While republicans sympathised with Labour goals, Irish independence, in their minds, demanded national unity. Internal class conflict was therefore seen as a threat.⁵⁶ The courts were popular among Irish workers as they were quite kind to them. In June 1920, in one of the first industrial disputes in Ireland involving the ITGWU arbitrated upon by the republicans, a Dáil arbitration court gave carters in Cork minimum wages of 62s. 6d. for a single horseman and 68s. 6d. for a double horseman (their peak wages), a forty-eight-hour week and six paid holidays a year.⁵⁷ The ease with which the ITGWU co-operated with the republican administration undoubtedly contributed to the authorities' view of it as subversive. In October 1920, its hall on Camden Place was raided by the British military. On 12 November, it was burned down by the Black and Tans, a month before the rest of the city centre suffered the same fate. The Tans had previously smashed up the hall on 2 August.⁵⁸

The most notable intervention by Cork republicans in a labour dispute was in September 1920. The ITGWU had brought out the milkmen at Douglas, Lehanagh and Bishopstown for higher wages, rendering milk in short supply in the city. It then spread to the farm labourers who wanted 15s. above the Agricultural Wages Board rate and a 100s. harvest bonus. After initially refusing arbitration, strikers forcibly blocked milk supplies to the city, placed pickets

on the roads and attacked delivery vehicles. The men were infuriated when the Cork city IRA began protecting these wagons. Most of those on strike were members of the same IRA company that was scabbing. Fearing a split, both the IRA and ITGWU rushed to arrange an arbitration hearing at a republican court, which was reluctantly accepted by the men. The prompt resolution of the strike came as a relief to everyone and the men re-joined the IRA.⁵⁹

Labour and Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney

The political environment continued to intensify Labour's republicanism. Throughout the latter months of 1920, political concerns, especially regarding MacSwiney, dominated Labour discourse. On 12 August, MacSwiney was arrested in a military raid on City Hall and jailed in Brixton Prison. He immediately went on hunger strike. MacSwiney was popular among Cork trade unionists and had addressed the 1920 ITUC annual conference, which was held in Cork.⁶⁰ On 19 August, the CTC issued the following declaration:

That we, the members of the Cork and District Trade and Labour Council, condemn in the strongest possible manner the inhuman treatment meted out to our Lord Mayor and other political prisoners at present confined in English and Irish goals; that we further condemn the action of the Government in deporting these prisoners to England as most inhuman and barbarous, seeing that they had been already several days without food, and were as a consequence unable even to stand, and we hereby pledge, on behalf of Labour here, our fullest support in bringing about their release.⁶¹

Five days later, it conducted a one-hour strike in support of MacSwiney and the republican hunger strikers imprisoned in Cork gaol.⁶²

In September, a trades council delegation tried to visit the prisoners to assess their condition but were refused entry. Throughout that month, the council also campaigned against a British Act of Parliament allowing landlords to increase rents on their tenants by up to 30 per cent. Instead, it obeyed a Dáil Éireann decree that permitted a maximum rent increase of 15 per cent.⁶³ That the trades council utilised an institution of Dáil Éireann, an illegal body since September 1919, rather than the British Ministry of Labour is emblematic of its political transformation. On 22 September, the CTC called another hour-long stoppage to facilitate

workers attending a special mass for MacSwiney. The council subsequently adjourned for the duration of the hunger strike to protest the Lord Mayor's treatment.⁶⁴ On 15 October, a third mass stoppage took place to allow workers to attend another mass in the Lord Mayor's honour. By then, the patience of some employers was running thin. Though Ford's had warned that any walkout without permission would result in dismissal, its employees were undeterred. Plant manager Edward Grace, an American, shut down the factory with the intention of keeping it closed until he could replace those who went out. Intervention from J.J. Walsh TD spared these workers – whose actions were praised by Deputy Lord Mayor Donal O'Callaghan – their jobs.⁶⁵ MacSwiney died in Brixton Prison on 25 October after seventy-four days on hunger strike. The next day, the CTC held a special meeting and unanimously declared:

That we, the members of the Cork and District Trade and Labour Council, extend to the Lady Mayoress, the brothers and sisters of the late Lord Mayor, his colleagues of the Corporation and his comrades of the Irish Volunteers, our deepest sympathy in the loss they have sustained; that we emphatically condemn the tyranny which has caused his untimely end in foreign dungeon, and we call upon the workers of Cork to hold themselves in readiness for any call that may be issued to register this sympathy and show their appreciation of his great sacrifice for land and liberty.⁶⁶

In conformity with the ITUC, the CTC ordered its members to cease work on 29 October as a tribute to MacSwiney. A few days later, representatives from the trades council and affiliated unions attended his funeral.⁶⁷ MacSwiney's hunger strike resonated across the world, especially among the working class. Several British trades councils and Labour Party branches had passed resolutions vociferously condemning their government's treatment of him and demanding his release.⁶⁸

From Truce to Treaty and back to war

Cork Labour's actions during the MacSwiney affair served to reinforce in the public mind, and in working-class consciousness, the commonality of interests between Labour and republicanism. This strongly militated against the formation of an independent Labour identity in the public sphere. The trades council discussed few of the several industrial disputes at this time. Instead, it regularly adjourned to protest the British government. Labour's preoccupation with the country's political situation meant it was poorly prepared for the employers' offensive.⁶⁹ Following MacSwiney's death, there was a lull in class conflict until mid-1921 as the national struggle took priority. However, the truce lessened the need for cross-class, national unity, resulting in the re-emergence of unrest across Ireland. The first three months after the truce saw a dramatic surge in class conflict. A major reason for this was the incipient breakdown in the republican-Labour alliance that had brought the British to the negotiating table. As O'Shannon warned in his presidential address to the 1921 annual conference of the ITUC:

. . . we, as a Labour movement, are not bound to the tail of the Dáil or even to the very gallant men and women who have put the Dáil in the position it is today – I refer to the members of the IRA – because at any moment in industrial troubles we may have to fight some of them, and keep as clear of them as we did of the British Army.⁷⁰

In contrast to the city's commercial classes, Cork Labour, like the ITUC, abstained from the Treaty debate and urged its membership to remain neutral. A meaningless call for a 'workers' republic' and a plebiscite to decide the issue was all that union officials could muster.⁷¹ Even the leadership of the ITGWU, famously militant and republican, urged neutrality from its membership on the Treaty.⁷²

From the truce to the end of the civil war, employers felt inhibited by the instability and lack of effective policing. They had been forced to put their counterattack on hold. By the Spring of 1922, much of the 'Munster republic' remained beyond the Provisional Government's reach. Cork was in the hands of anti-Treatyites unable to police the city and counter the increasing lawlessness. Thus, on 13 April the Lord Mayor formed a committee comprised of representatives from both Chambers of Commerce, the Harbour Board, the

Corporation and the CTC to address policing.⁷³ Labour had no representative at a meeting held later that month to discuss the foundation of the force, whereas representatives from both Chambers of Commerce were present. In the meantime, the business class took matters into its own hands. The two Chambers of Commerce and the CEF established a temporary police force to protect their property and re-establish their hegemony. It was established with contributions of £1,000 from Cork's leading merchants who also loaned male staff to it. This employer-controlled police force lasted until mid-August when it was replaced by another ad hoc force.⁷⁴

The political situation was spiralling out of control. On 13 April, the IRA began an occupation of the Four Courts in Dublin that would provoke civil war. The ITUC executive decided to act to stop the slide into fratricidal violence. On 24 April, it brought out Free State workers in a one-day strike against 'the spirit of militarism'. It was the third time in four years that Labour had brought Cork to a standstill:

All the city banks were closed, as well as the General Post Office. . . Work of all kinds was suspended, train, tram and transport services ceased, and the city, with its closed shops and shuttered windows, presented a lonely aspect, which, however, in its gloom of silence, supplied an earnest of the people's determination to stand by those who are striving for peace in the country.⁷⁵

Vast numbers of workers gathered in what was possibly Cork's biggest ever union meeting. As in 1918 and 1920, several working-class bands partook. The attendees listened to anti-war speeches from prominent trade unionists that condemned both sides of the split and unanimously backed the ITUC executive.⁷⁶ This ineffective action was indicative of the return of Labour ambiguity and ambivalence towards the national question. Whereas Labour's attitude to Sinn Féin during the war of independence can be summarised as 'first the republic, then the workers' republic', Congress now felt that the Treaty split was a 'plague on both your houses'.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, its stance was popular with Cork's working class. In the general election of 16 June 1922, Robert Day, the Labour Party candidate, topped the poll in an emphatic victory. He defeated two strong candidates fielded by the city's commercial class: Frank Daly, pro-Treaty merchant and the Harbour Commission chairman, and Richard Beamish, the famous

brewer.⁷⁸ Nationally, Labour had surpassed all expectations as it benefited from anti-Treaty losses; non-republican parties gained over 78 per cent of the popular vote. Labour won seventeen out of the eighteen seats it contested.⁷⁹ That so many ITGWU members, including Day, could stand for election without internal dissent in their union demonstrates that Irish syndicalism was more sympathetic to parliamentarianism than other syndicalist movements – like France and the US – where the rancorous debates on the issue occurred.⁸⁰ But once again events moved too fast for Labour. On 27 June 1922, Free State troops began shelling the Four Courts to dislodge the IRA units that had occupied the buildings. The Irish Civil War had begun. The IRA quickly cut off Cork from the rest of the country and established military rule. The ‘Cork republic’ was born.

Labour and the Cork republic

Initially, both capital and Labour sought accommodation with the republican regime. However, the civil war quickly scuppered any such possibility. The anti-Treatyites regularly seized commercial vehicles, which damaged the local economy. Still, merchants agreed to keep their businesses open and to share among themselves the costs of this commandeering. To bolster their war effort, the IRA occupied the Customs House and Inland Revenue office on the South Mall and redirected to themselves the taxation merchants paid on goods flowing through the Port of Cork. In 1920 and 1921, many citizens and businesses boycotted the British administration and did not pay their rates and/or income taxes. Republicans estimated that they could recover one-third of this, horrifying the bourgeoisie who had enjoyed tax-free profits for two years.⁸¹

The republicans also faced hostility from Ford’s, Cork’s largest employer. IRA engineers tried to commandeer pig iron for the construction of grenades and mines. Grace warned them that if they seized anything, he would close the factory, costing 2,000 jobs. Ford’s was left alone.⁸² The exigencies of guerrilla war meant that the IRA administration was alienating the merchant classes, creating a real possibility to engage Labour. Trade unionists met the IRA to discuss how the war would affect unemployment. Labour leaders were similarly fearful that a siege of the city would lead to famine. In response, O’Callaghan established the ‘Cork Food Committee’ to protect local supplies. The committee ensured the continuation of Cork’s commercial life.⁸³ But a republican-Labour alliance would never materialise, and trade unionists joined with the two Chambers of Commerce in calling for an end to the violence. On

17 July, Labour helped to initiate the peace movement at a special conference attended by local civil society organisations. Here, trade unionists rubbed shoulders with the commercial elite and established the People's Rights Association, which demanded an end to hostilities and a reconvening of the Dáil. A week later, a delegation from the Association, which included Nason, met the Minister for Education Eoin MacNeill to discuss the civil war. Nason implored the minister to reconvene the Dáil, but to no avail.⁸⁴

Labour's hostility toward the republican occupation is unsurprising given how badly workers were suffering. Isolation brought by severed telegraph and mail services caused the economy, already in recession, to drip into depression. Drapery shops shut their doors for want of stock. Railway and quayside workers were often fired due to the lack of shipping into the city. After a year of poor trade, in mid-July the Lee Boot Factory closed, having sought wage cuts earlier that year.⁸⁵ Fuel shortages threatened to shut down Ford's, whose famously high wages were vital for the local economy. Ford's mechanics earned 120s. a week, 8s. more than the local standard rate, and its labourers earned 2s. 1d. per hour, more than building tradesmen earned.⁸⁶ Though IRA officers forbade the GSWR to discharge its staff if train services were disrupted, they struggled to halt the haemorrhaging of jobs.⁸⁷ Thus, the working class continued to suffer. As one Free State officer reported:

A man, on seeing some lorries with armed men pass by, said to his companion: 'if they were as hungry as we are, they would not have much stomach for fight' . . . There are many men with them (the anti-Treatyites) who will fight only half-heartedly; with such men it is a case of bread and butter. Many of them would have joined the National Army had they the opportunity of doing so.⁸⁸

After two-year delay, the Corporation-backed reconstruction of Cork began, promising work in the building trade.⁸⁹

Unemployment was approaching 8,000, more than 30 per cent of the male workforce. The ITGWU claimed that it had 1,800 idle members, many of whom were homeless. Unemployment was so acute that a 'Cork Unemployed Central Committee' was established with CTC and ITGWU support.⁹⁰ The trades council demanded that the republicans do something to stop 'the cry of hungry children and starving workers.' Complaining of IRA indifference, Nason commented that 'thousands and thousands are starving in the city, and who

cares?'.⁹¹ In early August, the Cork ITGWU prepared to call a general strike to stop the fighting, which the Cork Ex-Soldiers Federation promised to join.⁹² Tensions between Labour and the republicans continued to mount, as typified by Richard Anthony's contribution to the 1922 Congress:

as far as Cork city is concerned. . . under the present regime there are people afraid really to speak out what is in the back of their minds. . . we are living under a most intolerable militaristic system in Cork City today. . . I have seen examples of Republican militarism in Cork City, which would be enough to make any Irishman blush.⁹³

The CTC had condemned IRA censorship of the *Examiner* and the *Constitution* because it was costing printers their jobs.⁹⁴ One such typographer, Richard Cody, asserted that 'the unemployed were indifferent to the government of the country whether they were Republicans or Free Staters, but a settlement must come'.⁹⁵ On Monday 8 August, posters appeared announcing a mass meeting of the unemployed for the following Sunday. However, events overtook Labour. That same Monday, National Army troops sailed into Cork Harbour. The ensuing Battle for Cork resulted in a decisive victory for the Free State, which took control of the city on 10 August.⁹⁶

Labour and the anti-Treatyites

Having lost Cork, the IRA was forced to conduct guerrilla warfare against the National Army. The republican administration had been quite efficient, having operated a competent system of taxation on Cork's largest businesses. Accordingly, had the anti-Treatyites adopted a social programme, they may well have received far more favourably by the working class. Instead, the regime brought nothing for the proletariat, which deepened Labour's disenchantment with the republicans. With the Free State now in control, the capitalists could fulfil their aims with state approval.⁹⁷

After the Cork republic, the estrangement between Labour and the republicans gathered pace. An essential component of the IRA's campaign was the destruction of railway infrastructure, which isolated the city and incurred immense financial losses for the railway

companies. Services were closed and wage cuts and redundancies carried out to pay for repairs. In August, the Muskerry and the Bandon dismissed many of its staff. The next month, the Blackrock and Passage closed, the Muskerry engaged in another purge of employees, and the Macroom Railway sacked many of its station washers and clerks. In October, the Muskerry estimated that a 25 per cent wage reduction for its full-time staff was needed if the company was to survive.⁹⁸ A month later, the Bandon decided to dismiss its clerical staff after 1 January 1923 and re-employ them as caretakers at two-thirds salary.⁹⁹ Even more alarming was the IRA's declaration in August that workers who assisted the Free State, like repairing damaged railways, were legitimate targets for execution.¹⁰⁰ In response, the government established the Railway Protection, Repair and Maintenance Corps within the National Army in October 1922. The corps largely consisted of unemployed railwaymen and operated until the civil war's end.¹⁰¹ By early 1923, four Cork railway companies were still not operating: the Blackrock, the Bandon, the Macroom, and the Schull and Skibbereen Railway. Roughly 1,000 railwaymen were unemployed as a result.¹⁰²

Railwaymen were not the only workers in Cork who were feeling increasingly estranged from the anti-Treatyites. Before it evacuated Cork, the IRA smashed the presses of the Unionist *Constitution* and the Treaty-supporting *Examiner*, resulting in more job losses in the printing trade. On 21 September, these actions were condemned by the trades council, which demanded an end to the violence. On 5 October, the government issued an amnesty for IRA men who handed in their weapons by 15 October. The CTC supported the offer, purporting that Cork's high unemployment was because of the activities of armed men.¹⁰³ Out of a population of 78,000, Cork had 10-12,000 unemployed citizens. Consequentially, when families are included, around 50,000 people were struggling daily to avoid starvation. About 4-5,000 of the jobless were not receiving any unemployment benefit.¹⁰⁴ In November, the trades council 'respectfully urged' the government to release Mary MacSwiney, sister of Terence, who was on hunger strike from Mountjoy Jail as 'public opinion was strongly against it'. On the council's behalf, the following month Dowling tried to bring an end to the hostilities but to no avail.¹⁰⁵

Working-class support for, or at least acceptance of, the Treaty presented an awkward reality for republicans considering that so much of their class-infused rhetoric was aimed at the Free State government's bourgeois character. Moreover, it refutes simplistic Marxist arguments of a clear class basis to the conflict. Naturally, the recession spurred much working-class recruitment into the National Army, a useful solution for the government to the social

problems created by the high unemployment. The republican response vacillated between sympathy for the workers and a moralistic, puritanical hostility typical of Irish middle-class prejudice. Recruits were often denounced in explicitly class-based terms: ‘undesirables’, ‘criminals’, ‘low caste hirelings’, ‘gutter scoundrels’, ‘tramps’, ‘tinkers’, ‘Soupers’, etc.¹⁰⁶ Free State rhetoric was little better and similarly infused with bourgeois, anti-working-class bias. Republican volunteers were dismissed as ‘of pot-house derivation’, ‘city scum’, ‘tramps and wasters’, ‘corner boys’ and ‘the dregs of society’, i.e., as lazy, feckless individuals with a parasitic relationship to the ‘respectable’. This outlook manifested itself in Treatyite fears that republicans posed an incipient threat to the very social order itself, implicitly revealing the Free State’s reactionary nature. Furthermore, it suggests a post-colonial dynamic of mental colonisation where the attitudes of the departing power are embraced by the nationalist revolutionaries who displaced it.¹⁰⁷

Accordingly, when the civil war ended in May 1923 both republicans and Free Staters were as antipathetic to Labour as Labour was to them. What had Labour received from investing so much in Sinn Féin and their revolution since 1917? Everything it asked for: self-determination, neutrality towards the wages movement, a safe space for direct action, toleration of red flag radicalism and an extraordinary prestige for local and national Labour officials. That it should have asked for more is another matter.¹⁰⁸

Chapter Notes and References

¹ CDTC minutes, 11 May 1916, U216/1/1, CCCA; *CE*, 23 July 1915, 8, 12 May 1916.

² Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 168, 171.

³ Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 18 Sept. 1917, TU/1/37, CCCA.

⁴ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 173-174, 179-181. Cathal O’Shannon (1893-1969) was an Antrim-born IRB member and product of the Belfast Irish-Ireland movement.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 173-185; John Borgonovo, ‘‘A Soviet in embryo’’: Cork’s food crisis and the People’s Food Committee, 1917-1918’, *Saothar*, no. 34, 2009, pp. 21-38.

⁶ Semi-revolutionary is the characterisation found in Lahiff, ‘Industry and Labour in Cork’, p. 195.

⁷ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 194.

⁸ *CE*, 24 Apr. 1918.

⁹ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 194-195.

¹⁰ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 166.

¹¹ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union*, p. 221.

¹² Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 46, 80, 165. The term ‘old gang’ was used by Éamonn O’Mahony in his letter to Liam de Róiste, 24 Sept. 1918, Ms. 10539/426, Liam de Róiste Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Research Library, Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

¹³ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 215-216.

¹⁴ De Róiste diaries, 18, 25, 27 Sept. 1918, U271/A/21 CCCA; *ibid.*, p. 216.

¹⁵ O’Mahony to de Róiste, 24 Sept. 1918, TCD.

¹⁶ De Róiste diaries, 6 Sept. 1918.

- ¹⁷ Borgonovo, *Dynamics of War and Revolution*, pp. 222-223. The 1918 Act gave all men over twenty-one and women over thirty who met certain property-based qualifications the right to vote.
- ¹⁸ Both quotes are cited in *ibid.*, p. 223.
- ¹⁹ *CE*, 27, 28, 29 Nov., 1 Dec. 1919; Francis Devine, *Division, Disillusion and Dissolution: The Automobile Drivers & The Motor Permits Strike, 1919-1920*, unpublished pamphlet in the possession of the author, p. 3; IADAMU executive committee minutes, 18 Sept., 9, 11 Oct. 1917, Ms. 7,301, NLI.
- ²⁰ *Irish Times*, 7 Jan. 1920; *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Feb. 1920; *CE*, 10, 11, 18 Feb. 1920.
- ²¹ *Twenty-sixth annual meeting of the ITUC*, 1920, NLI, p. 90; Conor Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland: Popular Militancy, 1917-1923* (London: Pluto Press, 1996), p. 116.
- ²² O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 87-88.
- ²³ De Róiste diaries, 30 May 1919, U271/A/26, CCCA. The German Plot was a conspiracy alleged by Dublin Castle in May 1918 that Irish republicans were colluding with the German government to launch a nationalist insurrection in Ireland. It was used to justify the internment of anti-conscription Sinn Féin leaders. For more information, see Paul McMahon, *British spies and Irish rebels: British intelligence and Ireland, 1916-1945*, (New York: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), pp. 24-25.
- ²⁴ *CE*, 6, 12, 22 Jan. 1920; Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 259; *Watchword of Labour*, 31 Jan. 1920; Conor McCabe, 'The Irish Labour Party and the 1920 Local Elections', *Saothar*, No. 34, 2010, pp. 7, 12-13, 16-17; Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (London: Profile Books, 2015), p. 218; Mitchell, *Labour in Irish Politics*, pp. 122-123.
- ²⁵ *CE*, 17 Jan. 1920.
- ²⁶ De Róiste diaries, 18 Jan. 1920, U271/A/26, CCCA.
- ²⁷ Mitchell, *Labour in Irish Politics*, pp. 126-127.
- ²⁸ Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 22 Nov., 13 Dec. 1919, U217/A/4, CCCA; Cork Coopers' Society Minutes, 7 Jan. 1920, U218/A/8, CCCA; Cork Operative Society of Masons & Bricklayers minutes, 4 Nov. 1919, TU/1/37, CCCA.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 22 Mar 1920.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 208.
- ³² *Irish Independent*, 14-15 Apr. 1920.
- ³³ *CE*, 14 Apr. 1920.
- ³⁴ De Róiste diaries, 14 Apr. 1920, U271/A/28, CCCA.
- ³⁵ *CE*, 14 Apr. 1920.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 24, 26, 27, 31 May, 5 June 1920; *Irish Independent*, 25 May 1920; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 May 1920.
- ³⁷ *CE*, 10, 11, 16, 18, 19, 30 June 1920.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27 July 1920.
- ³⁹ For an account of the railway embargo, see Charles Townsend, 'The Irish Railway Strike of 1920: Industrial Action and Civil Resistance in the Struggle for Independence', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 21, no. 83, pp. 265-282.
- ⁴⁰ *CE*, 22, 24, 26 June, 3, 10 July 1920; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 206-211.
- ⁴¹ Yeates, 'Craft workers in a time of revolution', pp. 1, 6; *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1920.
- ⁴² IESFTU provisional executive committee minutes, 15 May, 1 July 1920, TEEU archives, 6 Gardiner Row, Dublin; *CE*, 10 Aug. 1920.
- ⁴³ *CE*, 21 Aug. 1920; several documents contained in 'Irish engineering trades: formation of a union independent of the English union', DE/2/116, Dáil Éireann records, NAI; letters from Terence MacSwiney to Con O'Neill, 24 July 1920, PR4/4/81, and C. O'Leary, chairman of the ASLEF Cork branch, 23 June 1920, PR4/5/63, Terence MacSwiney Papers, CCCA.
- ⁴⁴ *Dockers' Record*, June 1917, Aug. 1920. Tillet's union had also organised men at the Rushbrooke docks and at Ballinacurra.
- ⁴⁵ Cited in Harding, 'The Irish Issue in the British Labour Movement', p. 190.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* The Cork members of Tillet's union had wanted to amalgamate with the ITGWU since at least 1918. See Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 206.
- ⁴⁷ Harding, 'The Irish Issue in the British Labour Movement', p. 186; *The Shop Assistant*, 17 Apr. 1920, 9 Apr. 1921.
- ⁴⁸ *CE*, 2, 23 Oct., 6 Nov. 1920; D.S. Johnson, 'The Belfast boycott, 1920-1922', in J.M. Goldstrom and L.A. Clarkson (eds.), *Irish population, economy, and society: essays in honour of the late K.H. Connell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 287-307.
- ⁴⁹ Devine, *Organising History*, p. 93; McCarthy, *Trade Unions in Ireland*, p. 53.
- ⁵⁰ Callan, *Painters in Union*, p. 160.
- ⁵¹ O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland*, p. 107; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 68. Some of the breakaways included the Irish Vintners', Grocers' and Allied Assistants from the National Amalgamated Union

of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks in 1917; the National Union of Sheetmetal workers and Gas Meter Makers from the National Union of Sheetmetal Workers and Braziers in 1918; The Irish Bookbinders and Allied Trades Union from the National Union of Bookbinders and Machine Rulers in 1920; The Irish National Union from Woodworkers from the ASW in 1921; and the Electrical Trades Union (Ireland) from the ETU in 1923. Jerome Joseph Judge, 'The Labour movement in the Republic of Ireland: an analysis of the major trends which have affected the development of labour in Ireland since 1894' (PhD: UCD, 1955), pp. 38, 96-97.

⁵² O'Connor, *A Labour History of Waterford*, pp. 150-151.

⁵³ Letters from the board of Beamish & Crawford to the ITGWU, 8, 15, 22, 26, 28 Feb. 1919, U18/Letter Book 1911-25, Beamish & Crawford collection, CCCA.

⁵⁴ Devine, *Organising History*, pp. 130, 900-910; ITGWU REC minutes, 2 Nov., 18 Dec. 1921, 12 Mar. 1922, SIPTU archives, Liberty Hall; *CE*, 16 June 1920, 1 Nov. 1921, 25 Jan. 1922.

⁵⁵ Graves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 285; Macardle, *The Irish Republic*, pp. 347-351.

⁵⁶ Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 252-259.

⁵⁷ Findings of Dáil Arbitration Court in the dispute between the ITGWU and the Master Carriers' Association', PR4/6/95, MacSwiney Papers, CCCA; *Watchword of Labour*, 3 July 1920; Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 273. MacSwiney presided over the case and was assisted by Liam de Róiste and Seán MacEoin.

⁵⁸ ITGWU Resident Executive Committee (REC) minutes, 8 Oct 1920, 9 Jan. 1921, SIPTU archives, Liberty Hall;

⁵⁹ John Borgonovo, 'Republican Courts, Ordinary Crime and the Irish Revolution, 1919-1921', in Margo de Koster, Hervé Leuwers, Dirk Luyten and Xavier Rousseaux (eds.), *Justice in wartime and revolutions: Europe, 1795-1950* (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2012), p. 56. Full details of the award are contained in *CE*, 13 Sept. 1920.

⁶⁰ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 288; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-sixth meeting*, 1920, pp. 64-65, NLI.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20 Aug. 1920.

⁶² *CE*, 24 Aug. 1920

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 13, 27 Sept. 1920.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 23, 24 Sept., 1, 8, 15, 23 Oct. 1920. See *CE*, 23 Sept. 1920 for an image of Ford's workers marching in procession to the mass, despite not having the permission of their employer to do so.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 16, 18 Oct. 1920; Miriam Nyhan, 'Are You Still Below?' *The Ford Marina Plant, Cork, 1917-1984* (Cork: Collins Press, 2007), p. 39.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 26 Oct. 1920.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 29 Oct., 1 Nov. 1920. Upon their return from this memorial mass, Ford's workers were called before Grace and were informed that if they left without permission again they would be sacked, a warning which was deeply resented. See Michael V. O'Donoghue, WS 1741, Bureau of Military History records, NAI. O'Donoghue was an engineer at Ford's and an IRA member whose trade was an invaluable asset to the republicans.

⁶⁸ Several documents contained in the file LP/CA/MAC, Council of Action collection, Labour Party archive, Labour History Archive and Study Centre, People's History Museum. For an understanding of the global significance of MacSwiney's hunger strike, see Dave Hannigan, *Terence MacSwiney: the hunger strike that rocked an empire* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2010).

⁶⁹ *CE.*, 24, 27 Aug., 7, 15 Sept., 9, 11 Oct. 1920.; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 210. On 31 August, Corporation staff wired the Lady Mayoress to express their 'admiration' of MacSwiney's 'soul-stirring steadfastness and fortitude'. See *CE*, 1 Sept. 1920.

⁷⁰ ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-seventh annual meeting*, 1921, p. 115, NLI.

⁷¹ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, pp. 26, 30.

⁷² *CE*, 14 Dec. 1921. Cathal O'Shannon announced his support for the treaty at a meeting at Charleville on 8 December. On 1 January 1922, the Bandon ITGWU branch unanimously voted to support the treaty. See *CE*, 2 Jan. 1922.

⁷³ Thomas Anthony Linehan, 'The Development of Cork's Economy and Business Attitudes, 1910-1939', (UCC: MA, 1985), p. 61.

⁷⁴ *CE*, 22 Apr. 1922; Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping, *Annual Report*, 1922, MP 507, Boole Library, UCC; Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping minutes, 28 Apr. 1922, B619/B/1/5, CCCA; 'City of Cork Police Force', TSCH/1/S1705, Dept. of An Taoiseach records, NAI.

⁷⁵ *CE*, 25 Apr. 1922.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; *Manchester Guardian*, 25 April 1922; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-eighth annual meeting*, 1922, pp. 140-142, NLI; D.R. O'Connor-Lysaght, 'Class struggle during the Irish war of independence and civil war, 1916-24', (UCD: MA, 1982), pp. 177-178.

⁷⁷ Purséil, *The Irish Labour Party*, p. 11.

⁷⁸ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, pp. 43-44.

- ⁷⁹ Purséil, *The Irish Labour Party*, p. 11.
- ⁸⁰ Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 134-136.
- ⁸¹ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, pp. 46-47, 50-52.
- ⁸² Ibid., pp. 52-53; Michael Hopkinson, *Green Against Green: The Irish Civil War* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988), p. 163.
- ⁸³ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, p. 47.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 57-59; *CE*, 13-18 July 1922; *Manchester Guardian*, 24 July 1922; Bill Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 132. See *CE*, 18 July 1922 for the full texts of the resolutions passed on 17 July.
- ⁸⁵ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, p. 55-57; NUBSO, monthly reports, Mar. 1921-Mar. 1922, TU/FOOTA/1/32-3, WCML.
- ⁸⁶ Nyhan, 'Are You Down Below?', p. 53; Report on the Situation in Cork by M. O'Connell, 19 July 1922, P7/B/40, Richard Mulcahy papers, UCD Archives. By early 1919, Ford's was paying its employees 44s. for a forty-eight-hour week. By June 1919, labourers there were in receipt of 1s. 8d. an hour for a forty-four-hour week and by January 1920 they were on 91s. a week. The Fordson tractor factory gave the 1s. 8d. hourly rate for a forty-four-hour week when it opened in 1919. See *ibid.*, pp. 36-37; *Voice of Labour*, 4 Jan. 1919; *CE*, 26 June 1919, 15 Jan. 1920. See *CE*, 9 Nov. 1920 for the prevailing standard rate for mechanics in Cork, and *CE*, 24 Mar. 1922 for the minimum rate paid at Ford's.
- ⁸⁷ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, p. 56.
- ⁸⁸ Most of this quotation is found in *ibid.*, pp. 56-57. The rest is taken from the original document, 'Report on the Situation in Cork', Mulcahy papers, University College Dublin Archives.
- ⁸⁹ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, p. 56.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ Both quotes are cited in *ibid.*, p. 57.
- ⁹² Ibid., p. 60.
- ⁹³ ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-eighth annual meeting*, 1922, NLI, p. 141.
- ⁹⁴ *CE*, 21 July, 7 Aug. 1922; Cork Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 22 July 1922, U217/A/4, CCCA.
- ⁹⁵ Cited in Borgonovo, *Battle for Cork*, p. 60.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid.
- ⁹⁷ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, p. 309; D.R. O'Connor Lysaght, *The Republic of Ireland: an hypothesis in eight chapters and two intermissions* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1970), pp. 69-70.
- ⁹⁸ Cork & Macroom Direct Railway minutes, 22 Sept. 1922, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station; Brendan Share, *In Time of Civil War: The conflict on the Irish railway 1922-23* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2006), pp. 53, 54, 58.
- ⁹⁹ Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway minutes, 23 Nov. 1922, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Aug. 1922; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-eighth annual meeting*, 1922, pp. 142-145, NLI. The threat, which deeply alienated Labour from the republicans, was issued by Ernie O'Malley, commandant of the IRA's Northern and Eastern Battalion. He later claimed to have been misunderstood. See O'Malley to Peadar O'Donnell, cited in O'Connor, *Reds and the Green*, p. 71.
- ¹⁰¹ Hopkinson, *Green Against Green*, p. 199; McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', p. 277; Share, *In Time of Civil War*, pp. 77-139. The corps provided a six-day working week.
- ¹⁰² Joseph McGrath, *Dáil Éireann Debates*, vol. 2, 3 Jan. 1923; *Irish Times*, 3, 4, Jan. 1923.
- ¹⁰³ *CE*, 22, 23 Sept., 6, 7 Oct. 1922; Kissane, *The Politics of the Irish Civil War*, p. 135.
- ¹⁰⁴ Cork Corporation Minutes, 14 January 1923, CP/CO/M/14, CCCA; *CE*, 15 January 1923; de Róiste Diaries, 13 July 1922, U271/A/45, CCCA.
- ¹⁰⁵ *CE*, 20 Nov., 15 Dec. 1922. In August, the trades council adjourned twice as a mark of respect for Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins after their deaths. See *CE*, 18, 25 Aug. 1922.
- ¹⁰⁶ Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society*, pp. 58-63.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 36-39.
- ¹⁰⁸ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 94.

8

Derry Labour and the Irish Revolution, 1917-21

The 1917 annual meeting of the ITUC, which was held in Derry, revealed the emerging gulf between northern and southern Labour on the war and constitutional nationalism. Congress voted to send delegates to the proposed socialist peace conference in Stockholm. McCarron and Logue, both of whom supported the war, spoke against it; Cassidy spoke in favour. Cassidy was Derry Labour's primary link to the Dublin leadership. He had topped the poll in the elections to the executive and was its vice-chairman in 1917 and chairman in 1918. McCarron, on the other hand, was becoming estranged by the turn from Labour-nationalism to republican-socialism. He strongly opposed a motion at the 1917 conference for a 'Federation of Labour' as he feared it would wipe out the amalgamateds. Later, he disobeyed Congress by taking a seat at the Irish Convention which ITUC and southern trades councils boycotted. By the 1918 Congress, Logue had changed his position on Labour and the national question. He supported the Labour Party's decision (over which Cassidy presided) to abstain from the coming general election as he agreed that Labour candidates would split the nationalist vote.¹ An orientation towards Dublin had begun within Derry Labour and it would only get stronger as time progressed.

The 1918 anti-conscription strike

Like most of Ireland, Derry Labour's most significant act in 1918 had nothing to do with an industrial grievance. Rather, it was its participation in the general strike against the imposition of conscription in Ireland. It had taken until then for the trades council to fall in line with Labour in the south by speaking in socialist terms and adopting a critical-to-hostile stance on the war. On 21 April, Derry's NUR branch passed a resolution condemning conscription and demanding a national referendum on the matter.² The NUR primarily represented the railways' lower grades, where Catholics dominated. Two days later, the *Sentinel* published a statement from indignant Unionist railwaymen that claimed that they had not been invited to the meeting and they repudiated it in its entirety. The separate organs of the press reflected Derry's ethno-

political divisions and therefore made no pretence towards impartiality or balance. The *Journal* called the strike a ‘great demonstration of fidelity’; the *Sentinel* denounced it as a ‘coward’s day’.³ The strike inevitably deepened the political chasm dividing its proletariat. Sectors dominated by Catholics, especially in commercial and infrastructural work where unskilled labour prevailed, took part in the strike while many craftsmen and white-collar workers (most of whom were Protestant) were decidedly hostile. Nevertheless, as a majority nationalist city the stoppage was widespread. The *Journal* reported that Derry was ‘Sunday-like’ in appearance. Most of the dockers, grain millers, carters, engineering and shipyard workers partook, as did many tradesmen and shirt operatives. The anti-conscription pledge was ‘extensively’ signed at local trades and labour halls. As employees of a nationalist paper, the *Journal*’s staff abstained from work. At the June monthly meeting of the trades council, Logue proposed a resolution of ‘emphatic protest’ against conscription that bound the council to support the ITUC. He persuaded Unionist delegates that conscription was purely a Labour question and the motion thus was passed by thirty-three votes to one.⁴

The 1918 general election and the war of independence

By the 1918 general election, held on 14 December, separatist feelings had heightened among Catholic workers. With an expanded franchise and no Labour Party competition, nationalists, Unionists and republicans all aggressively pursued the working-class vote. Anderson, the Unionist candidate, cited his record as a fair employer to highlight his pro-Labour credentials.⁵ But Eoin MacNeill, the Antrim-born historian and Sinn Féin candidate, won the Londonderry City constituency for the Republic. Thus, Derry had a participant in the legendary first Dáil Éireann: the seventy-three Sinn Féin MPs who gathered in Dublin’s Mansion House on 21 January 1919. MacNeill had previously visited Derry in September 1918 when he addressed a meeting of 2,500 people under the auspices of the city’s P.H. Pearse Cumann, which was formed only a month previously. The local Sinn Féin leadership tended to be younger than the IPP and more lower-middle class. Publicans, shopkeepers and clerks predominated with a sprinkle of teachers, lawyers and other professionals.⁶ As the first Dáil deliberated in Dublin, Irish Volunteers in Tipperary assassinated two RIC officers at Soloheadbeg. The Irish War of Independence had begun.⁷ Though working-class involvement in the struggle was minimal in Derry, there were examples of workers taking severe risks for the Republic. Edward McCafferty was a close associate of Peadar O’Donnell and a member of the IRA who

successfully smuggled weapons from Ulster to Dublin.⁸ The struggle for independence and against partition was increasingly occupying the minds of Derry's Catholic workers, a preoccupation that would deepen as 1919 progressed and moved Labour to the left.

The Ulster Unionist Labour Association

This leftward shift terrified Dublin Castle. Sir John French, the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland, urged the British government to change its policy towards Irish Labour. Instead of trying to lure trade union leaders away from republicanism, French proposed the release of republican prisoners. It would, he argued, strengthen Sinn Féin's moderate leadership who were no friends of Bolshevism:

I did not, however, consider that the time was ripe for an actual move in the direction of an immediate release of the prisoners until the strikes in the North occurred and a very dangerous crisis was at hand which might plunge the whole country in disaster. Bolshevist propaganda was undoubtedly at the root of the strikes, and it came to my knowledge that a close alliance exists between the Bolshevik element and the advanced Sinn Féin section. Further, it became evident that this Bolshevik – advanced Sinn Féin – combination was utilising the case of the prisoners in England to cover their revolutionary aspiration. Moreover, I found out that this junction with the Bolsheviks was condemned in the strongest manner by the real Sinn Féin leaders such as John McNeill, De Valera and Griffiths.⁹

The Ulster Unionists were equally terrified of Protestants being won over to the Republic with Bolshevism, but they had a more dexterous way of dealing with it. The UULA had been formally constituted to contest the recent general election and it won three seats in working-class loyalist areas of Belfast courtesy of its parent body, the Ulster Unionist Party. The UULA had a notional existence since 1911 when its establishment was proposed to combat any potential for Ulster Protestant support for Home Rule. Its goal was to stymie any growth in independent working-class consciousness among Protestants by offering them a forum within the Unionist Party. Sir Edward Carson was a staunch supporter of it. He hoped it would become a mechanism of Tory paternalism by incorporating Ulster into Britain's conservative political culture thus avoiding the social upheaval and class conflict he feared in the post-war era.¹⁰ Though a product of Ulster sectarianism, the UULA was not entirely divorced from the

conservative, narrow, defensive Labour advocacy also found in Britain at the time.¹¹ Another innovation was the creation of the Ulster Workers' Trade Union in December 1918, an overtly loyalist alternative to Irish unions and their apolitical British counterparts. Widely regarded as a 'yellow union', its secretary, James Turkington, had been a founding member of the UULA.¹² While the Ulster Workers' Trade Union made little impact in Derry – though it tried to organise shirt operatives in 1920 – Turkington and his sectarian patronage of the Protestant working class did, albeit comparatively late.¹³

By 18 January 1919, the UULA had established a branch in Derry with about 500 members. It was formally launched on 14 February and claimed a membership of 700. Two weeks later, it held another meeting that elected Mayor Anderson as president. Henry A. Greenway, a member of the Postmen's Federation, became vice-president and Alex McFarland, Alex Davies and Dealtry Thompson were elected honorary secretaries. Carson was made honorary president. The same meeting claimed that the branch already had 1,000 members.¹⁴ The branch's aims were to advance the Unionism by forming a Unionist employment bureau, maintaining a Unionist Corporation, and fostering harmonious relations between Unionist employers and Protestant workers. The UULA received a cordial welcome from the *Derry Standard*, which excoriated the ITUC for 'its approval of the Bolshevik regime of terror in Russia'.

It is absolutely necessary that the Unionist working men of the city in common with their fellows throughout the province should make it clear that the vast majority of workers in the one industrial province of Ireland are neither separatists or Revolutionaries. . . Irish labour leaders have ignored the opinions of Ulster Unionist workingmen on the Home Rule question. They have represented Irish labour as being solidly behind the Home Rule movement and are so enamoured of Sinn Féin aspirations and methods that they refused at the recent general election to nominated Labour candidates against the republican nominees.¹⁵

Thompson suggested appointing an Orange Order man as secretary and thought that while the Unionist Clubs might be successful in Belfast, 'they would not work successfully in Derry'.¹⁶

The UULA immediately undertook a canvass of Derry's factories and met Unionist employers there. Fiercely anti-socialist and anti-Bolshevik, it led the Unionist charge against the 'revolutionary' and 'subversive' ITUC.¹⁷ It had an open admirer in the *Sentinel*, which would later christen the ITUC as 'Sinn Féin Labour'.¹⁸ The UULA made no secret of its sectarianism and became notorious for being more jealously Protestant than the Unionist Party

when Protestant jobs were at stake. When campaigning for the 1921 Northern Ireland parliamentary elections, Alderman John Mark, a future chairman of the UULA's Derry branch, assured electors that his brother, a bacon curer on Foyle Street, employed no nationalists.¹⁹ The UULA would regularly 'play the Orange card' to stop any perceived threat and did so with remarkable success. The trades council struggled to counteract its malign activities, as evidenced by the 1920 shirt cutters' strike.

After partition, the UULA turned its focus to defending the six-county state against the threat of the Boundary Commission.²⁰ Derry's nationalists put their hopes in the commission as it was assumed that it would propose transferring the city to the Free State. On 21 March 1924, Thompson Donald, a Belfast Unionist-Labour MP, addressed the annual meeting of the UULA's Derry branch, 'that bigoted fraternity' as the *Derry People and Donegal News* dubbed it. He urged his fellow Unionist workers to forcefully resist any attempt by the Boundary Commission to give an inch of Northern Ireland to the Free State. In an even more extraordinary outburst, to loud cheers he warned the British government that 'we will take Donegal, whether you like it or not'. The UULA had been similarly aggressive about the Boundary Commission in 1922 and 1923.²¹

The Motor Permits Order and sectarian splits

Throughout 1919, Derry Labour grappled with how it should respond to and treat the ongoing national struggle for independence. It was a conundrum made explicit by its feeble response to the Motor Permits Order crisis. While most IADAMU branches went on strike against the order, not all did.²² On 7 December 1919, its Derry branch met to discuss how it should respond to the order. By thirty-three votes to five, it chose to work under the order's oppressive strictures.²³

Derry's lack of participation in the motor permits strike did nothing to dissuade Unionists. For many, Irish unions were irredeemably republican and Bolshevik, and Derry Labour was guilty by association. On 18 November 1919, the self-styled Londonderry Teachers' Association – which had disaffiliated from the ITUC for political reasons in December 1918 – met and called on the government to give teachers in Ireland a higher scale of salaries.²⁴ By November 1919, this Unionist teachers' association had become the Derry branch of the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU). The UTU had been founded earlier in 1919 by disgruntled northern teachers antagonised by the INTO's support for the general strike against conscription and its affiliation to the 'frankly Bolshevik and Sinn Féin' ITUC. The UTU's origins lay in the Irish Protestant National Teachers' Union, a caucus within the INTO.²⁵ In

1919, the INTO noted the loss of its branches in Derry, Coleraine, Newtownards and Lisburn to the UTU. Unsurprisingly, the UTU was overtly conservative, as its president made clear in May 1920 when he declared that ‘as honest men we could not identify ourselves with the party of which Larkin was prophet and Connolly was the martyr’.²⁶ Likewise, when the ASTI affiliated to Congress in 1920, it lost Protestant members in the north. However, perhaps out of loyalty, many Protestants stayed with both the INTO and the ASTI.²⁷

Working-class organisations instituted along sectarian lines were not the preserve of Unionists. In October 1919, Catholic workers in Derry established a ‘National Workers’ Association’ to counteract the UULA. Its professed aim was ‘to safeguard its members from loss of employment because of religious or national beliefs; to provide assistance as far as possible in case of victimisation; to promote harmony and smooth working between members and employers, and to strengthen and consolidate their position in the city.’²⁸ In response, the Unionist *Belfast Newsletter* warned:

Sinn Féiners, Separatists and the Bolshevists are at work . . . As an example of their methods we may refer to the formation in Derry of a ‘National Workers’ Association’ . . . a Roman Catholic and Sinn Féin organisation and its object is sectarian and not industrial. The suggestion that workers lose their employment because they are Roman Catholics and Nationalists is baseless; but in Belfast and other parts of Ulster Nationalists came from the South and West to take the places of men who joined the Army, and they have no cause of complaint if they are required to make way for these men when they have returned after fighting for their King and country. That is not ‘victimisation’ but simple justice. . . It is only by maintaining the Union that justice for all classes can be secured. It is a guarantee of liberty and progress, and the Ulster Unionist Labour Association is taking a prominent part in its defence.²⁹

The National Workers’ Association made little or no impact.

Besides the ITGWU, Irish unions were similarly ineffectual in Derry during this period. The city had small branches of the Irish National Union of Vintners’ and Grocers’ Allied Trade Assistants and the IDAA/IUDWC. Likewise, a branch of the Irish Tailors’ and Tailoresses’ Union – founded in Dublin in October 1918 to compete with the ASTT – had existed since October 1919. With sections for men and women, its chairman was Sinn Féin councillor Robert McAnaney.³⁰ There are no records of any of these unions calling a strike, putting forward wage claims or organising Protestants. The IADAMU was the dominant union among Corporation

motormen. In February 1921, it had threatened to take ‘drastic action’ unless the Corporation compel ‘nons’ to join it.³¹ Local asylum attendants joined the IAWU upon its foundation in October 1917. Of the four Ulster branches of the Dublin-based Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers that existed in 1914, Derry was the only one that was still there in 1924. However, no local branches of the ICWU, the INPDATU or the IESFTU/IEIU were launched during this time, even though ‘a certain amount of support’ was reported for the establishment of an IESFTU branch.³² Ulster Protestant animosity was something no Irish union could overcome, as some trade unionists conceded. At its 1919 annual conference, the IDAA reported rising membership everywhere except Belfast. The city was ‘hopeless’, the president announced, adding that ‘they seemed to view everything south of the Boyne with suspicion’.³³

Derry Labour and the 1920 local elections

Industrial relations in Derry were calm in the first half of 1920, part to the political turmoil that the city underwent. The 1920 municipal elections saw it starkly divided. But the trouble was only brewing. In an historic victory that undermined the case for partition, the elections gave nationalists and republicans a majority on the Corporation for the first time. Eleven nationalists, ten Sinn Féiners and nineteen Unionists were returned. The loss of Derry to Catholic nationalists was a bitter pill for Unionists to swallow because the city had a special place in the history and culture of Ulster Protestants. For many Ulstermen, the victory at the Siege of Derry was the beginning of the province’s resistance to Catholic domination. Its famous walls were therefore deeply symbolic and represented the continuity of Ulster’s heroic struggle. The current threat of Sinn Féin was the latest manifestation of a continuous fight against Ireland’s Catholic majority who were determined to dominate and subjugate them.³⁴ The Derry correspondent of the *Morning Post* – a right-wing London daily – predicted that ‘Sinn Féin will be ruthless in its manipulation of Corporation employment and Unionist workers will be misplaced’. The paper bemoaned the growth in the number of Catholic in a once homogenously Protestant city blamed this on the growth of the shipyard.³⁵

On 30 January, the new Corporation met for the first time to elect its mayor and committees. Nationalists and republicans had run on a united ticket to ensure victory. Alderman Hugh C. O’Doherty, an independent nationalist and a respected local solicitor, was their agreed nominee. He became Derry’s first Catholic mayor since 1688. Following his election, elated scenes consumed the Guildhall as overjoyed nationalists and republicans belted out ‘The

Soldiers' Song' and 'God Save Ireland', and tricolours were frantically waved. O'Doherty's inaugural speech ended in a dramatic fashion with a warning to his Unionist colleagues: 'Ireland's right to determine her own destiny will come about whether the Protestants of Ulster like it or not'.³⁶ Within days of his election, the Dorsetshire Regiment and the RIC raided houses and seized munitions and 'seditious' literature.³⁷

The trades council had resolved to field candidates under a Labour banner that stood on a Labour platform. But 'difficulties' ensured that trade unionists stood as nationalists like Logue, as republicans like McCafferty, or as UULA men like Greenway (soon to be chairman of the local branch of the Union of Postal Workers). In October 1919, Derry was one of only four centres not represented at an all-Ireland meeting of trades councils to discuss the forthcoming local elections. Moreover, it was the only one that 'was unrepresented without valid reason'.³⁸ Of the forty elected councillors, the Dáil reckoned that only five were also Labour activists, but the number was higher than that. Other than David Mitchell, every working-class candidate that stood was elected. But once again Derry was the only city in Ireland without designated Labour councillors as the national question took precedence over everything else. A bitter atmosphere prevailed at the Guildhall for the next three years, especially among the nationalist and UULA trade unionists.³⁹

Labour was hopeful that it could achieve more for municipal workers under the new regime given its less haute-bourgeois composition. The mutual alienation of local Labour leaders and official Unionism, which began in 1918, had gathered pace throughout 1919 and was acute by the time the new Corporation assembled. The wave of strikes and discontent in the city forced Unionist councillors to accommodate the working class to a far greater extent than ever before, which predictably resulted in it satiating the demands of working-class loyalism. In January 1919, a nationalist ex-soldier on the Corporation who claimed to represent the working class demanded that action be taken to alleviate the poverty and unemployment of demobilised soldiers. A committee was set up to help returning men find work. In November 1919, the Derry Trades Council was infuriated by the Corporation's allocation of three of the five 'Labour' seats on the local War Pensions Committee to the UULA.⁴⁰

Table 8. 1: Candidates with Working-Class Occupations at the 1920 Municipal Elections

Ward	Seats	Unionists (working-class)	Nationalists (working-class)	Sinn Féin (working-class)
North	11	8 (Henry, Greenway, postman)	3 (-)	2 (Edward McCafferty, engineer)
South and east	12	8 (David Mitchell, tailor)	3 (William J. Bradley, postman; Con Doherty, tailor)	3 (Robert McAnaney, tailor; James Gallagher, platers' helper)
Waterside	9	7 (James Blair, plumber; D.P. Thompson, compositor)	2 (-)	2 (-)
West	8	- (-)	4 (William Logue, Labour organiser, NAUL; Joseph McKernan, merchant seaman; Patrick Meenan, Labour delegate, NUDL)	4 (Anthony Carlin, house painter)

Source: O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 39.

Growing sectarianism and general strikes

As the independence struggle intensified in early 1920, workers retreated into their sectarian camps. Like April 1918, Derry's biggest strike of the period had nothing to do with wages, conditions or workers' rights. It was the general stoppage called by the ITUC for the release of republican hunger strikers incarcerated in Mountjoy Prison and Wormwood Scrubs. The strike took place from 14-16 April across Ireland except for the Unionist north-east. On 13 April, the Derry Trades Council recommended a general cessation of work from the following morning. All workers, except for those employed at newspapers, at the telegraph service, in the baking of bread and essential food distribution, in humanitarian services and in necessary work with horses and cattle were to withdraw their labour. Like April 1918, the strike was sectarian in nature as only Catholics partook. Protestants had been asked not to do so by the UULA. The stoppage was another reminder that Labour had still not resolved its identity crisis: how it could express the political aspirations of most of its members and achieve and maintain the working-class unity for which it had always struggled. The dockers and most carters came out, as did Corporation omnibus drivers and conductors. A section of the shipyard workers obeyed the

trades council's directive, as did the teachers in the city's Catholic schools, primary and secondary alike.⁴¹

But even republican unions were unhappy with what they perceived to be the trades council's tepid support for the national struggle. In May 1920, the ITGWU and the Irish Union of Tailors and Tailoresses boycotted the trades council's annual May Day sports event in solidarity with hunger strikers in Belfast and Wormwood Scrubs. During Terence MacSwiney's hunger strike, the sectarian scenes repeated themselves. On 21 September, Catholics abstained from work to attend a mass to honour the martyred lord mayor and marched through the streets in solidarity with him. No such action had taken place in March when Tomás MacCurtain was murdered by the RIC, demonstrating the growth in republicanism among Catholics in the interim. Work at the quays, the shipyard and at many shirt factories was brought to a standstill, the omnibuses halted and teachers from Catholic schools marched alongside their pupils. On 29 October, the scenario was again repeated when work was suspended to allow nationalists to attend McSwiney's requiem mass which was arranged by Derry's ITGWU branch. There are no reports of any Protestant groups attending either event.⁴²

Labour and the 1920 riots

The April 1920 strikes did much to deepen the latent sectarian tensions that had scarred Derry for centuries. Relations between nationalists and Unionists had plummeted since the outbreak of the war of independence. However, serious intercommunal rioting occurred only once, on 15 August 1919.⁴³ By April 1920, however, animosities were at boiling point. On 16 April, many strikers assembled at the GNR station to greet an arriving Sinn Féin prisoner. When the RIC and the British military were called upon to disperse the crowd, they responded with cries of 'Up Dublin!', 'Up the republic!' and a rendition of The Soldier's Song. A barrage of jeers and stones were meted out to the police and the Dorsets. The latter responded with force. Shots were fired and a riot ensued. Several people, police, military and civilian alike, were injured. The military's actions aroused the intense indignation of the nationalist community. Three nights later, more destructive riots engulfed the city. Hundreds of soldiers were mobilised, and many were seriously injured. Both police and the crowd repeatedly fired shots. It was only a matter of time before the riots became sectarian. Mob violence between nationalists and Unionists brought community relations to an all-time low. The former sang the 'Soldier's Song', 'A Nation Once Again' and 'God Save Ireland' and the latter bellowed out 'Derry's

Walls', 'Dolly's Brae' and 'Rule Britannia' amidst the carnage. Over £2,000 worth of damages was done to property as windows were smashed and buildings damaged in the melee. The unrest was repeated the following night. The IRA was quick to exploit the lawlessness to bring its campaign to Derry. Throughout 1919, it had recruited in working-class nationalist areas, mainly drawing its support from demobilised soldiers. On 16 April, it launched attacks on a RIC barracks in the Bogside.⁴⁴

Another riot broke out on 16 May, this time initiated by Unionists. Shots were fired and Derry had its first fatality of the war of independence when the local head of the RIC's Special Branch was killed. The RIC and British Army retaliated by firing shots and launching bayonet charges into Catholic areas. The introduction of the IRA to Derry alarmed Protestants, as did the Unionist leadership's seeming inability to mount a fightback. The Ulster Volunteers Force (UVF) was re-instituted by local Protestant ex-servicemen. Its goal was to provide an armed resistance to the IRA without sanction from Unionist leaders. A small Catholic enclave in the Waterside was attacked, followed by reprisals against Protestants in the Brandywell and Bogside. The growing inter-communal hatred peaked in mid-June with sectarian riots so destructive they resembled an internal civil war. The riots began on 13 June when Catholics walking at Prehen Wood were assaulted – both sides interpreted this as *casus belli*. Sectarian fighting took place throughout the following week and culminated in a major riot in the Waterside. But worse was on the way. Between 19 and 25 June, the violence climaxed as the IRA and the UVF fought sporadic gun battles for control of the city. Attacks on Catholics provoked a retaliatory IRA invasion of the walled city and gun battles engulfed much the city. The UVF's superior firepower eventually forced a republican retreat. In revenge, they looted and burned the property of Unionist supporters and businessmen on the fringe of the Bogside. Although few combatants were injured, several innocent civilians were killed in the crossfire. Lack of manpower and the complete breakdown of British rule in many parts of Ireland rendered the task of the authorities impossible. It was nearly a week before enough troops arrived in Derry to put down the disturbances.⁴⁵

On 23 June, a heavy military interference curbed the shootings but not the intercommunal strife. The military intervention was so blatantly on the side of the UVF that several RIC men resigned in protest. The April to June violence claimed the lives of forty people, nineteen of them in that vicious week in June. The IRA had suffered a devastating loss and its activity practically ceased in Derry. The confidence of the local republican movement had been irreparably damaged. The violence confirmed not only the scale of ethno-national

identities and communal hatreds, but also the influence of both the IRA and the Catholic clergy in the nationalist community. Local clergy had begged the volunteers to take revenge against the UVF. Community leaders, including IRA and UVF officers, set up a 'Citizens' Conciliation and Protection Committee' to prevent further unrest.⁴⁶ From late June to early July, the committee facilitated three unsuccessful meetings between the SMF and the UGW to bring the shirt cutters' strike to an end. Bizarrely, the strike had continued through the city's civil war – a vivid example of how this fractured society was forced to function by the interconnectedness of its economy.⁴⁷ Although acts of violence ended, social unrest and sectarian attacks persisted.⁴⁸

The trades council and most of the unions were mute on the violence that had brought Derry to a shambolic state. In contrast, the ITGWU blamed both sides equally and attributed the influence of the Orange Order and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, of which Logue was a member, as the cause of sectarian animosity. As a solution, it proposed an anti-sectarian 'Red Guard' to impartially defend all workers from violence. In May, O'Donnell had unsuccessfully attempted to set up such a body – a local ICA unit – in anticipation of turbulence. This did not endear him to some in the IRA who resented his efforts to make the Citizen Army more active. In January 1920, the ICA had discussed the possibility of instituting a Derry unit, but nothing appears to have come of it.⁴⁹ Greaves asserted that the 'Ulster Protestant and Unionist Workers' Association', a 'yellow' Labour Party in Ulster, deliberately instigated the violence by stoking sectarianism to ward off working-class unity 'under the pretext of defending Protestant ex-servicemen from Catholics who had taken their jobs'. There is no evidence to support these claims.⁵⁰

Derry and the 1920 Belfast shipyard expulsions

Derry's April-June ordeal was reflective of the explosive sectarian violence now engulfing Ulster. In July, a Unionist on Belfast Corporation tried to justify the Belfast shipyard expulsion by alleging that Protestant shipyardmen in Derry were being driven out of their employment. Derry Corporation resolutely denied this and there is no evidence to support it. The Belfast expulsions took place on 21 July when 8,000 Catholics and left-wing/republican Protestant workers were ejected from the shipyards. In response to the Belfast expulsions, Dáil Éireann initiated the Belfast Boycott, an embargo on goods coming from the city that was co-ordinated by the its Labour Department and backed by the ITUC.⁵¹ A relief fund was established for the

expellees to which Irish Labour generously donated, with the *Journal* reporting the weekly subscriptions. The Derry UULA branch supported Turkington's counter-boycott of southern products in 1921.⁵² In October, the Unionist *Belfast Evening Telegraph* preposterously claimed that Unionists in Belfast merely copied what nationalist shipyard workers in Derry had done when Unionists refused to join the April general strike.⁵³

Derry and the munitions embargo

When the munitions embargo began in Dublin on 23 May, it quickly spread across nationalist Ireland.⁵⁴ The NUR's leadership in London quickly tried to moderate the action, at which point the ITUC stepped in to offer its support. On 13 July, Derry became the first centre in Ulster to partake in the embargo when a railway driver on the LLSR refused to move a train carrying troops. The *Journal*, however, questioned whether patriotism was the driving force: 'It is stated that the railwaymen were intimidated, the threat . . . being that if they worked the train carrying armed military or police, serious consequences would befall them'.⁵⁵ Whatever the reason, the protest spread throughout the north-west and munitions trains leaving Derry were regularly held up.⁵⁶ By late July, thirty railwaymen on the Lough Swilly had been suspended. Derry's NUR branch resolved to give them its full support:

That we, the representatives of the majority of the employees of the Lough Swilly Railway . . . wish it to be clearly understood that under no circumstances will we convey or assist in the conveyance of armed military or police to be utilised for the destruction of our fellow countrymen. We absolutely refuse to be party to the creation of a second Amritsar, and we pledge ourselves to support by every means in our power our colleagues who have already been suspended for advocating this principle.⁵⁷

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre in the Punjab had a deep resonance in Ulster as Carson was a well-known apologist for the man responsible for it, General Reginald Dyer.⁵⁸

The munitions embargo was split on sectarian lines in Derry. A week before the NUR's resolution, a 'well-attended meeting' of all grades at the Waterside station had pledged its support to the British government and the railway companies. This gathering of the 'Loyal Railway Workers of Derry' also dissociated itself entirely from the strike and called on the executives of the NUR, the RCA and the ASLEF to withhold strike pay for those engaged it.⁵⁹

By early August, the inevitable had happened. The munitions strike had split the railwaymen along political lines. A section of Protestant workers decided to cut themselves adrift and a new branch was formed from which Catholics were rigidly excluded. However, some Protestants remained with the original branch through loyalty to the union. The railwaymen were, like the rest of Derry's working class, now hopelessly divided and no appeal to class consciousness was capable of overcoming sectarianism.⁶⁰

The embargo had cross-class Catholic support. On 10 August, at a meeting presided over by Sinn Féin Alderman Cathal Bradley, a local fund was set up to assist the embargo. A committee with Peadar O'Donnell as chairman was appointed to oversee the fund's distribution. The railwaymen had hitherto forgone financial aid so that the locked-out shirt factory workers could be helped. Collections were made and concerts and dances were held across Derry and Donegal to supply the fund.⁶¹ But morale was running low and the men on the LLSR were getting anxious to return to work, even if it meant doing so unconditionally. O'Donnell was central in galvanising them to sustain the battle, telling them that 'we are not exactly fighting because we are going to win but because it is right to fight'.⁶² An ITUC conference on the strike was held in Dublin in November. At it, John Limerick, secretary of one of the NUR's Derry branches, pleaded for an end to the embargo, claiming that he had come from his branch with a mandate for peace. O'Donnell, on the other hand, proclaimed that he 'represented the workers of Derry, and he would tell the Congress that in the North they would carry the foodstuffs in their bare feet on their backs through the country rather than give in in the present fight.' The men on the Swilly, however, thought differently and returned to work on 26 November. The line had been closed to passengers for twenty-five days.⁶³

On 14 December, with over 500 railwaymen sacked, the ITUC recommended an end to the munitions embargo. So too did a national conference of the Irish NUR seven days later. Aside from the crippling the British government's counterinsurgency, the embargo severely affected the economy.⁶⁴ Derry merchants applied pressure on the LLSR to get trains running again because of the loss of business to the city. The company capitulated and quietly began to take back dismissed workers without victimisation.⁶⁵ The NUR obtained similar outcomes across Ireland. The GNR, however, had enough scabs to demand a pledge of loyalty, including in the transportation of troops, from its reinstated men. The strike compelled the NUR leadership to summon a meeting of the British Trades Union Congress that condemned the military occupation of Ireland.⁶⁶ Derry's railwaymen received a total of £1,930 from the ITUC's Munitions of War Fund, with the majority NUR branch getting £1,747, the minority

branch £117 and the ASLEF £66. The strike prompted the only intervention from the IRA's First Northern Division in a labour dispute when volunteers kidnapped a train driver from Derry who had scabbed and took him prisoner. They released him after he gave a passionate speech of repentance. Most of the men under O'Donnell's command were from working-class or small-farmer backgrounds, a considerable number of whom were trade unionists. Johnny Fox, the Second Brigade's quartermaster, had heard Eleanor Marx speak at the Guildhall in 1891. But the IRA was not dedicated to social revolution and therefore rarely intervened in strikes. When it did, it was on the side of the employers.⁶⁷

Peadar O'Donnell's revolution

O'Donnell, however, was dedicated to social revolution. Like many revolutionaries, he was a firebrand agitator rather than an organiser and was not well-suited to trade unionism, work he found tedious.⁶⁸ In the summer of 1919, he had tried, and failed, to establish a branch of the short-lived Socialist Party of Ireland, a Bolshevik faction within the Irish Labour Party, in Derry. He later claimed that these efforts were undone by internal feuding in Dublin. In February 1920, he and McCafferty established a Workers' Education Committee, intended as the nucleus of a branch of the James Connolly Labour College. It offered courses in history and economics. That September, Eoin MacNeill delivered its first public lecture, entitled 'Ireland's future: a co-operative commonwealth'. In April, O'Donnell had been nominated to the June 1920 Poor Law Guardians elections and gave his occupation as 'Workers' Republican Organiser'.⁶⁹

On 23 October 1920, 'the stormy petrel of the Transport Workers', as the *Sentinel* had once dubbed him, took his last pay cheque as a full-time ITGWU organiser. But he continued to write, speak and agitate on its behalf. His regular letters to the *Journal* ceased when he became the commandant of the IRA's Donegal Brigade.⁷⁰ O'Donnell had joined the IRA in 1919 and began his military career innocuously, transporting arms and doing 'odd jobs for one IRA officer or another'. In the summer of 1920, he assumed command of the 2nd Battalion of the Donegal Brigade, whose area of operations included Derry city. Having been warned of his impending arrest by a Unionist RIC sergeant – a man whom O'Donnell had helped in setting up the Irish Prison and Police Officers' Union – he fled Derry and devoted himself fully to the republican struggle. Apart from occasional work with tattie hokers and the Scottish Farm Servants' Union, his stint as a trade unionist was over. His position as an ITGWU organiser

was viewed with suspicion within the IRA, some of whose officers regarded the union as unfriendly towards it.⁷¹ But O'Donnell was a committed republican who rejected the Anglo-Irish Treaty. He was among the IRA volunteers who occupied the Four Courts in June 1922. He escaped its shelling, only to be captured by the National Army shortly afterwards. From his cell in Mountjoy, where he remained until 1924, he excoriated the Labour leadership for its acceptance of the status quo and timorousness on the national question. 'It is England's devilish luck that the Labour Party is led by Johnson just when Labour is faced with tremendous opportunities', he decried in 1922.⁷²

Across Ireland, the ITGWU was being targeted for harassment by the authorities because of its republicanism. On 22 January 1921, the military raided the Derry branch's offices on William Street which the IRA had sometimes used as a meeting place, much to the apprehension of the ITGWU. Labour was often caught in the crossfire of Derry's internal war, sometimes literally. On 2 October 1920, more than twenty bullets had perforated a window of the NUDL offices on Butcher Street.⁷³ But violence could not stop the ITGWU, which motored on, failing to win over Unionist workers along the way. O'Donnell took this more seriously than most within his union. On 13 November 1921, he gave a lecture on the Irish Labour and movement partition. Before challenging Turkington, who had recently been in Derry, to a debate, he warned:

It is a mistake to assume that many Ulster workers are not in favour of partition. They are. If anyone had got as many mobbings and howlings down in dealing with Ulster workers as he had got they would have the same views. But this much he could say: he had never known a case where one comes on Unionist workers suddenly, before the Lodge gets a move on, without getting a ready allegiance enough to the working-class movement in this country. . . He was certain he could shake to pieces any Orange Lodge in Ulster where he was allowed to develop freely economic and national theories, and he'd benefit mostly from the fiery opponent, who would smother economic sound sense with the big drum or the memory of Billy and his Papish victory at the Boyne.⁷⁴

Working-class Ulster Protestant support for Unionism would be a recurring theme in O'Donnell's political work for the rest of his life

Partition

In this respect, however, O'Donnell was in a small minority within both the republican and Labour movements. No coherent strategy to deal with working-class Unionism emerged from the leadership of either, greatly aiding the Ulster Unionists. After a third reading of the Government of Ireland Bill 1920 took place in the House of Commons on 11 November, the partition of Ireland looked certain to occur on 23 December 1920.⁷⁵ Derry, as a part of the six counties that would comprise Northern Ireland, was about to be cut off from Donegal and lose its main economic hinterland. In October 1920, the British government had already capitulated to James Craig's demand that a special constabulary of 'loyal' citizens be established to protect the north, or at least the six counties, from the republican insurrection when it announced the formation of the Ulster Special Constabulary. The new force was composed of three sections: A-Specials, B-Specials and C-Specials. The A-Specials formed the basis of the Royal Ulster Constabulary founded in 1922; the C-Specials were later dissolved. Only the B-Specials survived as a part-time, quasi-military auxiliary force to the police. Many old Ulster Volunteers became B-Specials, effectively turning the UVF into a state-sponsored militia. Like the UVF, the Specials became a de-facto capitalist militia who were often organised by local landlords and/or employers like Wallace Kennedy, a leading UVF organiser in Derry.⁷⁶ Determined to keep nationalists and Unionists together, unions in Derry stayed extraordinarily silent on partition.

Partition deepened the divide within the working class, making the possibility of proletarian unity even harder to achieve. By early 1921, having initially gravitated towards Belfast and Britain on political matters, Derry Labour began to take its cue from Dublin. Its participation in political strikes was often unenthusiastic and always divisive. The result was a working class more divided along sectarian lines than ever before. The carnival of reaction predicted by Connolly was on its way – and Labour could do little to stop it.

Chapter Notes and References

- ¹ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 35-38; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-fourth meeting and special congress*, 1918, pp. 114-115, NLI. The Irish Convention was a forum established by the British Government to resolve the Ulster crisis in advance of Home Rule being granted.
- ² Ibid., 22 Apr. 1918; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 36.
- ³ McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 131-132; *Irish Times*, 27 Apr. 1918.
- ⁴ *DJ*, 24 Apr., 10 June 1918; *New Way*, Apr. 1918; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 36.
- ⁵ *LS*, 7, 12 Dec. 1918.
- ⁶ Colm Fox, *The Making of a Minority: Political Development in Derry and The North, 1912-25* (Derry: Guildhall Press, 1997), pp. 58-59, 62.
- ⁷ The Soloheadbeg Ambush is the name given to the assassination of two policemen by members of the Irish Volunteers' Tipperary brigade.
- ⁸ *DJ*, 15 May 1953.
- ⁹ Most, though not all, of this quotation is cited in O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 71. The rest is taken from 'Release of Sinn Féin Prisoners', Memorandum of John French to the War Cabinet, 7 Feb. 1919, CAB 24/76, Cabinet Office records, UKNA.
- ¹⁰ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 178.
- ¹¹ Graham Walker, 'The Protestant working class and the fragmentation of Ulster Unionism', in Mervyn Busteed, Frank Neal & Jonathan Tonge (eds.), *Irish Protestant Identities* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 361.
- ¹² O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 178.
- ¹³ *Garment Worker*, Feb. 1924.
- ¹⁴ UULA executive committee minutes, 18 Jan., 16 Aug. 1919, D1327/11/4/1, Ulster Unionist Council collection, PRONI; *LS*, 11, 15 Feb., 1 Mar. 1919. Reportedly, over 1,000 people attended its end of year social. See *LS*, 6 Dec. 1919.
- ¹⁵ *Derry Standard*, 14 Feb. 1919.
- ¹⁶ Cited in Claire Fitzpatrick, 'Labour, ideology and the states in Ireland, 1917-32' (University of Cambridge: PhD, 1993), p. 158.
- ¹⁷ *LS*, 9, 16 Aug. 1919.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 22 Apr., 6 May, 27 July, 18, 27 Nov., 2 Dec. 1920, 2, 6 Aug. 1921; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 42-43.
- ¹⁹ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 38; *DJ*, 14 Feb. 1919. For further information on the anti-socialist activities of the UULA, see also John F. Harbinson, *The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973: Its Development and Its Origins* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1973), pp. 67-69; and annual reports of the Ulster Unionist Council, 1919-26, D1327/20/2/5-9, Ulster Unionist Council records, PRONI.
- ²⁰ *LS*, 4 Mar. 1922, 24 Feb., 17 Nov. 1923. Established under the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Irish Boundary Commission's remit was to examine where the border between the Free State and Northern Ireland should be. Many northern nationalists placed great faith in it as it was hoped that it would give much territory to the Free State thereby making Northern Ireland unviable. Its first meeting was held in December 1924 and continued to meet throughout 1925. Its report recommended certain territorial swaps but was a major disappointment to both Dublin and Northern nationalists and so it was suppressed by the Free State Government. See KJ Rankin, 'The Provenance and Dissolution of the Irish Boundary Commission', *Working papers in Irish-British Studies*, no. 79, 2006.
- ²¹ *DJ*, 24 Mar., 7 Apr. 1924; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 29 Mar. 1924; *ibid.*, 22 Mar. 1924.
- ²² ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-sixth meeting*, 1920, pp. 11-17, NLI; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 87-88.
- ²³ *DJ*, 8 Dec. 1919; RIC CI for Londonderry, MRs for Nov-Dec. 1919, CO 904/108-110, UCC.
- ²⁴ *DJ*, 20 Nov. 1919
- ²⁵ T.J. O'Connell, *History of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 1868-1968* (Dublin: INTO, 1968), pp. 29, 190; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 175, 181. For the Derry UULA's condemnation of the 1919 ITUC conference, see *LS*, 9 Aug. 1919. The Irish National Protestant Teachers' Union merged with the UTU in 1920s. See Richard H. Mapstone, 'Trade union and government relations: a case study of influence on the Stormont government', *Saothar*, no. 12, 1987, pp. 35-46; Richard H. Mapstone, *The Ulster Teachers' Union: An Historical Perspective* (Coleraine: University of Ulster, 1986). For its internal activities, see minute book of the Irish National Protestant Teachers' Union, 1911-26, D517/1, Thomas Jamison Papers, PRONI.
- ²⁶ Quoted in O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 175.

- ²⁷ ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-sixth annual meeting*, 1919, NLI, pp. 22-35, 42; Cunningham, *Unlikely Radicals*, pp. 46-47.
- ²⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Oct. 1919.
- ²⁹ Most, though not all, of this quotation is cited in Fitzpatrick, 'Labour, ideology and the states in Ireland', p. 226. The rest is taken from *Belfast Newsletter*, 6 Oct. 1919.
- ³⁰ Irish National Union of Vintners' and Grocers' Allied Trade Assistants minutes, 11 Sept. 1921, 5 Mar. 1922, Mandate Trade Union archive, O'Lehane House; *DJ*, 27 Mar., 17 Apr. 1916, 27 Oct. 1919, 5 Jan. 1923; *LS*, 22 Mar. 1923; *Drapers' Assistant*, Vol. XVI, Apr., June, Sept., Dec. 1919; *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Oct. 1921. For information on the launch of the Irish Tailors' and Tailoresses' Union on 8 October 1918, see the handbill on the matter: EPH B849, NLI.
- ³¹ Letter from the M. Mullen to Henry Miller, 14 Feb. 1921, letter book no. 50, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum.
- ³² Report on the new Irish Engineering Society, DE/2/116, Dáil Éireann collection, NAI.
- ³³ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 175-176.
- ³⁴ Dennis Kennedy, *The Widening Gulf: Northern attitudes to an independent Irish state, 1919-49* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1988), p. 43-44, 48. Kennedy deftly describes Ulster protestant attitudes to Ulster Catholics/nationalists and the south throughout this book.
- ³⁵ Quoted in Ronan Gallagher, *Violence and nationalist politics in Derry, 1920-1923* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), p. 18; *Derry Standard*, 23 Jan. 1920.
- ³⁶ *Derry Standard*, 2 Feb. 1920.
- ³⁷ Gallagher, *Violence and nationalist politics in Derry City*, pp. 20-22.
- ³⁸ *Watchword of Labour*, 1 Nov. 1919, cited in McCabe, *The 1920 Local Elections*, p. 8.
- ³⁹ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 38-39.
- ⁴⁰ *DJ*, 24 Jan., 12 Nov. 1919, 14 Apr. 1920; Mark Desmond McGovern, 'The Siege Myth: The Siege of Derry in Ulster Protestant Culture, 1689-1939' (University of Liverpool: PhD, 1994), pp. 371-372; Gavin, Kelly and O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 202.
- ⁴¹ *DJ*, 12-19 Apr. 1920; *LS*, 15 Apr. 1920. In 1919, the Sentinel had previously warned against Sinn Féin surreptitiously using Labour to advance its cause. See *LS*, 9 Jan. 1919.
- ⁴² *DJ*, 30 Apr., 3 May, 22 Sept., 1 Nov. 1920; *LS*, 23 Sept., 30 Oct. 1920. See *DJ*, 27 Oct. 1920 for a copy of a telegram of sympathy sent from Derry's ITGWU branch to Cork's Deputy Lord Mayor.
- ⁴³ Joost Augusteijn, 'Radical Nationalist Activities in County Derry, 1900-1921', in Gerard O'Brien (ed.), *Derry & Londonderry, history & society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1999), p. 581; RIC CI for Londonderry, MR for Aug. 1919, CO 904/109, UCC
- ⁴⁴ Murphy, 'Derry and North-West Ulster', pp. 465-466; *DJ*, 14, 16, 19 Apr. 1920. For a first-hand account of the Dorsetshire Regiment's activities in Derry, see Major-General G.N. Wood, *The Military Control of Londonderry, 1919-23*, 78/31/1, Imperial War Museum.
- ⁴⁵ Timothy Bowman, *Carson's Army: The Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910-22* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 194; Eamon McCann, *War in an Irish Town* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), pp. 219-220; James Connor Doak, 'Rioting and civil strife in the city of Londonderry during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' (QUB: MA, 1978).
- ⁴⁶ Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and Modern Ulster*, pp. 254-256; Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), pp. 25-26; Augusteijn, 'Radical Nationalist Activities in County Derry', pp. 581-584; RIC CI for Londonderry, MR for June 1920, CO 904/110, UCC; TH Mullin, *Ulster's historic city: Derry/Londonderry* (Coleraine: Coleraine Bookshop, 1986), p. 144.
- ⁴⁷ *DJ*, 30 June, 2 July 1920; *Journal of the ASTT*, Sept. 1920, L20, WCML; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 53.
- ⁴⁸ *DJ*, 28 June, 16, 26 July 1920. For a comprehensive explanation of Derry's role in the 1916-21 Irish revolution, see Liam A. Brady's articles on the topic in *DJ*, 1 May-3 June 1953.
- ⁴⁹ *Watchword of Labour*, 3, 17 July 1920; ICA executive committee minutes, 25 Jan. 1920, ILHS.
- ⁵⁰ Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union*, pp. 280-281. See also Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 101-102.
- ⁵¹ *Belfast News-letter*, 2 Aug. 1920; *DJ*, 18 Aug. 1920; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 42. For an account of the expulsions, see Kevin Johnstone, *In The Shadows of Giants: A Social History of the Belfast Shipyards* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2008), pp. 199-203.
- ⁵² *LS*, 12 Nov. 1921. The Derry UULA had 500 members in January 1922. See *LS*, 21 Jan. 1922.
- ⁵³ *DJ*, 25 Oct. 1920, *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 20 Oct. 1920.
- ⁵⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 24 May 1920; Townshend, 'The Irish Railway strike of 1920', pp. 265-282. The action was inspired by the example of London dock workers who had refused earlier that month to load a munitions ship, the SS *Jolly George*, that was destined to Russia to aid the White armies in their war against the Bolsheviks,
- ⁵⁵ *DJ*, 14 July 1920.

- ⁵⁶ CE, 26 July 1920; DJ, 28 July 1920; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 40.
- ⁵⁷ Most, though not all, of this quote is cited in O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 40. The rest is taken from DJ, 28 July 1920.
- ⁵⁸ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 40.
- ⁵⁹ LS, 22 July 1920; *ibid.*, pp. 40-41; 'Handling of Munitions. Resolution', 19 July 1920, uncatalogued file, Great Northern Railway archive, IRRS.
- ⁶⁰ Sweeny, 'The Letterkenny & Burtonport extension railway', pp. 103-104.
- ⁶¹ DJ, 11, 13 Aug., 13, 17, 20, 24 Sept. 1920.
- ⁶² *Ibid.* 19 Nov. 1920, quoted in Hegarty, *Peadar O'Donnell*, p. 75.
- ⁶³ ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-seventh annual meeting*, 1921, p. 56, NLI; *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Nov; *Northern Whig*, 27 Nov. 1920.
- ⁶⁴ *Irish Independent*, 22 Dec. 1920; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 40.
- ⁶⁵ DJ, 10 Dec. 1920.
- ⁶⁶ Mitchell, *Labour in Irish politics, 1890-1930*, pp. 120-122; ILPTUC, *Report of the twenty-seventh annual meeting*, 1921, pp. 11-12, NLI.
- ⁶⁷ ILPTUC, *Munitions of war fund: receipts and disbursements* (Dublin: Word Printing Work, 1921), LO P 94, NLI; Hegarty, *Peadar O'Donnell*, pp. 96-97.
- ⁶⁸ Michael McInerney, *Peadar O'Donnell, Irish Social Rebel* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1974), p. 39.
- ⁶⁹ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 45; O'Connor, 'True Bolsheviks?', p. 213. O'Donnell, among others, had been introduced to Marxism by the Socialist Party of Ireland via its 'workers' library on Bolshevism'. See Ó Drisceoil, *Peadar O'Donnell*, p. 11. For the Derry UULA branch's take on the Socialist Party, see LS, 21 June 1919.
- ⁷⁰ LS, 23 Nov. 1920; McCabe, 'The Stormy Petrel of the Transport Workers', pp. 20-21. For correspondence between O'Donnell and a conservative Catholic named 'Democrat' on socialism, see DJ, 12, 14, 24, 28 Feb., 5 Mar. 1919. 'Justicia' also criticises 'Democrat' in DJ, 21, 26 Feb. 1919. For a similar letter from 'J.G.', see DJ, 3 Mar. 1919.
- ⁷¹ Report from Liam Archer, 3 June 1921, P7/A/18, Richard Mulcahy Papers, University College Dublin Archives, cited in Robert Lynch, *The Northern IRA and the Early Years of Partition, 1920-1922* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), p. 54; Augusteijn, 'Radical Nationalist Activities in County Derry', pp. 590-592.
- ⁷² He also referred to the party as the 'Johnstonian Imperial Labour Party' and demanded Thomas Johnson's deportation. Letter from Peadar O'Donnell, 12 Aug. 1922, Lot 128 A/1118, Captured Documents collection, Military Archives of Ireland, cited in O'Connor, *Reds and the Green*, pp. 70-71.
- ⁷³ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 43-44.
- ⁷⁴ Most of this is cited in *ibid.*, p. 50. The rest is taken from DJ, 18 Nov. 1921.
- ⁷⁵ Alvin Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998: War, Peace and Beyond* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999), pp. 221, 236-239.
- ⁷⁶ Farrell, *The Orange State*, pp. 31-32, 35; Farrell, *Arming the Protestants*, pp. 21-22, 47; Michael Farrell, 'The Establishment of the Ulster Special Constabulary', in Austen Morgan and Bob Purdie (eds.), *Ireland: Divided Nation, Divided Class* (London: Ink Links, 1980), pp. 125-127; Bell, *The Protestants of Ulster*, p. 94. In 1922, the managing director of Tillie & Henderson's was given a leave of absence to take up a position organising the B-Specials. See Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 103-104.

9

Local Government, the Central State and Municipal Labour in Cork and Derry, 1917-23

In 1917, Cork's local authorities were dominated by constitutional nationalists whose conservatism was often a reflection of their upper-middle-class background. Like the private sector, they too were put under pressure by Labour's resurgence to make concessions to their employees, having given only small war bonuses until then. Sinn Féin's demolition of constitutional nationalism at the 1918 general election positioned it perfectly to replicate this success in Cork at the 1920 municipal elections – and so it did. With the ITGWU by its side, the party took control of the Corporation and the Harbour Board in January 1920 and, with Labour's support, the Board of Guardians that June. Nothing illuminated the amiable relationship between Labour and the republicans in Cork more than this Labour-facilitated change of hands. However, within eighteen months relations would sour, which exposed the class nature of the republican project.

By 1917, Derry's public authorities had long been governed by Unionists, many of whom were wealthy employers with a strong anti-Labour bias. Hence, municipal workers had long fared badly under institutions dominated by unrepresentative oligarchs. Robert Anderson, mayor from 1915-20, was a prominent industrialist and his successor, Maxwell Scott Moore, was a landowner and railway director. Councillor H.S. Robinson was the secretary of the Employers' Federation. Robert Watson, chairman of the Harbour Commissioners from 1917-23, was a Justice of the Peace and his successor, A.A. Crockett, was a tramway proprietor. John McFarland, Derry's answer to William Martin Murphy, was a prominent Unionist voice on both the Corporation and the Harbour Commissioners throughout this period. Derry's municipal workers experienced three momentous changes in their lives from 1917-24, as their places of employment became arenas for revolution and counterrevolution. Firstly, they were as affected by the rebirth of Labour militancy as any of their comrades in the private sector. Secondly, the historic local elections of January 1920 returned Derry's first ever nationalist Corporation. Thirdly, in 1923 Stormont gerrymandered it back under Unionist control.

Accordingly, an analysis of the relationship between Labour and the Corporation during these tumultuous years reveals much about the class nature of the Irish revolution and the Ulster Unionist counterrevolution.

Derry Corporation and Labour

Though faced with hostile employers, the MEA was as active as any private sector union in combatting the rampant wartime inflation. In April 1917, it secured only a fraction of the 6s. increase it sought for workers who earned 40s. or less.¹ Though the Corporation publicly condemned retailers for their exorbitant prices, it was no less scrupulous. In April 1917, its carters, who were paid 6s. daily, ceased work when their claim for 10s. a day was rejected. The Corporation was willing to increase this to 8s. 6d. but this was not accepted. The MEA received similar treatment when its demand of a 4s. bonus was put on the long finger.² On 17 December, Unionists voted down the nationalists' proposal to give a wage of 40s. 6d. to their own plumbers and water inspectors even though outside plumbers would receive 45s. from 22 December for a fifty-four-hour week. Corporation plumbers earned 38s. 6d. for a fifty-four-hour week while its water inspectors received the same for a fifty-five-hour week. Strike was threatened but never materialised.³ Clashes between unions and the Unionist Corporation increased in 1918. The MEA threatened to withdraw its labour on 23 February if its claim for an increase was not acceded to. Strike was deferred to allow the Corporation to consider the claim. In March, the union was granted its claim.⁴ Nine months later, after threatening strike, the Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick and Stonelayers won from the Corporation the 12½ per cent bonus that had been awarded by the Committee on Production.⁵ Although its tradesmen's wages tracked those in the private sector, the Corporation was often remarkably slow to pass on increases and typically only did so under strong duress from unions.

The same was true of increases awarded by the British government. In March 1919, despite much objection, the Corporation was forced to give employees electricity department employees a Committee on Production award.⁶ In May, having sought the forty-four-hour week, the MEA obtained a forty-seven-hour week for those workers and a forty-eight-hour week for its other members. It also won three days' annual holidays and a raise.⁷ Three months later, the Corporation demonstrated its anti-worker bias by substantially augmenting the annual salaries of its Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk – already the best paid municipal officials in Britain or Ireland – instead of its waged staff, to £450 and £260 respectively.⁸ The

employees' bonus was also raised to 14s. 6d. But the MEA was not still satisfied and demanded 10s. more in October. On 22 December, 5s. was given when nationalists and Labour-Unionists voted together to defeat a proposal that would have given only 2s. 6d. An attempt by non-Labour Unionists to sabotage it by staging a walkout and claiming that no quorum was present was defeated.

As described in Chapter 8, the January 1920 local elections brought to power Derry's first nationalist-majority Corporation. Unlike its Unionist predecessor, the new Corporation prided itself on not having a single capitalist in its ranks.⁹ Within three months of its election, it had proven its value to workers, nationalist workers at least. In April 1920, its omnibus drivers joined the political prisoners' strike without fear of victimisation.¹⁰ The new Corporation's first wage increase came a month later when nationalist and UULA votes gave labourers and the semi-skilled an extra 8s. 6d. In August, the office staff and the sanitary sub-officers got the increase. Given the new possibilities, the MEA fancied its chances of getting another advance and put in a claim in December. But within its first year, the limits of progress for workers under the new regime were evident, as the MEA learned. Citing the costs incurred by its compensation for damages inflicted during the 1920 riots, non-Labour nationalists and republicans, including O'Doherty, sided with the Unionists in voting down the new wage. The UULA voted with Labour-nationalists and Labour-Sinn Féin councillors to give the increase. Unlike Corporation tradesmen, the MEA did not experience any reductions in 1921, much to the dismay of the Chamber of Commerce which attacked the Corporation that September for its high rates, high wages and high expenditure on unemployment relief.¹¹

A tentative peace between the municipal body and its employees prevailed until November 1921 when workers at its slaughterhouse threatened to withhold their labour over the poor-quality gas lighting that prevented them from seeing their work properly. The Corporation undertook to install electric lighting instead as gas was charged at an exorbitant price in Derry. Later that month, it considered the question of wages and McFarland demanded a 25 per cent cut for labourers, which would bring their pay from 55s. to 42s. But he would not yet have his way. The slump had sent unemployment rising again. The Corporation was negotiating with London for funding to institute public work schemes for unemployment relief and discussed the issue in October, the first public body to do so since 1914. Workers on these schemes were entitled to only 75 per cent of trade union wages. In December, the Corporation refused the firemen's application for higher pay and a twelve-hour shift.¹²

Table 9. 1: Wage Increases Obtained by the MEA, 1917-20

Union/Workers	Increase	Date
MEA	1s. 6d.	Feb. 1917
Electricity department employees	3s. 6d.	Mar. 1919
MEA	3s. 6d.	May 1919
MEA	3s.	Aug. 1919

DJ, 1917-21

But McFarland had an unlikely ally against the working class – his nationalist political opponents on the Corporation. On 22 February 1922, the Corporation, which had re-elected O'Doherty as mayor in January, cut employees' wages by 8s. Claiming that the Corporation was alone in not cutting pay in Derry, the mayor proposed that it follow the example of the Unionist-led Harbour Board and issue reductions of 4s. from January, 2s. from March and 2s. from May. Enunciating his capitalist acumen, Doherty outlined that labourers' wages had gone from 18s. in 1914 to 55s. in 1920 (a 206 per cent increase) and that rates needed to be reduced. The MEA threatened strike in response although nothing came of it and the cut was accepted. Employers were no doubt pleased. Separately, at the 22 February meeting McCafferty complained of preference for employment at the electric light station being given to the ITGWU over other unions.¹³

By early 1923, Craig's government had consolidated the six-county Northern Ireland statelet. The Unionist government was deeply suspicious of its Catholic population and considered undermining nationalist political influence to be a security imperative. The abolition of proportional representation and a gerrymandering of wards restored an artificial Unionist majority to the Corporation in January 1923. Convinced they would lose, nationalists boycotted the elections.¹⁴ William Maxwell Scott Moore, a railway director, was elected mayor. The reactionary capitalists were back in charge and workers were among the first to suffer. Under pressure from the master builders, the Corporation resolved to cut its labourers' pay by another 5s. in March, having considered cuts of 7s. 6d. and 10s. Strike was averted when the MEA negotiated it down to 3s. Labourers' wages were now 42s. – exactly what McFarland had wanted.¹⁵ In June, employees at the electricity supply department had their wage diminished. The MEA initially declined to accept the lower rates and wanted arbitration; the Corporation, however, refused to budge and the rates were accepted.¹⁶

Table 9. 2: Wages and Hours of Derry Corporation Workers from 23 June 1923

Power Station	Hourly rate	Working hours
Fitters' assistants	1s. 2d.	47
Greaser, cleaner and general helper	1s.	47
Leading stoker or driver	1s. 4½d.	48
Stoker	1s. 4d.	48
Driver and cleaner	1s. 4½d.	48
Ash wheeler & coal trimmer	1s. 2½d.	47
Switchboard attendant	1s. 2½d.	48
Outside Staff		
Cable ganger	1s. 1d.	47
Jointer's mate	1s.	47
Meter fixer and reader	1s. 2d.	47
Leading lamplighter	1s. 5d.	47
Lamplighters	1s. 3d.	47
Time switch attendant	1s. 4d.	47

Source: Schedule of wages of Derry Corporation, 8 Aug. 1923, LAB 83/2277, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

The nationalist Corporation's refusal to recognise the Northern government meant it ran out of funds for unemployment relief work in 1922. The return of the Unionist Corporation gave Stormont the recognition it wanted and so funding for public works projects returned.¹⁷ But workers suffered here too. In June 1923, the Corporation cut its mechanics' pay. Two months later, relief scheme labourers struck for twelve days in a dispute concerning wages.¹⁸ Similarly, from 23-26 October, Corporation omnibus drivers, conductors and cleaners unsuccessfully struck for the re-employment of a driver who was suspended for dereliction of duty and a disrespectful attitude. By this time, the Corporation had been in conflict with its omnibus workers for months. In August, it had reduced omnibus wages by 1s. for men and 6d. for boys.¹⁹ More serious was the *Journal's* allegation of sectarianism against the Corporation for its dismissal of three Catholics in the department for leaving work early.²⁰ The Corporation's 1924 clash with the MEA illuminates how far it was willing to go to uphold its authority over municipal Labour.

Derry Harbour Commissioners and Labour

The Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners were established in 1854. Comprising of ex-officio members and nominees from the Corporation and business interests, it became a tool of the Unionist establishment. Like the Corporation, it met monthly and acquired a more nationalist membership in 1920, albeit only slightly. Inevitably, it too was affected by the tide of syndicalism.

Under pressure from the unions, wage rates and increases at the Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners mirrored those given in the private sector. Like the private sector, the NAUL was the union that the Commissioners had to deal with. Industrial relations were tense at the port. On 12 September 1917, the Tyneside union took on the Commissioners in a two-day strike for an increase and forced a concession.²¹ In February 1918, it secured another advance after issuing strike notice again.²² In May 1920, the labourers struck when their application for a 50s. minimum, a 9s. increase, was declined and the company's 3s. offer rejected. As a show of force, the NAUL even brought out the cranemen, who also wanted increases, on sympathetic strike. At the end of the month, work was resumed when the dispute was sent to arbitration, which sided with the Commissioners. Earlier in May, the cranemen had won the higher Belfast rates.²³ Labourers' wages peaked in April 1920 at 55s., a 245 per cent increase on 1914 levels.²⁴

Table 9. 3: Labourers' Wages at the Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners, 1914-18

Date	Wage
1914	17s.
Mar. 1915	19s.
Nov. 1915	20s.
Oct. 1916	21s. 6d.
Apr. 1917	23s. 6d.
Sept. 1917	27s. 6d.
Feb. 1918	32s. 6d.
June 1918	37s. 6d.
Oct. 1918	41s.
June 1919	44s.
Jan. 1920	46s. 6d.
Apr. 1920	55s.
Jan. 1922	51s.
Mar. 1922	49s.
May 1922	47s.
Apr. 1923	44s.

Source: Rates of wages paid to labourers at the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners, 1914-23, LAB 83/2614, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.

As he did on the Corporation, from August 1921 McFarland aggressively championed wage decreases for harbour employees. Things came to a head on 13 January 1922 when workers struck against an 8s. cut. The wage alteration, which was originally 10s., affected labourers, capstanmen, engine drivers and firemen and shunters, who were represented by the NAUL and the NUDL. A coal-laden vessel bound for Derry had to be diverted to another port because of the strike. On 23 January, after arbitration by the Northern Ministry of Labour, the men returned to work after assenting to the change.²⁵ At the Commissioners' annual general meeting held a few days later, McFarland took the initiative. He called for drastic wage cuts across the economy and urged employers to assert their authority when confronting the unions. For this, he received lavish praise from the Derry Chamber of Commerce.²⁶ McFarland continued his campaign against wages throughout 1922. In August, another strike at the Harbour Commissioners, this time of cranemen, was provoked. The NAUL had previously agreed to a 6s. reduction: half in July and half in August. They accepted the first cut but requested a conference to discuss the second. The commissioners were not interested in talk and enforced it without negotiation. On 14 August, the NAUL brought out the cranemen. When 500 coal porters came out in sympathy, it was feared that the carters would do the same. On 22 August, the men accepted defeat and resumed work on a 60s. wage.²⁷

The Harbour Commissioners never went through the political change in its composition that the Corporation had experienced. Accordingly, it recognised the Stormont government and, unlike the Corporation, continued to receive funding from Belfast to continue its relief schemes.²⁸

At the 1923 annual meeting of the Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners, held on 15 January, McFarland continued his crusade against Labour. He urged his fellow Commissioners to continue reducing wages and lengthen the working day from its 'absurdly low figure' of eight hours, for which he received trades council opprobrium.²⁹ He attacked workers again at the LLSR's 1923 annual general meeting in February, maintaining that wages had to come down if the company was to survive and unemployment – which afflicted 8,232 people in Derry – avoided.³⁰ A year after the previous harbour strike, on 11 August 1923, the labourers struck for two days to fight a 2s. decrease. Arbitration forced the NAUL to accept the new cut. There would be two 1s. decreases: one from 1 September and another 1 January 1924, giving the labourers 42s., the same as Corporation employees, their lowest of the era. Further cuts would become operative contingent on a fall in the cost of living.³¹

Cork Corporation and Labour

Like their comrades in the private sector, by 1917 Cork Corporation workers were on the march. For example, that October the domestic scavengers struck for an additional 11s.-14s.³² By the end of 1917, Corporation carters' wages had doubled since the war began because of their unionisation by the ITGWU. In contrast, the wages of Corporation general labourers, who were not unionised, rose only 35 per cent over the same period when the cost of living had reached of its 1914 level.³³ By March 1918, however, the labourers had joined the burgeoning Transport Union. Organisation quickly proved its worth. That April, after a month's agitation, the ITGWU secured a 36s. wage. However, it failed to obtain a fifty-one-hour week. Eight months later, the Corporation group of unions successfully negotiated another 5s., or 12½ per cent, improvement for all workmen after threatening strike. That increase gave Corporation labourers a wage 20s. higher than what they had in 1914.³⁴

On 2 May 1919, after another threat of strike, the ITGWU won a 50s. minimum for labourers via the Cork Conciliation Board. The Corporation also voted to give masons and bricklayers another 12s. 6d. a week to give them 70s. 6d. a week. The new wage maintained a 2d. per hour differential with the private sector, which put pressure on the Master Builders' Association to give concessions. Corporation painters got a similar increase.³⁵ Building artisans were the only Corporation craftsmen to receive higher rates than what prevailed in the private sector. Wages were standardised in the trade from 1 January 1920.³⁶ In late May 1919, the Corporation's clerical staff, recently organised by the ITGWU, ceased work in pursuit of a 50 per cent salary augmentation. It was their first dabble in industrial action. In June 1917, they received their only increase, 25 per cent, since 1914. By May 1919, typical annual clerical salaries were £130, £137, £140, £170, £180 and £210.³⁷ On 5 June, the Conciliation Board enticed them back to work. A committee was appointed to draw up new pay scales. The new salaries disappointed the men.³⁸ However, Corporation employees were well-paid by local comparison, often earning above private sector rates. For example, by mid-1919 the lamplighters earned 65s. 8d. and the roller-steamer drivers were striving for a 87s. wage.³⁹

Table 9. 4: Wages of Cork Corporation Labourers, 1914-21

Date	Wage
Apr. 1914	21s.
Apr. 1916	22s.
Apr. 1917	28s.
Sept. 1917	31s.
Apr. 1918	36s.
Dec. 1918	41s.
May 1919	50s.
May 1920	62. 6d.

Source: Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 161; *CE*, 1917-20

From January 1920, they had a more sympathetic ear from their new employers: the ITGWU-Sinn Féin coalition. Republican socialists like Tadgh Barry, Robert Day, William Kenneally and John Good were now at the helm.⁴⁰ On 9 March 1920, it convened to discuss potential remedies to the city's constant labour disputes. At the behest of Lord Mayor Tomás Mac Curtain, the meeting established a twenty-man Cost of Living Commission to determine a proper living wage for Cork's workers.⁴¹ Its terms of reference were as follows:

1. To define a standard of living.
2. To define a suitable wage to that standard
3. That the standard of living must be higher than the war standard
4. The basis of calculations to be taken from the existing rates prevailing in the districts in which the workers live and from the kind of commodities usually used and in the quantities usually purchased by the workers
5. Miscellaneous – insurance, clothing, light and fuel
6. To consider hours of employment, overtime and holidays.⁴²

The new regime was certainly more favourable to workers than its predecessor. In May 1920, the water inspection staff had their pay augmented to 85s. (an 8s. 6d. increase) and, after months of pressure, labourers obtained another 12s. 6d., giving them the standard city rate for general labour.⁴³ Now that the ITGWU was in a position of political power it sought to take full advantage, both inside and outside the parameters of the wages movement. In May, it ensued that all Corporation vacancies were filled by union labour.⁴⁴ The following month, on behalf of the clerks (whose top grade earned 81s. 1d. a week), it applied for an annual salary scale that began at £100 and rose to £450 – a £50 improvement. After some wrangling, the clerks received the scale in November.⁴⁵ These were to be the final improvements the Corporation would give any of its employees. In August, the Cost of Living Commission reported that a living wage was 70s., rather more than most workers received. On 19 October, the Corporation endorsed this wage but did not give it to their labourers. The 62s. 6d. rate was the highest they would attain during the period. A month later, the Corporation voted to not pay its employees a wage or salary higher than trade union rates prevailing in the private sector, bringing alterations in wages to an end until 1924.⁴⁶

From the July 1921 truce, the Corporation reflected the conflict that was emerging across Ireland between Labourites and republicans. Sinn Féin had sought the benign neutrality of Labour in the hope that working-class interests would not undermine the fight for independence; Labour gave it even more than that. The ITGWU-Sinn Féin Corporation was a testament to how local syndicalism advanced the republican agenda and it illuminated the symbiotic relationship between the two struggles. The conflicting class interests of proletarian Labour and petit-bourgeois Sinn Féin ensured that the two movements came into conflict when peace was declared. As the RIC reported in October, ‘The Labour Party are not so much interested in Sinn Féin as heretofore; their attitude towards it has changed considerably’. That month, Sinn Féin Lord Mayor Donal O’Callaghan, who was not as sympathetic to Labour as his two predecessors, clashed with the CTC when he suspended two Corporation clerks. In January 1922, Kenneally denounced O’Callaghan’s re-election as Lord Mayor because of his social record.⁴⁷ In early 1921, the Corporation established the Cork Reconstruction Committee to rebuild the city centre after its destruction during the Burning of Cork. The CTC hoped to that the committee, on which it had three seats, would ease the impact of the slump on building trade workers, but progress on this, like other relief schemes, was slow.⁴⁸

Table 9. 5: Increases Given by Cork Corporation, 1917-20

Workers	Increase	Date
Plumbers	¾d. an hour	Jan. 1917
Firemen	7s. a week	Aug. 1919
Carpenters & joiners	6d. per hour (making wages 69s. a week)	Oct. 1919
Drivers & firemen	3s. a week	July 1920
Lamplighters	16s. 6d. a week (making wages 83s. 2d. a week)	July 1920

Source: CE, 1917-1921.

Corporation workers escaped the 1920-23 employer fightback unscathed. Thus, they did not feature in the 1923 lockout. But in 1924, their luck ran out. Taking inspiration from the CEF, in February 1924, the Corporation set up a committee to examine wages for staff other than labourers. Two months later, it enacted the committee's report: salary cuts of 10 per cent for those on £300 or more a year, and of 5 per cent for those on £250-300. Labourers, however, retained their 62s. 6d. wage after an attempt to reduce it at the Corporation's Salaries' Committee was defeated in July.⁴⁹

On 31 October, the Minister for Local Government and Public Health dissolved Cork Corporation under the Local Government (Temporary Provisions) Act 1923. From 11 November, the city was administrated by Philip Monahan, a government-appointed commissioner. From 21 August to 7 September 1924, the Corporation had been subject to a public inquiry into its efficiency and ability to function after heavy campaigning by local business interests for such an inquest. The *Examiner*, Cork Progressive Association and both Chambers of Commerce – who had been vocal critics of the Corporation for its unwillingness to cut wages and the high commercial rates it imposed to rebuild Cork – welcomed the move.⁵⁰ Monahan immediately began cutting wages and staff numbers to reduce rates, and earned for himself a notorious reputation among trade unionists.⁵¹ The Corporation was, in his words, 'not an institution for the relief of unemployment', but 'a business concern, to be run on business lines'.⁵² Shortly after the dissolution, Lord Mayor Seán French claimed that the Corporation had been abolished because it refused to cut its workers' wages.⁵³ In early 1925, Monahan's ruthlessness nearly provoked a strike of Corporation employees. He forced a 4s. 6d. reduction of labourers' wages in March 1925 under the threat of dismissal, having already sacked several of them. By 1928, he had decreased this wage to 54s. He also cut clerical salaries.⁵⁴

Table 9. 6: Numbers Employed by Cork Corporation, 1914-24

Occupation	1914	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924
Mechanics	9	6	6	6	7	6	6
Labourers	116	105	104	96	97	98	97
Carters	26	28	29	28	28	30	30
Stonebreakers	5	3	2	5	1	1	1

Source: Quinlivan, *Dissolved*, p. 86.

Cork Harbour Board and Labour, 1917-21

Instituted in 1814, the Cork Harbour Board was composed of five ex-officio members, five Corporation representatives and twenty-five mercantile representatives, all appointed by the Corporation. Though the Board had long been a home for Cork's commercial elite like railway directors, shipping agents and large merchants, the presence of Sinn Féin-ITGWU members from 1920 gave it a more democratic veneer.⁵⁵ Wages at the Harbour Board largely followed those given at the Corporation, though increases were issued at a slower pace, especially before the republicans took their places on the Board in January 1920. Like the Corporation, wages at the Harbour Board were initially higher than in the private sector. But from late 1919, Labour succeeded in closing the gap and standardised the wages of many groups.

For example, a major batch of improvements came in May 1918 when £2,602. 5s. worth of raises were issued to bring wages in line with those of the private sector. The increases reflected union demands, with the ITGWU at the forefront of struggle. In May 1918, it forced the Board to make labourers' pay 33s.⁵⁶ Other unions were also making ground. That October, the NSFU successfully secured a wage 20s. above its 1914 rate.⁵⁷ The ICWU also won modest improvements after agitation. By the year's end, it had acquired an additional £25 annually to make maximum clerical salaries £250-275 for the first grade, £200-225 for the second and £150-175 for the third. Their only previous increase had been in March 1917 when clerks earning under £120 were given a 10 per cent war bonus.⁵⁸ The ITGWU had more success. In August 1918, it had sought a 10s. increase and the 12½ per cent bonus, which the Board refused to grant. The dispute was sent to arbitration, which awarded a 7s. increase, a 43s. wage. The union promised to not seek another increase for twelve months.⁵⁹ Like their colleagues at the Corporation and in the building trade, by late 1918 Harbour Board labourers' pay had grown by 105 per cent since 1914, when they earned only 21s.⁶⁰ But some workers were still chronically underpaid. The office cleaners, for example, earned only 16s.

By early 1919, many Harbour Board workers were still on wages superior to the private sector. For example, its carpenters and joiners were on 68s. while those in the building trade were on 58s. 4d. But the Board still largely followed the private sector's lead. In January 1919, it gave its quay and yard workers a forty-seven-hour week only after the Cork shipyards had done so.⁶¹ Harbour Board shipwrights experienced significant gains throughout this period to maintain their status as some of Cork's best paid workers. In March, the Shipwrights' Association gained an extra ¾d. per hour (the bulk of the demand) when its 5s. claim was arbitrated upon by the Ministry of Labour. By late 1918, shipwrights worked a fifty-one-hour week.⁶² In May 1919, the Board's only sawyer was given a 59s. wage after the Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists won 10s. for those in the private sector, thereby standardising sawyers' pay in Cork. That month, the ITGWU applied for a 50s. minimum and the forty-four-hour week, a claim which had the support of de Róiste and Kelleher. The union withdrew the claim in deference to the November 1918 agreement.⁶³

As has been discussed, Sinn Féin's revolutionary war was predicated on strict class unity and the suppression or taming of class conflict. Arbitration was a central component of this strategy. By mid-1919, the Dáil's ability and legitimacy as an arbitrator appears to have been accepted by the Board, an institution still dominated by constitutional nationalists. In July 1919, the NSFU gained 7s. for its Harbour Board members after having its 15s. claim arbitrated by the Dáil's Department of Labour.⁶⁴ That the Board and its workers turned to the Dáil, and not the British Ministry of Labour, is indicative of the rapid and ongoing delegitimisation of British rule in Ireland. Political instability was translating into real gains for workers. In November 1919, after threatening strike, the pilots were granted their 20s. demand, giving them a 70s. wage. Having waited the twelve months, the ITGWU won a 50s. minimum for labourers later that month. Harbour labourers now had the same wage as their comrades at the Corporation and at most private sector firms. The Transport Union had wanted a 14s. 6d. increase but settled for 7s. The wage rise complemented the week-long paid annual holiday it had secured in August, which survived until 1934.⁶⁵ By late 1919, the ASCJ had secured the 78s. 4d. rate paid by the master builders. Labour militancy was leading to increased standardisation of wages within trades. The 78s. 4d. rate meant that, to their chagrin, Harbour Board carpenters were now paid the same as those in the private sector. Following the 1919 carpenters' strike, the ASCJ put in an unsuccessful claim to the Board for 90s. 6d. a week.⁶⁶ However, the Board's class composition remained the same and it therefore continued to exude a social conservatism that was a defining feature of the Irish middle classes. The ICWU was

brought to the verge of strike when its application for increased remuneration was recurrently rejected. Concomitantly, shipwrights were refused and an extra 8s. 10d. The clerks' claim was resolved in February 1920 when salary increases instituted a new scale ranging from £175 to £300 – their peak rates.⁶⁷

With the municipal elections of January 1920 bringing a more republican and proletarian flavour to the Harbour Board, workers had solid grounds for optimism. One of the last acts of the old Board was to reject applications from the NSFU for 20s. and the 12½ per cent bonus, and from the ITGWU for 12s. 6d. for labourers. But the new Board continually declined both claims. On 7 March, the labourers met and announced their willingness to strike only for the counsel of ITGWU organiser Thomas Donovan, who urged restraint, to prevail.⁶⁸ In May, the union finally got the advance, making wages 62s. 6d. That month, the NSFU won 12s. through the Maritime Board's arbitration, despite the Harbour Board previously rejecting mediation. This gave wages of 70s. to sailors and firemen, and 75s. to boatswains, their peak rates.⁶⁹ On 1 June, the ASE brought out the Board's engineers and fitters as part its city-wide strike for a 25s. increase. After nine days, the Board yielded.⁷⁰ In mid-June, boathands won 20s. to give them a 60s. wage. Simultaneously, the Boilermakers' Society secured 6s., giving wages of 89s. 5d. to boilermakers and 65s. to their labourers. These rates were the highest these workers attained in this period and are emblematic of the scale of Labour's success: the boilermakers' labourers procured weekly advances of 11s. between December 1919 and June 1920. But there were limits to the Board's altruism. In March 1921, an application for another 15s. for boilermakers' labourers – this time from the IEIU – was refused.⁷¹ In November 1920, after four months of struggle, the Cork Conciliation Board awarded shipwrights a 103s. 9d. wage for a forty-seven-hour week their highest of the period and one of the highest in the city.⁷²

Table 9. 7: Increases given by the Cork Harbour Board, 1917-21

Workers/union	Increase	Date
Boilermakers' Society	6s.	July 1917
Boathands	10s. (wage now 40s.)	Oct. 1917
Labourers & mechanical helpers	3s.	Nov. 1917
Engineering apprentices	5s. 6d. for adults and 5s. for boys	Dec. 1917
Shipwrights and boilermakers	8s.	May 1918
Masons and stonecutters	10s. 7½d.	May 1918
Carpenters & Joiners	14s. 10½d	May 1918
Sawyer	12s. 9d.	May 1918
Labourers, sailors and firemen, shipmasters, harbourmaster's staff	5s.	May 1918
Engineering apprentices	5s. for adults and 2s. 6d. for children	June 1918
Carpenters and joiners, shipmasters and engineers	12½ per cent bonus (via Committee on Production)	July 1918
ASE	3s. 6d.	Oct. 1918
NSFU	7s.	Oct. 1918
Boilermakers' Society	6s. & 12½ per cent bonus (9s. 3d.)	Nov. 1918
Office cleaners	3s. 6d.	Dec. 1918
NSFU	5s.	Nov. 1918
Masters of the dredgers and hoppers	5s.	Jan. 1919
Sawyer	2s.	May 1919
Boilermakers' Society	7s., making wages 77s.	Sept. 1919
Harbourmaster's staff	7s.	Sept. 1919
Masters of the dredgers and hoppers	7s. 6d.	Sept. 1919
Boilermakers and holders-up	5s.	Feb. 1920
Harbourmaster's staff	12s. 6d.	June 1920

Source: CE, 1917-21

Table 9. 8: Shipwrights' Wages in Cork, 1918-22

Date	Wage
Jan. 1918	55s. 2¼d.
Mar. 1918	59s.
Sept. 1918	63s.
Nov. 1919	71s.
May 1920	87s. 2d.
Nov. 1920	103s. 9½d.
Apr. 1922	94s.

Source: CE, 1918-23.

The Cork Harbour Soviet of 1921

On 16 February 1921, the Harbour Board received a letter from the ITGWU asking that the 70s. rate be put into effect. The Board deferred the matter.⁷³ On 3 April, Robert Day, a member of the Board, assured the workers that matters were progressing.⁷⁴ On 8 June, the expected rejection of the claim finally came. The Board maintained that it could not afford to implement the wage. Nevertheless, the ITGWU persisted. On 10 August, the Board again refused the claim. Five days later, the union served strike notice for 26 August. On 24 August, Day proposed arbitration at a Harbour Board meeting. His motion collapsed as it did not have a seconder. The next day, the CTC called for arbitration and passed a motion to discuss the situation with the Board.⁷⁵ When its delegates met Harbour Board chairman Frank Daly, he agreed to arbitration and proposed Richard Beamish, Mr. McDonnell (of the Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping) and Fr. Cahalane as mediators. This was acceptable to the workers. Strike was deferred for a week to allow their status as arbitrators to be ratified.⁷⁶ However, on 31 August the Board rejected the chairman's idea. At the same meeting, arbitration under Dáil Éireann's Department of Labour was also dismissed.⁷⁷

From 2 September, the harbour workers were officially on strike.⁷⁸ The river pilots and four Cobh harbour workers came out in sympathy, but the men at the Steam Packet Company and the Clyde did not.⁷⁹ In total, 180 were out, of which 150 began the strike by marching, four deep, behind a red flag to raise another one over the Harbour Board's offices.⁸⁰ The men blockaded the port, preventing merchant ships from reaching their destination. The ITGWU declared its intention to issue permits for the pilotage of the ships stranded in Cork.⁸¹ At a special Harbour Board meeting on 5 September, de Róiste proposed arbitration under the Department of Labour. The motion was carried overwhelmingly. Day was one of only three to vote against it. The secretary, Sir James Long, was mandated to write to the ITGWU. The letter stated that the Board had decided to refer the dispute to arbitration and had nominated its chairman as its representative. It also asked the Transport Union to state if it accepted arbitration and, if so, to give the name of its representative. But Day made it clear that the time for reconciliation had passed as far as he was concerned:

If this Board are willing to eat its own words and give the men a £3. 10s. minimum from the day the application was sent in, the men will go back under the control of this Board and present officials. If not, the men are going back, but not under the control of the Board. We are going to

take action. If you say you cannot run the port and pay these men a living wage, then the men are going to run the board themselves. . . The position, Mr. Chairman, is that we are prepared to take the action and we are prepared to abide by the consequences. . . If the Irish Republican Government put me out of the office tomorrow they can do it, but they have to count the cost.⁸²

He warned the Board that the red flag was ‘not coming down until the workers get every penny they are looking for. If anyone else wanted to take that flag down they will do so against my life, and 10, 20, aye 100 lives.’⁸³ The meeting adjourned to give the ITGWU sufficient time to respond to the letter. Upon resuming, Daly read the ITGWU’s reply: ‘No’. Long locked away the Board’s documentation in preparation for the takeover. De Róiste added: ‘the Irish Government recognises the right to strike, and also to protect property.’⁸⁴ The Board was right to be worried, as events the following day would prove.

On 7 September, 135 of those on strike gathered outside the Cork Custom House. Later, Day, accompanied by fellow ITGWU comrades William Kenneally and Thomas Coyle, entered Long’s office. They announced their intentions to take over the port and enquired if he was prepared to continue as secretary under the new regime. He refused and was duly replaced by Day, who announced that ships could only enter and leave the port with his permission. The three men collected dues from shippers to pay the 70s. wage.⁸⁵ Workers were not coerced into the soviet and could leave if they wished. The engineers, telephonists and caretakers agreed to partake, but the clerks were less favourable. Most staff in the Accountant’s and Collector’s Department voted to leave. Nevertheless, the takeover was successful, and Day was elected ‘Chief Commissioner of the Port of Cork’.⁸⁶ Afterwards, he told the men that ‘no man is to go inside that building unless he gets an order from me. I am Chief Commissioner now. You are members of the workers’ army, and as workers go and do your duty’.⁸⁷ Coyle was made ‘General Steward’ and Kenneally ‘Chairman of the Soviet Board’.

Shortly afterwards, Daly arrived. He was soon joined by Seán French, the secretary to the Minister for Labour, and by Messrs Mercier, Higgins, Dowdall and de Róiste. Together with Day and Keneally, they reached an agreement. Day and Kenneally now proposed to surrender to what had previously been rejected. Work would be resumed at the old rate, pending Dáil-sponsored arbitration on 10 September which would decide on the wage claim retrospective to February. At a mass meeting of the men, Day successfully sold the agreement

by spuriously claiming that the talks did not constitute arbitration but a conference.⁸⁸ He also promised to renew the soviet if the workers' claim was not won:

Friends, comrades and Bolsheviks (laughter). . . He did not think that there was any better title for them than Bolsheviks, for the word meant to him an anxiety that the bottom dog should go up and the top dog should come down (cheers). . . When they raised their Red Flag people laughed at them and said they were a pack of sillies. They had proved that whatever flag the people had faith in, the workers had faith in the Red Flag, and the Red Flag only (loud cheers).⁸⁹

The red flag had flown over a workers' soviet for approximately five hours before Florence O'Donoghue and other Cork IRA men replaced it with a tricolour. The watchmen resumed work that night and the rest of the staff the following morning.⁹⁰ The conference held on 10 September gave the workers what they demanded: 7s. 6d. backdated to 14 February in a lump sum until another cost of living commission had reported, which would decide any increase to be given.⁹¹ The Harbour Board ratified the agreement on 14 September. However, the next day the CTC passed a motion refusing to work with the allegedly capitalistic commission. At the same meeting, Richard Cody, a Typographical Association delegate, condemned the soviet. He was alone in this.⁹² Although the CEF was willing to work with the commission, the ITGWU agreed with the CTC. As a result, the Corporation never established the commission and the 70s. wage was never instituted.⁹³ The rate would have given harbour workers higher wages in real terms than what they had in 1914 and possibly 1904.⁹⁴

The political aftermath of the Cork harbour soviet led to a breach in the Sinn Féin-ITGWU coalition.⁹⁵ The breakdown was perhaps inevitable given the predominately lower-middle-class composition of Sinn Féin.⁹⁶ Shop and drapers' assistants, clerks, teachers and tradesmen (especially apprentices and journeymen) were disproportionately featured in the IRA in Cork city relative to their number in the general population.⁹⁷ As Peter Hart analysed:

Artisans and tradesmen provided a solid core of support for the movement throughout the revolution . . . In the city, the Volunteers recruited at least a third of their members from among the skilled trades . . . The organization had particular success among the building trades, motor drivers, and especially drapers' assistants. Shoe- and boot-makers . . . were also prominent. . .

Artisans and trades provided a solid core of support for the movement throughout the revolution. . . . Another key group of Volunteers came from the white-collar world of shops and offices. . . . Their employers . . . rarely joined the movement, but their sons (who often worked as apprentices or assistants for their fathers) frequently did . . . Assistants and clerks tended to be educated, ambitious, and highly status conscious—habitual joiners of clubs, leagues, and, latterly, trade unions. Such men tended to prize their respectability as well as their political ideals, thus helping to set the social and moral tone of organized republicanism. The chronically underemployed general labourers . . . may have voiced support for the I.R.A. . . . but they remained outsiders to the movement.⁹⁸

Though upper-middle- or upper-class people almost became militant republicans, the same was true of casual labourers and the unemployed. Most ‘professionals’ in the IRA were at the lower end of the middle classes: teachers and assistant or part-time teachers. Nearly all skilled workers in the movement were apprentices or journeymen. Most volunteers who worked as labourers had regular jobs as hotel, shop or railway porters; drivers; or mill and factory workers. The Ford’s factory became a hotbed of working-class militant republicanism. However, very few dockers – the backbone of the trade union movement – joined the IRA.⁹⁹ Cork volunteers were of a similar social background to their comrades in Mayo, Tipperary, Dublin and Derry, while volunteers in Clare, Kerry, Longford and Sligo were more proletarian. From 1922, the Cork IRA became more working-class because farmers’ and merchants’ sons began to leave it.¹⁰⁰

Table 9. 9: Occupations of IRA volunteers in Cork city, 1917-23

	Officers			Men		
	1917-19	1919-21	1921-23	1917-19	1919-21	1919-23
Sample	34	49	35	43	195	272
Un/semiskilled (%)	-	2	14	21	30	42
Skilled (%)	33	39	41	45	37	34
Shop assistant/clerk (%)	32	35	28	20	23	15
Professional (%)	2	16	14	-	1	1
Merchant (%)	2	2	-	3	2	3
Student (%)	-	-	-	12	5	-
Other (%)	11	6	3	-	3	4

Source: Hart, *The IRA and its enemies*, p. 156.

Table 9. 10: Occupations of the Cork City Sinn Féin Leadership

Occupation	Number	Per Cent ¹⁰¹
Un/Semi-skilled	6	10
Skilled	16	25
Organiser	6	10
Clerk	5	8
Shopkeeper	7	11
Teacher	5	8
Professional	13	20
Merchant	5	8

Source: Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 80.

The raising of the red flag had angered local republicans who felt that the tricolour had been dishonoured. The IRA was willing to expel the workers and reinstate the old Board.¹⁰² The Cork Sinn Féin executive charged Day and Kenneally with defying Dáil authority, prompting the local ITGWU to send a letter in response which endorsed their actions as being ‘in accordance with trade union principles’.¹⁰³ Both were tried at Cork Courthouse and expelled from the republican movement.¹⁰⁴ There were even rumours circulating that the IRA intended to assassinate Kenneally.¹⁰⁵ British Intelligence noted the growing divergence between Labour and the republicans and cited the harbour soviet as an example of this. In September, a report warned that, ‘the danger from the extreme wing of the Irish Labour Party is a very real one cannot have escaped the attention of Sinn Féin leaders.’¹⁰⁶ It did not:

Republicans and Conservatives are united in their opposition to the Red Flag. . . It must be a surprise to the Conservatives [unionists] that Republicans are so strenuously in opposition to the Red Flag and what it signifies.¹⁰⁷

He predicted intense class conflict in post-revolutionary Cork:

In fact, it is of intense interest to me to see how this struggle of what I may term Red Flag versus Irish tricolour has come about so soon. . . It is one of the things I anticipated but did not expect would come so soon in Cork.¹⁰⁸

The ‘conservatives’ with whom de Róiste’s movement found themselves in agreement were hysterical in their denunciation of the soviet. The *Cork Constitution* even praised the Dáil for the first time for dismantling it.¹⁰⁹ However, neither republicans nor Unionists need have worried. Despite Day’s flamboyant rhetoric there was little revolutionary potential in the soviet. Its lavish pageantry masked its true nature as a newly acquired strike tactic carried out by a confident proletariat and ended by a pragmatic leadership.¹¹⁰ The relationship between Sinn Féin and Labour would never be repaired. Another break in the link was the murder of Tadhg Barry by Crown forces on 15 November 1921 in an internment camp in Ballykinlar, Co. Down. His death was mourned and condemned by both trade unionists and republicans and removed a major personality who straddled both camps.¹¹¹

Cork Harbour Board and Labour, 1922-24

The soviet had permanently ruptured relations between the Board and its employees. With the possibility of a 70s. rate for labourers gone, wage increases at the Harbour Board largely, though not entirely, ended. In August 1921, clerks received a £25 salary top-up (with a £10 bonus) and obtained another £25 in February 1922. Two months later, boathands got 7s. 6d., making their wage 67s. 6d.¹¹² But friction between the unions and the Board remained strong. In August 1921, it had voted to give preferential treatment to Irish unions when filling vacancies. The CTC, which felt that the trade-union values of solidarity and internationalism were at stake, strongly objected. After applying much pressure, it got the Board to rescind the motion in May 1922.¹¹³ The wages of Harbour Board employees remained at peak levels at the standardised city rate until 1923. Table 9. 11 outlines these rates and how they compared to the Passage West dockyards.

Table 9. 11: Wages at the Cork Harbour Board and the Royal Victoria Dockyard, 1922

Workers	Cork Harbour Board	Passage West
Fitters & Smiths	94s. 6d.	83s. 6d.
Boilermakers	89s. 6d.	96s. 6d.
Shipwrights	103s. 9d.	86s. 3d.
Carpenters & joiners	94s.	87s. 11d.
Painters	94s.	80s. 6d.
Sawyers	78s. 4d.	73s.
Labourers	62s. 6d.	61s. 6d.
Smiths' helpers	63s. 6d.	63s.
Other helpers	63s. 6d.	61s.
Masons	94s.	94s.
Watchmen	82s. 3d.	55s.
Firemen	70s.	61s. 6d.

Source: CE, 14 Feb. 1922.

Taking inspiration from the private sector, wage cuts became a reality from early 1923. In January, engineering craftsmen experienced an 11s. cut. From 1 April, watchmen's pay was reduced from 82s. 3d. to 72s. 11d., the same as Corporation watchmen. Private sector watchmen earned 45-60s. The harbourmaster's staff also had their application for a forty-seven-hour week denied.¹¹⁴ But, like private sector employers, the Board waited until autumn before initiating the bulk of its cuts, implicating its employees in the 1923 lockout. From 20 September, all staff except for the lightkeepers, Harbourmaster's deputy and a labourer in Ballinacurra were given a week's notice.¹¹⁵ On 28 November 1923, a settlement was reached between the CEF and the Harbour Board on one side, and the AEU, IEIU, ETU and the Boilermakers' Society on the other. Like the private sector, there would be hourly reductions of 1d. immediately and ½d. from January 1924. Work was resumed at the Board and at the affected engineering firms on 3 December. The Board's temporary staff were not re-employed. Labourers acceded to a 4s. 6d. decrease, with watchmen also put on this 58s. rate. Sailors', firemen's and sailors' watchmen's pay was lessened to 65s. 6d. On 1 August 1924, the Board took another 2s. off pay, as per the November 1923 agreement. It did so without negotiation which infuriated the ITGWU and NSFU, the latter of which had recently clawed back 6s. 6d. from the Shipping Federation.¹¹⁶

Cork Board of Guardians

Boards of Guardians had been established in Ireland in 1838 by the British government to implement of the Irish Poor Law Act, heralding a turn towards a decidedly Victorian approach to relieving the widespread poverty of the time. Self-incarceration in the workhouse became the central, and most notorious, feature of this strategy. Half of each board's membership was elected by ratepayers and the other half was there ex-officio. Funded by local rates, they were dominated by the Unionist landed classes until the 1880s when nationalists began to take control of them. Having first gained influence over the Cork Board of Guardians in 1917, Sinn Féin took full control of it in June 1920 when elections for the Boards of Guardians, County Councils and the Rural District Councils took place. As echoed in the Dáil's 1919 Democratic Programme, republicans regarded the workhouses as one of the most hideous manifestations of British rule in Ireland. Closing them down was a matter of priority. In November 1920, the financial stress caused by the war of independence prompted the guardians to disband. Three paid vice-guardians replaced them, initially for a three-month period.¹¹⁷ Despite its changes of hands, Poor Law relief was consistently dominated by men with austere, Victorian attitudes to the causes of poverty. Accordingly, a punitive regime based on deterrence remained throughout this period, especially under the vice-guardians. Though Labour had supported the republican takeover, the Board of Guardians became another arena for the emerging conflict between the two movements.

During the First World War, though increases were occasionally granted, war bonuses were largely resisted.¹¹⁸ Like the Corporation, the guardians' tradesmen and labourers were paid at the standardised rates.¹¹⁹ From 1917, the guardians' policy toward their employees' wages and conditions mirrored the approach taken by private-sector employers and bonuses were increasingly granted to offset inflation.¹²⁰ In February 1919, nurses received a 15s. advance, a compromise on their demand for £25 a year and a reduction of their unenviable eighty-four-hour week, a direct consequence of the Spanish Flu epidemic. In June 1919, the dispensary medical officers got a £40 annual salary augmentation. They would now start on £190 and move up to £250 after fifteen years' service. The medical officers would subsequently secure a salary that began at £250 and rose incrementally by £5 until it reached £300.¹²¹

Table 9. 12: Pay Increases Given by the Cork Board of Guardians, 1917-20

Workers	Increase	Date
Nurses	10s. a week	June 1917
Midwives	10s. a week	Nov. 1917
Dispensary midwives	3s. a week	Dec. 1917
Dispensary medical officers	£40 a year	June 1919

CE, 1917-20.

However, except for John Good, the guardians were no Labour sympathisers. In November 1919, they rejected higher scales of salaries for their employees, arguing that the Dáil should first approve of them. This approval was issued in June 1920 via the Local Government Board. But many workers, who were organised by the ITGWU, considered the new scale to be insufficient.¹²² It gave female nurses £130, rising to £150 after increments; male nurses £170 rising to £185; and £52 to most midwives.¹²³ In September 1920, an arbitration board was formed to resolve the question, but it never met, despite the workers' insistence that it do so. The only increase that several of the workers had received over and above their salaries was a 12s. weekly war bonus plus 10 per cent on salaries for men, and £20 yearly plus 10 per cent for women. A typical bonus at the Guardians was £46. 4s. whereas it was £239. 7s. in the civil service.¹²⁴ In December 1920, the newly appointed vice-guardians promised to give their employees a substantive bonus. However, they later claimed they could not afford to do this and put off the question until April 1921, when it devised a scale that disappointed many. Thus, the ITGWU continued to press for increases. In August 1921, the two-year-old dispute reached a crescendo and strike was set for 17 August. But in the nick of time, the case was submitted to arbitration, which took place a month later under the Department of Labour. The employees were granted considerable increases retrospective to 1 April 1921 depending on positions and years served. The new scale gave the top worker £300 a year and the bottom worker £40 a year including allowances.¹²⁵ The settlement signified the end of salary improvement for the guardians' employees. Tradesmen and labourers employed there suffered the same fate as their counterparts in the private sector in the autumn of 1923.¹²⁶

But the divisions between Labour and Sinn Féin went deeper than wages disputes. Although local trade unionists had supported the appointment of the vice-guardians, on 17 August 1921 the ITGWU called for them to be made subservient to the elected guardians, who should control appointments, dismissals and salaries. The CTC also clashed with the vice-guardians when its building trade workers struck for a few days in early August to protest

working alongside someone who they believed was a non-unionist. Though the vice-guardians initially refused to negotiate, an agreement was brokered by the ITGWU. The vice-guardians, however, refused to pay the men for the days they were on strike.¹²⁷ Separately, The CTC criticised the maltreatment of inmates, allegations that the vice-guardians strenuously denied. The Cork Chamber of Commerce was more enamoured by the vice-guardians' management of the workhouse's financial crisis. In July 1921, it praised them for their 'very efficient management' in slashing expenditure, which seriously impacted the inmates, and the sacking of nearly twenty staff.¹²⁸

Tensions between the vice-guardians and the trades council continued to grow throughout 1922 and 1923. In May 1922, at a meeting to decide whether to re-appoint the vice-guardians, Good made a litany of charges against them. He contended that inmates were subjected to physical abuse and hunger, and that the vice-guardians had acted in an autocratic manner that showed 'no sympathy for the poor'. Shortly afterwards, vice-guardian Séamus Lankford, a prominent local Sinn Féiner, accused Good and other trade unionists of being charlatans, 'masquerading as protectors of the poor'. In May 1923, Nason submitted a report to of his previous inspections of the workhouse to the ITUC executive that was highly critical of conditions in which inmates were forced live. In contrast, the administration of the Cork Mental Hospital, which was also inspected, received glowing praise.¹²⁹ The Poor Law Guardians were abolished in 1925 and replaced by County Health Boards.

Cork Labour and the Free State: the railway crisis

As described in Chapter 3, by January 1922 the railway crisis remained unresolved. However, the Cork railway companies had a new ally: The Provisional Government of the Irish Free State. While the split over the Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed on 5 December 1921, was not a socio-economic one, components of a class-based division can be detected. The Irish bourgeoisie overwhelmingly supported the Treaty for several reasons, one of which was that it facilitated a quicker launch of the counterattack. In Cork, calls for its endorsement came from the local clergy, the two Chambers of Commerce, the Cork Farmers' Union and the South of Ireland Cattle Traders.¹³⁰ The support given to it by the 'men of property' gave the new state some much needed legitimacy and created a solid nexus of interests between employers and Treatyites.¹³¹ The government regularly ascribed its highest levels of support to 'shopkeepers' and 'commercial and farming elements', and the clergy, doctors and bankers'; the working

class, on the other hand, was seen as more susceptible to ‘Irregularism’.¹³² Conversely, the government’s beliefs about its own middle-class support were widely held by its anti-Treatyite opponents.¹³³ Amid much dissent, on 7 January 1922 the Dáil ratified the Anglo-Irish Treaty, facilitating the birth of Saorstát Éireann on 6 December 1922. Until then, a provisional government was in power. Immediately after its foundation, it had to deal with the industrial crisis on the Irish railways. The new administration largely opposed state intervention in the economy as a matter of principle. However, its desire to minimise economic disruption – pending resolution of the political crisis – meant that some compromise was inevitable.¹³⁴

On 11 January 1922, the government proposed to the companies that they defer Carrigan’s rulings on hours and conditions for a maximum of four months while the wage reductions would apply immediately. The government would subsidise the companies for any monetary loss incurred. It was hoped that staggering the implementation of the award would moderate working-class militancy, but only a repudiation of Carrigan could achieve this. On 13 January, Cork’s No. 1 and No. 3 NUR branches voted to strike from 15 January. The RCA did likewise the next day.¹³⁵ Last-minute conferences under the Department of Labour produced a truce on 14 January. The companies suspended enforcing Carrigan’s rulings on hours and conditions for one month. In return, they received state subsidisation to recuperate their losses. The workers agreed not to strike in return for their cherished eight-hour day. The government hoped this would give it enough time to work out a permanent resolution to the crisis.¹³⁶

Table 9. 13: Railway Wages in Cork, 1922

Job	Wage
Passenger porters	46s. 6d.
Parcel porters	47s. 6d.
Train ticket collectors	63s.
Station firemen	53s.
Goods porters, platelayers	48s.
Goods checkers	51s. 6d.
Working foremen (goods)	55s.
Permanent way gangers	56s. 6d.
Steamraisers & coalmen, firelighters, capstanmen, station ticket collectors	50s.
Shed labourers	48s. 6d.
Cranemen	57s.
Carriage examiners, guards	54s.
Carriage & wagon greasers	47s. 6d.

Source: Railway Workers’ Strike Committee demands, 3 Feb. 1922, file no. 3686, GSWR archive, IRRS.

On 26 January, the frail peace on Cork's railways collapsed when the engine cleaners on the Bandon ceased work against Carrigan and for two suits of protective overalls, like those issued to drivers and firemen. A day later, 400 NUR men on the GSWR struck against Carrigan. The ASLEF and the RCA remained at work. On 28 January, workers at the Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway withdrew their labour and the GSWR strikers demanded the 70s. minimum proposed by the Cost of Living Commission in August 1920. On 30 January, the locomotive cranemen joined the strike.¹³⁷ By the end of January, the IEIU had brought out shopmen.¹³⁸ On 31 January, the railwaymen's Joint Strike Committee reconstituted itself as the 'Industrial Co-Operative Strike Committee' to takeover and operate the city's railways. It called this plan 'Document No. 2', a direct reference to Éamon de Valera's alternative to the Treaty. Though seemingly audacious, the document was essentially a revised timetable for the Cork-Cobh train. However, the committee did adopt radical proposals as official policy. It demanded a 70s. minimum for railwaymen, and a 50s. minimum, unaltered conditions and two suits of overalls per annum for the cleaners.¹³⁹

Once again, the Provisional Government established conferences involving the unions, the companies and the Ministers for Labour of the Free State and Northern Ireland. But progress was slow and the talks continued for nearly two weeks.¹⁴⁰ The intended takeover of the railways would begin with the line to Cobh's port to meet the liners due there on 2 and 3 February.¹⁴¹ Accordingly, on 2 February railwaymen in Cobh seized the local station and occupied it for a few hours before handing it back to the stationmaster.¹⁴² That day, a letter from the strike committee was published in the *Examiner*:

The workers had made and perfected their machinery to take over control of the railways. . . and to assume complete control and management thereof. This project was to be brought into effect today. . . The forcible appeal of Dr. Thomas induced the men not to give effect to their determination to take over control of the railway in order to afford the Dáil Minister of Labour an opportunity of redressing the men's grievances. The Strike Committee desire to have it known to the public that the men have only yielded for the moment. . . and that they hold all the machinery which they have already perfected ready to put their purpose into effect the moment negotiations break down.¹⁴³

By now, Joseph McGrath, Free State Minister for Labour, had met the strike committee and was led to believe that the lines would be taken over on 6 February. The government was determined that this would not happen.¹⁴⁴ But the fears were unwarranted. The men had agreed to suspend Document No. 2 upon learning of negotiations between the minister and the GSWR. Instead, the committee sent its chairman, William McGinn, a checker; its secretary, Patrick Crowe, a cloakroom porter; John Roche, a foreman; and James Mooney, a steamrider and the locomotive men's representative, to Dublin to participate in the talks. They claimed that they had no power to negotiate on behalf of the strikers and would not 'consider any offer with embraces arbitration or sliding scale arrangements.' Moreover, they asserted that the NUR did not represent them, and they therefore would not be bound by any forthcoming settlement between that union and the companies. They requested that all correspondence should be directed to Liberty Hall. This meant that discussions could not continue because they would compromise negotiations and potentially open the Irish railways to more localised, unofficial action.¹⁴⁵ As a result, the strike committee sanctioned another takeover of Cork's railways.¹⁴⁶

On 5 February, a mass meeting of strikers decided to call out the Macroom Railway's workers and to renew plans for working the lines from 8 February. The local RCA refused to strike as it felt bound by the 14 January agreement.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the government was fearful. The takeover threatened not only the whole Irish railway system but the stability of the new state. The cabinet was determined to protect the companies' property. McGrath made military preparations to prevent the planned appropriation and gave assurances to the GSWR that it would receive protection.¹⁴⁸ The men had declared that midnight, 8 February was the deadline for the takeover. Once again, Dowling – who had assured the workers that negotiations were progressing – persuaded them not to execute their plans. The next day, the railwaymen gave a final warning that if nothing came of the conference by 1pm, 10 February, then Document No. 2 would be enforced without delay.¹⁴⁹ The GSWR, however, was in no mood to make concessions and made further requests to the government for protection.¹⁵⁰

On 10 February, a settlement finally emerged from the Dublin talks. There were three documents in total: one on hours for both the NUR and the ASLEF, and one for each on wages. The Carrigan award was adjourned from 15 February until August and the eight-hour day was guaranteed.¹⁵¹ The NUR accord gave the men a week's paid holiday and a 4s. improvement in the conciliation grades from 15 February, subject to a 2s. cut from 15 May.¹⁵² Under Carrigan, the lowest paid railwaymen would have been paid 44s.; from February, they were paid 51s.¹⁵³ The ASLEF wages agreement, completed on 9 February, did not require state intervention. The

larger railways were grouped together at Carrigan's original higher wage level.¹⁵⁴ The railway crisis appeared to be over – but the relief was short-lived.

Table 9. 14: Firemen's & Drivers' Weekly Wages, 1922

Position	Drivers (Carrigan)	Drivers (settlement)	Firemen (Carrigan)	Firemen (Settlement)
On appointment	66s.	72s.	50s.	57s.
1 st Year	70s.	72s.	50s.	57s.
2 nd Year	73s.	72s.	50s.	57s.
3 rd Year	76s.	78s.	60s.	63s.
4 th Year	82s.	78s.	60s.	63s.
5 th Year & after	-	86s.	63s.	66s.
8 th Year & after	-	90s.	-	-
Class One	86s.	-	-	-
Class Two	90s.	-	-	-

Source: *Irish Independent*, 11 Feb. 1922.

Table 9. 15: Railway Cleaners' Wages, 1922

Age	Already in service (Carrigan)	Already in Service (award)	New entrants (award)
16 & under	20s. a week	24s. a week	4s. a day
17 & under	24s. a week	30s. a week	5s. a day
18 & 19	33s. a week	42s. a week	6s. a day
20 & after	40s. a week	-	7s. a day

Source: *Irish Independent*, 11 Feb. 1922; Railway Workers' Strike Committee demands, 3 Feb. 1922, file no. 3686, GSWR archive, IRRS.

The Cork railway soviet

The Cork railwaymen had not won the 70s. wage and, on 10 February, McGrath was wired to this effect. When no reply was received, the strike committee decided to act. That afternoon, 800 gathered outside its headquarters on the Grand Parade. They divided into four groups to take control of the railways; the largest, containing 300 to 400, would take over the Glanmire station. An hour later, the workers controlled the railways. The soviet quickly ran into problems as neither the RCA nor the ASLEF supported it and the IRA blockaded the stations. The RCA later wrote to the GSWR to explain that the absence of clerks that day was unavoidable.¹⁵⁵ There were no soldiers on duty when Document No. 2 was enacted, much to the companies' anger. Workers' control of the railways lasted just twenty-four hours, with the men operating an emergency timetable. On 13 February, a ballot at the GSWR yielded a 313 to 225 majority

in favour of accepting the agreement. That day, the Macroom and the Bandon Railway's employees returned to work. Due to their different demands, the GSWR's cleaners had a separate ballot and they rejected the settlement by twenty-five votes to seven.¹⁵⁶ By 16 February, most railwaymen had resumed work, though the Passage and Blackrock Railway workers held out until 25 February. The agreements maintained the rise in real wages that had been taking place on the Cork railways since 1904. Railway militancy remained potent. Workers on the Cork and Muskerry got their way when they threatened to strike for an increase to bring their pay up to the levels of the other lines. On the Bandon, the cleaners stayed out until 15 February, when they successfully obtained the oilskins they demanded and an extra 4-6s.¹⁵⁷

The railway soviet was a stylised token act – a strike tactic and a belated effort by the rank-and-file to apply industrial unionism by outwitting the NUR leadership. It revealed the failure of industrial unionism and its increasing irrelevance in the class war.¹⁵⁸ The railway takeover achieved nothing for the workers involved. Moreover, it seemed to attain little public support. As de Róiste deciphered, 'even the anti-Treaty republicans are opposed to the "Bolshevik" labour element'.¹⁵⁹ He further claimed that, 'those who talk of a "Workers' Republic" can now see it in being in Cork'; however, public opinion was, in his words, 'entirely opposed to it'.¹⁶⁰ Both the strike and the soviet demonstrated the frustration felt by many Irish NUR members towards their union's leadership. The day of the takeover, Crowe, Mooney and a representative from the Department of Labour arrived from Dublin to report the agreement to men. McGinn told the press that its terms 'were so indefinite that no consideration could be given to them.' He stated that the men would only accept them if they came directly from McGrath.¹⁶¹ The NUR's dominance on the Cork railways was now being challenged in an unprecedented manner by internal elements and by the ITGWU, which presented itself as a radical alternative. Its appeals reflected contemporary calls for a separate Irish railway union.¹⁶²

The railway crisis was finally over. It affected about 1,000 railwaymen in Cork and over 4,000 nationally. It demonstrates how political instability could translate into Labour gains. The new government was not yet able to stamp its authority on the railwaymen, even though it was willing to forcefully put down any attempt to appropriate property. Placating the railway unions was central to the government's campaign to consolidate itself. Despite its ideological hostility to state intervention in the economy, pragmatism ultimately prevailed. The government knew it needed content railwaymen more than it needed content shareholders, putting the unions in a strong position to negotiate a favourable settlement. But this pragmatism

was heavily outweighed by the intense ruthlessness that characterised these revolutionaries-turned-statemens, a shift made explicit by the nature of their counterinsurgency against the anti-Treatyites. On 24 April 1922, McGrath announced the formation of the Irish Railway Commission to ascertain the optimum operation of the national railway system.¹⁶³ The 2s. cut came into effect on 15 May. Nothing came of the threats of strike against it given by McGinn and Crowe, now with the ITGWU.¹⁶⁴ Several other Cork railwaymen had joined the ITGWU by April 1922, though McGinn had re-joined the NUR by late 1923.¹⁶⁵

The 1922 postal strike in Cork

The fall of Cork to the National Army in August 1922 gave the Free State a much firmer footing. The anti-Treatyites had to resort to guerrilla warfare against a regime that was becoming aggressively authoritarian in its efforts to suppress them. From November 1922, military courts were operational with the power to inflict the death penalty for subversive activity.¹⁶⁶ This military repression soon translated into an attack workers' rights. The government now took the lead in taking on the unions, setting an example for the capitalists to follow. Its new-found confidence manifested itself in a readiness to face strikes in the civil service. The postal workers were the first in line.

The dispute was incited by the threat of Postmaster-General J.J. Walsh to cut civil servants' cost-of-living bonus.¹⁶⁷ This bonus was paid in twice-yearly instalments. It was introduced by the British government during the First World War to shore up wages against inflation. The bonus provided an increase of 130 per cent on the first 35s. of wages and 60 per cent on the remainder. When the war ended, prices continued to rise and the bonuses, calculated as a percentage of the workers' basic wages, were kept in place. For the postal workers, these bonuses were vital. In 1891, the maximum earned by a postal clerk, after seventeen years' service, was 54s. In 1922, it had risen (excluding bonus) to 61s. – a gain of just 7s. in over thirty years.¹⁶⁸

In January 1922, the government indicated its intention to cut postal pay. Walsh claimed the postal service within the twenty-six counties had been run at a loss of £1.5 million in 1921, a financial burden the new state could not afford.¹⁶⁹ Although the postal workers preferred arbitration, they would not shirk a fight. Edward O'Keefe, secretary of the Cork branch of the British-based Union of Post Office Workers, warned that the men would oppose reductions 'by

every constitutional means at their disposal'.¹⁷⁰ On 19 February, Cork's General Post Office staff voted unanimously to strike against the cuts, which would be in effect from 1 March.¹⁷¹ The political context helps to explain the government's pugnacity. From the start, ministers viewed the threatened strike as an attempt to sabotage the new state. The workers categorically refuted claims and insinuations that their motive was political. One Cork postal union official maintained that his members 'knew no politics . . . they knew only nationality and they need never be ashamed of the part that Cork had played in establishing an Irish government. Economic pressure, not politics, was behind this strike.'¹⁷² But declarations like this were ignored. The government prepared for the inevitable. In a leaked telegram, it was revealed that Walsh had requested scabs from his opposite number in London to break the coming strike.¹⁷³

But the workers' determination forced concessions. On 28 February, the government entered negotiations with the newly formed Irish Postal Union (IPU). The de-facto establishment of the Free State had necessitated the creation of Irish civil service unions. Strike was averted on 5 March – just four hours before it was due to begin – when it was agreed to establish an independent commission of enquiry into wages and conditions under the chairmanship of Senator James G. Douglas.¹⁷⁴ The Douglas Commission issued its interim report on 11 May. It advocated a basic wage rise of 12.5 per cent to compensate the workers for the bonus reduction. It also recommended that any further cuts should be postponed until an Irish cost-of-living index was agreed upon, or until the commission produced its final report. The government ignored these findings and drew up a cost-of-living index based on false figures to justify pay cuts. It claimed that the cost-of-living was 90 per cent above 1914 levels and that a bonus reduction of 11-12 per cent from 1 September was necessary.¹⁷⁵ Excluding the bonus, postal workers earned 57s. and senior clerks 90s. After the cuts, wages (including bonus) would be 55s. 6d. for the former and 75s. for clerks and telegraphists. Postmen's wages on entrance were only 30s. with the bonus.¹⁷⁶ On 5 September, the IPU reissued its threat of strike, which received unanimous support from its Cork branch.¹⁷⁷ Five days later, the three postal unions – the IPU, the Irish Postal Office Workers' Union and the Irish Post Office Engineering Association – struck. In Cork, this involved 300 workers.¹⁷⁸

Table 9. 16: Postal Wages minus the Bonus, February 1920.

Position	Postmen	Engineers	Telephonists (female)	Sorting Clerks & Telegraphists
Class One				
On Entrance	20s.	44s.	16s.	18s.
Ten Years' Service	34s. 6d.	-	31s.	42s.
Highest Attainable	40s.	52s.	33s.	61s.
Class Three				
On Entrance	18s.	26s.	14s.	16s.
Ten Years' Service	29s. 6d.	-	29s.	36s.
Highest attainable	34s.	42s.	29s.	49s.

Source: Ms. 10/IPU/11/Box 2, Post Office Workers' Union collection, Irish Labour History Society (ILHS).

On 11 September, the government began its campaign to defeat the strike, repeating its declaration that civil servants had no right to withdraw their labour.¹⁷⁹ That day, a 'special notice to staff' was placed on Cork's GPO. It warned that, 'any officer withdrawing his labour automatically forfeits his position; and that in the event of subsequent reinstatement on settlement, reinstatement would not carry with it restoration of pension rights for previous service or of continuous service.' In March 1922, de Róiste had sensed that there was 'a trace of political opposition' in the postal workers' actions.¹⁸⁰ By September, however, he had become far more critical of the government. He denounced its attitude to the workers as 'irritating, to say the least', and its notice to picketers as 'atrocious'. Ministers were 'narrow, petty, supersensitive, resentful of criticism, too much inclined to the 'mailed fist' towards their own people . . . some of them . . . are certainly developing views that we always regarded more pro-English than Irish.'¹⁸¹ The insinuations that the strike was an act of subversion were more powerful than they had been in February. They deeply coloured the government's perceptions of the strike. This was probably unavoidable given the outbreak of civil war.

Inter-postal union relations were poor in Cork. After only a day of strike, the IPU announced it could no longer co-operate with the Irish Postal Workers' Union.¹⁸² However, the local stoppage was effective. By 14 September, all blacklegging had ended, and the postal system had completely shut down. Two days later, the trades council called for an end to the strike and for the government to re-employ the workers on old wages until arbitration made a binding decision. The council correctly believed that a government victory would galvanise

private sector employers to cut wages.¹⁸³ The government was ruthless in putting down the strike. The military and police harassed and arrested picketers, with shots fired at pickets on occasion. Scabs were also utilised:

a flying column of strike-breakers is the latest effort by the P.O. Dept. to break the postal strike. It is reported that two dozen have arrived in Limerick. It is quite on the cards that the same party will arrive here (Cork) in a day or two to keep up the farce.¹⁸⁴

On 29 September, an agreement hailed as a 'substantial victory' by the Cork Postal Strike Committee was announced. Thomas Dowling was involved in bringing it about. Five-eighths of the cut would be retained until 1 December and the remainder would be taken off retrospectively from 1 September. The Douglas Commission would resume its sitting and issue its final report before 1 December. Although the postal unions won the right to strike and picket, the government was the real victor. The final settlement had been put to the unions before the strike and rejected.¹⁸⁵ The cabinet had predicted strike since February and successfully imported scabs to operate the postal services under military protection. Walsh and his colleagues had sent out a resonant message that public servants would have to know their place in the Free State. Walsh's promise of no victimisation was quickly broken. The postal unions spent the rest of 1922 and much of 1923 dealing with workers sacked or demoted because they had gone on strike.¹⁸⁶ The other civil service unions had remained aloof from the strike and accepted the cuts.¹⁸⁷ The Douglas Commission's final report was issued on 14 December 1922. It recommended improved conditions, increases in pay and various other benefits in many sectors of the postal service. Walsh rejected the report.¹⁸⁸ In response, in June 1923 the newly established Post Office Workers' Union, an amalgamation of the three postal unions, threatened another strike, which received support in Cork, but this never materialised.¹⁸⁹

The resolution of the railway crisis

On 16 August 1922, the Irish Railway Commission reported in favour of nationalisation of the railway system, which was attacked by the conservative press.¹⁹⁰ Their importance to the economy notwithstanding, the cabinet's determination to keep industrial relations free from state intervention was reflected on the railways. When the commission's majority report recommended nationalisation, it was immediately rejected in favour of the voluntary amalgamation of the companies into a single, privately-owned firm. Although the companies rejected this idea, they did agree to a 'grouping' scheme like that which existed in Britain. The government gave the companies until March 1923 to come up with a grouping arrangement; in the absence of one, it would enforce its own.¹⁹¹ In the interim period, the February agreement was due to expire on 31 December 1922. In late 1922, the railway companies sought a 3s. 6d. decrease; the GSWR wanted an even deeper cut. The Cork NUR vowed to fight any alteration.¹⁹² The government was once again forced to compromise. Strike was avoided when it announced that it would bring the GSWR under its control to sustain the existing wage and keep the line open.¹⁹³ The GSWR promptly reversed its decision to close and undertook to pay the same wages as the other companies, thereby ensuring they would be free of government control.¹⁹⁴ Its duplicity had been exposed.

The state's willingness to maintain pay levels kept the Cork railways free of wage disputes in 1923, in stark contrast to the rest of the city. Nevertheless, the loss of business incurred by the companies during the lockout meant that they were forced to reduce pay and staff numbers. The IEIU assented to shopmen's wages being decreased by 2s. 6d. from 1 January 1924 and by another 2s. 6d. from 1 July 1924.¹⁹⁵ Due to the merger of the railway companies, these reductions did not come into effect until May 1925. However, the settlement was not the permanent solution the cabinet sought. Once again, it had no option but to partially yield on its free market ideology to keep workers, rather than shareholders, happy. Hence, in December 1923 directors, unions and the government agreed to establish a comprehensive machinery of arbitration for wage and conditions. A hierarchical scheme of five institutions was put in place: local departmental committees, sectional railway councils, railway councils, the Central Wages Board and the Irish Railway Board. Directors, trade unionists, businessmen and members of the public would sit on these bodies. The Carrigan award was finally shelved for good.¹⁹⁶ The machinery proved its worth for workers in 1924 (see Chapter 3).

The experience of public authority workers in Cork and Derry from 1920-25 was an early indication of what class relations would be like in Sinn Féin's republic and the Unionist state. Although workers in Cork did better under republican-dominated institutions than their constitutional nationalist predecessors, both were governed by men with middle-class biases against workers. This is unsurprising given that Sinn Féin's labour policy was premised on conducting a successful constitutional revolution that would leave class relations undisturbed. Separating politics from economics was central to republican strategy, a reflection of the petit-bourgeois nature of the movement.¹⁹⁷ The victory of Sinn Féin's conservative wing, embodied in the Free State, sounded the death knell for even a mildly social democratic construction of class relations, as the postal strike made clear. In Derry, wage alterations at the Harbour Commissioners followed those issued at the Corporation until 1922. Then, the Commissioners took the lead in taking on municipal Labour and rolling back gains. Both nationalists and Unionists on the Corporation were impressed. Despite political changes, the class interests of those who controlled state institutions, not those employed by them, prevailed in both cities.

Chapter Notes and References

¹ *DJ*, 21 Feb., 18 Apr. 1917.

² *Ibid.*, 21 Mar., 11, Apr., 20 June, 18 July 1917; *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 Apr. 1917.

³ *DJ*, 18 July, 5 Nov., 19 Dec. 1917, *Irish Independent*, 21 Dec. 1917.

⁴ *LS*, 19 Feb. 1918; *DJ*, 27 Feb. 1918; correspondence between J. Malcom and Sir Henry Millar, 25 Feb., 5 Mar. 1918, letter book no. 47, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum. Millar was the Derry town clerk.

⁵ Letters from Henry McGillen to Henry Miller, 9 Oct., 11, 21 Dec. 1918, letter book no. 47, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum.

⁶ *LS*, 17 Dec. 1918; letters from Henry Miller to J. Malcolm, 17 Dec. 1918, 24 Jan. 1919, letter book no. 35, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum; *DJ*, 19 Mar. 1919.

⁷ Correspondence between J. Malcolm and Henry Miller, 22 Apr., 22 May 1919, letter book no. 48, Derry Corporation records, Tower Museum; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 24 May 1919; *Irish Independent*, 23 May 1919.

⁸ *DJ*, 23 July, 20 Aug. 1919.

⁹ *LS*, 6 Jan 1921; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 185.

¹⁰ *DJ*, 14-16 Apr. 1920; *LS*, 15 Apr. 1920

¹¹ *DJ*, 31 May, 18 Aug., 22 Dec. 1920, 28 Sept. 1921.

¹² *Ibid.*, 12 Oct., 9, 23 Nov., 14 Dec. 1921; Gavin, Kelly and O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 202.

¹³ *DJ*, 1, 20, 22 Feb., 22 Mar. 1922, 14 Mar. 1923.

¹⁴ Gallagher, *Violence and nationalist politics*, p. 59.

¹⁵ *DJ*, 21, 30 Mar., 9, 11, 18 Apr. 1923. The sanitary sub-officers were spared this reduction but not the 1922 one.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18 Apr., 11, 13, 20 June, 24, 26, 29 Oct. 1923.

¹⁷ Gavin, Kelly and O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 205; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and Syndicalism*, p.44. By December 1923, the Corporation had spent £11,000 on various relief schemes. See *DJ*, 19 Dec. 1923.

¹⁸ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 60. The relief scheme labourers were on strike from 4-16 August.

¹⁹ *DJ*, 20 June, 27 Aug., 24, 26, 29 Oct. 1923; *LS*, 27 Oct. 1923; trade disputes record book for all industries in the UK in 1923, LAB 34/41, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; *LG*, Sept. 1923.

²⁰ *DJ*, 16, 28 May 1923.

²¹ *DJ*, 23 Mar., 18 July, 14, 26 Sept. 1917; *LS*, 13, 15 Sept. 1917; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 15 Sept. 1917.

- ²² NAUL, first quarterly report for 1918, TU/GENERALC/1/23, pp. 32-39, WCML.
- ²³ *DJ*, 12, 21, 26 May, 2 June 1919; *Irish Independent*, 23 May 1919; *Derry People and Donegal News*, 24 May 1919.
- ²⁴ *DJ*, 9 July 1920.
- ²⁵ Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners Finance Committee minutes, 9 Aug., 18, 25 Nov. 1921, 13 Jan. 1922, MIC501/1/16, PRONI; *DJ*, 16, 18, 20 Jan. 1922; agreement between the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners and the NAUL and the NUDL, 21 Jan. 1922, LAB 83/2614, Min. of Labour records, UKNA.
- ²⁶ *DJ*, 25 Jan. 1922.
- ²⁷ Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners Finance Committee minutes, 7, 10 Feb., 11 Apr., 9 May, 6 June, 5 Dec. 1922, MIC501/1/16, PRONI; *DJ*, 16, 18, 23 Aug. 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Aug. 1922; reports on the strike of crane operators at Derry quay, 16, 23 Aug. 1924, HA/5/1019, Ministry of Home Affairs records, PRONI.
- ²⁸ Gavin, Kelly and O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, pp. 205-206.
- ²⁹ *DJ*, 17, 22 Jan. 1923.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2 Mar. 1923.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 17 Aug. 1923; *LS*, 14, 16 Aug. 1923; Londonderry Port and harbour Commissioners Finance Committee minutes, 10 Aug., 11 Sept. 1923, MIC501/1/16, PRONI; award in the case of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners and the NAUL, 1 Sept. 1923, LAB 83/2614, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 202.
- ³² *CE*, 1-3 Oct. 1917; Cork Corporation minutes, 23 Feb., 9 Mar. 1917, CP/CO/M/12, CCCA. The plumbers worked a fifty-one-hour week.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 10 Sept., 2, 20 Oct. 1917; Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 161.
- ³⁴ *CE*, 2, 22 Mar., 15 Apr., 19, 29 Oct., 5, 7, 14, 21 Dec. 1918.
- ³⁵ *CE*, 3, 24 May, 28 June 1919; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 194-195, 200. The Corporation rejected an amendment that would have eliminated the differential. The labourers were set to cease work on 2 May.
- ³⁶ *CE*, 20 Dec. 1919.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 June 1920. These figures were cited by Richard Beamish as a sample of clerical salaries.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 31 May-6 June, 12 July 1919; Cork Corporation minutes, 11 July 1919, CP/CO/M/13, CCCA. In July, it was proposed to refer the matter to the Conciliation Board but this never happened. See the minutes of the 11 July 1919 meeting of Cork Corporation to see a list of these salaries.
- ³⁹ *CE*, 27 June 1919.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 Jan. 1920. For a biography of Tadhg Barry, see Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Tadhg Barry (1880-1921): the story of an Irish revolutionary* (Cork: Cork Council of Trade Unions, 2011).
- ⁴¹ Cork Corporation Minutes, 9, 14 March, 9 April 1920, CP/CO/M/13, CCCA; D.R. O'Connor Lysaght, 'September 1921, Month of Soviets', *The Plough*, no. 1 (1972). The commission was comprised of six representatives from the Corporation; six from the CEF; six from the CTC, with three of them coming from the ITGWU; and two from the Cork Industrial Development Association.
- ⁴² 'Notes on proposed inquiry into the cost of living, 1920', L. 1945.315, Alfred O'Rahilly collection, Cork Public Museum; *CE*, 10 Mar. 1920.
- ⁴³ *CE*, 4 Mar., 21 Apr., 10, 19, 28 May 1920. The ITGWU first submitted the 12s. 6d. in November.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 15 May 1920. The original motion, which was moved by Tadhg Barry, proposed that all vacancies other than those of clerks and tradesmen be filled by ITGWU members. It was amended to include all trade unionists after objection from Barry's fellow Labour-republican and NUR man John Good. Alderman Beamish dissented. Barry had previously put forward the motion in April. See *ibid.*, 10 Apr. 1920.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 June 1920; Cork Corporation Law & Finance Committee minutes, 22, 26 July, 11 Aug, 10 Nov. 1920, CP/CO/LF/M/15, CCCA; Cork Corporation minutes, 26 Nov. 1920, CP/CO/M/14, CCCA. The motion for improved wages for clerks was moved by Tadhg Barry. It also included a 20 per cent bonus paid on salaries given between 1 Dec. 1919 to 1 Dec. 1920, and further increases depending on the cost of living. These extra bonuses, however, were not granted.
- ⁴⁶ *CE*, 14 July 1920; *Watchword of Labour*, 2 Oct. 1920; Cork Corporation minutes, 19 Oct., 26 Nov. 1920, CP/CO/M/13-14, CCCA.
- ⁴⁷ RIC Inspector General's MR for Oct. 1921, CO 904/116, *The British in Ireland* microfilm series, Boole Library, UCC, also cited in O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 72-7; *CE*, 7, 15 Oct. 1921, 31 Jan. 1922.
- ⁴⁸ *CE*, 1 Feb., 6, 18 June 1921, 1, 29 Apr., 17 May 1922. Rebuilding Cork was necessitated by the Burning of Cork: the city's destruction by Crown forces on 11-12 December 1920. See Gerry Whyte, *The Burning of Cork* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2006).
- ⁴⁹ Cork Corporation minutes, 18 Jan., 8, 29 Feb., 25 Apr. 1924, CP/CO/M/15, CCCA; *CE*, 23 Aug., 5 Sept. 1924; Quinlivan, *Dissolved*, p. 82.

- ⁵⁰ CE, 22 Aug.-8 Sept. 1924; For a transcript of the inquiry, see *Verbatim report of local government inquiry into administration by the Corporation* (Cork: Eagle Printing, 1925), MP f941.956 COUN, Munster Printing collection, Boole Library, UCC; Linehan, 'The development of Cork's economy and business attitudes', p. 75.
- ⁵¹ Monahan was a constant target of Cork Workers' Council invective for the rest of the 1920s. See Linehan, 'The development of Cork's economy and business attitudes', p. 77. For an account of the business class's lobbying, see Quinlivan, *Dissolved*, pp. 15-17.
- ⁵² Cited in Quinlivan, *Dissolved*, pp. 126-127. This quote is from an interview Monahan gave to the *Examiner* on 11 Nov. 1924, his first day in office.
- ⁵³ CE, 1, 14 Nov. 1924.
- ⁵⁴ 'Extract of the minutes of the meeting of the cabinet held on 27 January 1925', TSCH/3/S4249, Dept. of An Taoiseach records, NAI; CE, 28 Mar. 1925; Mary A. Ryan 'The Reform of Municipal Government in Cork City, 1919-1929' (UCC: MA, 2005), p. 54; Quinlivan, *Dissolved*, p. 128; CE, 14 Apr. 1928.
- ⁵⁵ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 1.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 30 Apr., 2 May 1918, 20 Nov. 1919; Cork Harbour Board minutes, 20 Apr. 1918, PC/1/49, CCCA. The NSFU had wanted 20s. more but this was considered excessive.
- ⁵⁷ CE, 23 May, 2, 4, 11, 25 July, 3, 15 Oct. 1918; Cork Harbour Board Dredge & Works Committee minutes, 14 Oct. 1918, PC/3/, CCCA. The Shipwrights' Association had wanted a 3s.6d. increase and the granting of the 12½ per cent bonus.
- ⁵⁸ CE, 29 Mar. 1917, 11 June, 14, 19, 21 Nov. 1918.
- ⁵⁹ CE, 21, 29 Nov. 1918. The dispute had been ongoing since August. The ITGWU had unionised Harbour Board tradesmen, labourers, watchmen and cleaners among others.
- ⁶⁰ Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', pp. 211-214; *ibid.*, 2 Mar. 1920.
- ⁶¹ CE, 30 Jan., 9 Oct. 1919. In February 1919, the Board's carpenters and joiners, painters, stonemasons and stonecutters had a wage claim refused because their wages were higher than those in the private sector. See CE, 13, 18 Feb. 1919.
- ⁶² *Report on conciliation and arbitration. Including particulars of proceedings under the Conciliation Act, 1896, the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act, 1912, the Wages (Temporary Regulation) Acts, 1918 and 1919, the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act, 1919, and the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, 1920, 221, XIX, UKPP*, p. 244; CE, 11 July, 19, 24 Sept., 12, 19 Dec. 1918, 9 Jan., 7 Feb. 1919.
- ⁶³ CE, 22 May, 4 June 1919; de Róiste diaries, 21 May 1919, U271/A/25, CCCA.
- ⁶⁴ CE, 15, 26 May, 16 July 1919; LG, June, July 1919; RIC CI for Cork ER, MR for May 1919, CO 904/109, UCC.
- ⁶⁵ CE, 6, 13, 20 Nov. 1919, 26 July 1934; LG, Dec. 1919.
- ⁶⁶ CE, 2, 9 Oct., 13 Nov. 1919; Lahiff, 'Industry and Labour in Cork', p. 202.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 24 Sept., 16, 28, 30 Oct., 4, 6, 13, 20 Nov. 1919, 22 Jan., 5 Feb. 1920. The use of the Conciliation Board to end the dispute was refused by the Board.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., 8, 15, 22 Jan., 4, 11 Feb., 2, 4, 8, 31 Mar., 28 Apr. 1920.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 18, 20, 27 May 1920.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 27 May, 1, 3, 10, 24 June, 3 July 1920; *Freeman's Journal*, 27 May 1920.
- ⁷¹ CE, 1 Jan., 3 Feb., 3, 10 Mar., 2, 9, 15, 16 June, 21 Dec. 1920, 17, 22 Mar. 1921.
- ⁷² Ibid., 22 July, 4, 26, 31 Aug., 2, 24 Sept., 4, 9 Nov. 1920.
- ⁷³ Cork Harbour Board minutes, 16 Feb. 1921, CCCA; *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Sept. 1921.
- ⁷⁴ ITGWU Cork branch minutes, 3 Apr. 1921, TU-IT, CCCA; Devine, *Organising History*, p. 119.
- ⁷⁵ Cork Harbour Board minutes PC/1/51, 8 June, 20 July, 10, 17, 24 Aug. 1921; *ibid.* 30 June 1921, TU-IT, both found in CCCA; CE, 26 Aug. 1921.
- ⁷⁶ Liam Beecher, 'The Cork Harbour strike of 1921, part I', *Liberty*, Sept. 1976.
- ⁷⁷ CE, 1 Sept., 1921.
- ⁷⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Sept. 1921; CE, 3 Sept. 1921. For a more detailed account of the 1921 Cork harbour soviet, see Luke Dineen, 'The Cork Harbour Soviet of 1921', *Saothar*, no. 42, 2017, pp. 31-43.
- ⁷⁹ CE, 5 Sept. 1921.
- ⁸⁰ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000* (London: Profile Books, 2004), pp. 212-213.
- ⁸¹ Liam Beecher, 'The Cork Harbour strike of 1921, part II', *Liberty*, Oct. 1976; CE, 3 Sept. 1921.
- ⁸² Cork Harbour Board minutes, 5 Sept. 1921, PC/1/51, CCCA; CE, 6 Sept. 1921; *Freeman's Journal*, 6 Sept. 1921.
- ⁸³ CE, 6 Sept. 1921.
- ⁸⁴ Cork Harbour Board minutes, 5 Sept. 1921, PC/1/51, CCCA.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.
- ⁸⁶ O'Connor Lysaght, 'September 1921, Month of Soviets'; Kostick, *Revolution in Ireland*, p. 176.
- ⁸⁷ CE, 7 Sept. 1921.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid; de Róiste diaries, 6 Sept. 1921, U271/A/39, CCCA.

- ⁸⁹ CE, 7 Sept. 1921.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., 7, 8 Sept. 1921.
- ⁹¹ Ibid, 12 Sept. 1921; O'Connor-Lysaght, 'September 1921, Month of Soviets'.
- ⁹² Cork Harbour Board minutes, 14 Sept. 1921, PC/1/51, CCCA; Cork Corporation minutes, 14 Sept. 1921, CP/CO/M/14, CCCA; CE, 16 Sept. 1921.
- ⁹³ Cork Corporation minutes, 14 Sept., 12 Oct., 9 Nov. 1921, 11 Jan. 1922, CP/CO/M/14, CCCA; Cork Harbour Board, 7, 14 Dec. 1921, PC/1/51, CCCA.
- ⁹⁴ O'Connor-Lysaght, 'Class struggle', p. 138.
- ⁹⁵ In the 1920 local elections the CTC was not part of the Sinn Féin-ITGWU pact and fielded twelve candidates in five districts. Three of these candidates were successful. Thirty Sinn Féin-ITGWU candidates were elected in Cork. See McCabe, 'The Irish Labour Party and the 1920 Local Elections', pp. 12, 17.
- ⁹⁶ Edward Norman, *A History of Modern Ireland*, (London: Fletcher & Son Ltd, 1971), p. 269; Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The Experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence, 1916-1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996), p. 175; Tom Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1981), pp. 123-125; F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), p. 403.
- ⁹⁷ Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at War, 1916-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 114-115; Peter Hart, 'Introduction', in Peter Hart (ed.), *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story, 1916-21* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2009), pp. 19-20.
- ⁹⁸ Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and its Enemies: Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 155-157.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 157.
- ¹⁰⁰ Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society*, p. 15; Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*; David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-21: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1977); Peter Hart, 'The Social Structure of the Irish Republican Army, 1916-23', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Mar. 1999, pp. 207-231.
- ¹⁰¹ These percentages are rounded off to nearest decimal point. Therefore, they add up to 101 per cent rather than 100 per cent.
- ¹⁰² *New York Times*, 7 Sept. 1921.
- ¹⁰³ ITGWU Cork branch minutes, 26 September 1921, TU-IT, CCCA; Beecher, 'The Cork Harbour strike of 1921, part I'.
- ¹⁰⁴ William Kenneally, 'Rebel Song, part II', *Irish Democrat*, Nov. 1956; Liam Beecher, 'The ITGWU in Cork', *Liberty*, June 1977.
- ¹⁰⁵ Devine, *Organising History*, p. 120.
- ¹⁰⁶ C.J.C. Street ('I.O.'), *Ireland in 1921* (London: Allan & Co.), pp. 155-156.
- ¹⁰⁷ De Róste Diaries, 6 Sept. 1921, U271/A/39, CCCA.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Cork Constitution*, 8 Sept. 1921.
- ¹¹⁰ Michael Laffan, 'Labour must wait': Ireland's conservative revolution', in P.J. Corish (ed.), *Radicals, Rebels and Establishments* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1985), p. 210; O'Connor Lysaght, 'September 1921, Month of Soviets'.
- ¹¹¹ CE, 16-30 Nov. 1921
- ¹¹² Ibid., 28 Feb., 4 Apr. 1922.
- ¹¹³ Ibid., 30 Aug., 10 Nov. 1921, 7 Jan., 13 May 1922; ILPTUC, *report of the twenty-eighth annual meeting, 1922*, p. 243, NLI; McCarthy, *Trade Unions in Ireland*, p. . In January 1922, the IEIU, the instigators of the policy of preference, were denounced as a 'destructive body that had sprung up and called itself a trade union' by a delegate of the Shipwrights' Association. See CE, 7 Jan. 1922.
- ¹¹⁴ CE, 1, 22, 29 Mar., 10 May, 22 Nov. 1923.
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid., 1, 22 Mar., 11 Sept. 1923. The shipwrights were originally threatened with weekly reductions of 34s. 1d. and 54s. 1d. before these were ruled as too drastic.
- ¹¹⁶ CEF, *Cork Trades Disputes*, pp. 8-22; CE, 15, 22, 24, 29 Nov., 1, 3, 4 Dec. 1923, 21 Aug. 1924; *Irish Times*, 29 Nov. 1923. The Shipping Federation was founded on 2 September 1890 in response to the great London dock strike of 1889. Its primary goal was to counteract the NAFSU and various dockers' unions by the effective co-ordination of strike breaking among its affiliates. It thus developed a fearsome reputation. For a history of the Federation, see L.H. Powell, *The Shipping Federation: A History of the First Sixty Years, 1890-1950* (London: The Shipping Federation, 1950).
- ¹¹⁷ Donnacha Seán Lucey, *The end of the Irish Poor Law? Welfare and healthcare reform in revolutionary and independent Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 1-7, 14, 17-21.
- ¹¹⁸ CE, 1, 15 Nov., 1, 15 Dec. 1916.
- ¹¹⁹ Cork Board of Guardians' wages and salaries book, 1920-26, BG69/FR/2, CCCA.
- ¹²⁰ Ibid., 26 Jan., 29 June, 26, 31 Oct., 9 Nov., 5 Dec. 1917.

- ¹²¹ Ibid., 12, 28 Feb., 2 Apr., 6, 19 June 1919.
- ¹²² Ibid., 5, 30 Sept., 7, 15 Oct., 21 Nov. 1919, 13 Sept. 1921.
- ¹²³ There was little continuity in rates of pay as most individual workers were on different rates. For a list of the scale fixed, see Cork Board of Guardian minutes, 6 Oct. 1919, BG/69/A/152, CCCA.
- ¹²⁴ CE, 23 Sept. 1920, 19 Sept. 1921.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid., 4 Nov. 1920, 18 Aug., 13, 19, 20, 27 Sept. 1921.
- ¹²⁶ Cork Board of Guardians' wages and salaries book, 22 Sept. 1923-25 Oct. 1924, BG/69/FR/2, CCCA.
- ¹²⁷ CE, 13, 18, 22 Aug. 1921. The man in question was a labourer and a member of the ITGWU.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid., 13 July, 22 Aug. 1921.
- ¹²⁹ Lucey, *The end of the Irish Poor Law?*, pp. 28-30.
- ¹³⁰ Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, pp. 24-26.
- ¹³¹ Regan, *The Irish Counter-Revolution*, pp. 82-84; Tom Garvin, 'The Anatomy of a Nationalist Revolution: Ireland, 1858-1928', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 28, No. 3, July 1986, pp. 484-491.
- ¹³² Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society*, p. 55.
- ¹³³ Cited in ibid, p. 56.
- ¹³⁴ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 104.
- ¹³⁵ Provisional Government minutes, 11 Jan. 1922, PG1/G1/1, NAI; CE, 14 Jan. 1922; *Irish Times*, 14 Jan. 1922.
- ¹³⁶ *Irish Independent*, 10-16 January 1921; *Freeman's Journal*, 10-16 January 1921; *Irish Times*, 10-16 January 1921
- ¹³⁷ CE, 27, 30, 31 Jan., 1, 4 Feb. 1922; *Sunday Independent*, 29 Jan. 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jan. 1922.
- ¹³⁸ ITGWU Cork Branch minutes, 1 Feb. 1922, TU-IT, CCCA. The IEIU was receiving financial assistance from the ITGWU.
- ¹³⁹ O'Connor-Lysaght, 'Class Struggle', pp. 160, 163; Railway Workers' Strike Committee demands, 3 Feb. 1922, file no. 3686, GSWR archive, IRRS.
- ¹⁴⁰ CE, 30, 31 Jan., 6 Feb. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 1-10 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁴¹ CE, 1 Feb. 1922; O'Connor-Lysaght, 'Class Struggle', p. 160.
- ¹⁴² *Irish Times*, 3 Feb. 1922; CE, 3 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁴³ CE, 2 Feb. 1922. Much of this quote is also cited in O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 128.
- ¹⁴⁴ Provisional Government minutes, 2 Feb. 1922, PG1/G1/1, NAI.
- ¹⁴⁵ CE, 1 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁴⁶ McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 270-271.
- ¹⁴⁷ CE, 6 Feb. 1922; *Workers' Republic*, 11 and 18 February 1922; *Irish Independent*, 6 February 1922.
- ¹⁴⁸ Provisional Government minutes, 8 February 1922, PG1/G1/1, NAI; 'Letter from E.A. Neale to Richard Mulcahy, 8 February 1922', file no. 3686, GSWR Archive, IRRS.
- ¹⁴⁹ CE, 8, 9, 11 February 1922.
- ¹⁵⁰ 'GSWR to Richard Mulcahy, 9 February 1922', file no. 3686, GSWR archive, IRRS.
- ¹⁵¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Feb. 1922; Philip S. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen: The History of the National Union of Railwaymen* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1963), pp. 448-449. Any additional hours would be paid at overtime rates.
- ¹⁵² TSCH/3/S1365, Dept. of An Taoiseach, NAI; NUR, *Irish Railway Agreements*, pp. 141, 150.
- ¹⁵³ CE, 15 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Irish Independent*, 10, 11 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁵⁵ CE, 11 Feb. 1922; letter from Railway Clerks' Association to W.H. Thompson, District Superintendent, 9 February 1922, file no. 3686, GSWR archive, IRRS. In a separate incident, four railwaymen from Tralee wrote to the GSWR to express their opposition to the takeover in Cork and their solidarity with the company. See letter to GSWR from Lynch, Hayes, Mullane, and Lynch, 16 February 1922, file no. 3686, GSWR archive, IRRS.
- ¹⁵⁶ CE, 13, 14 Feb. 1922; Letter from E.A. Neale to Robert Crawford, 16 Feb. 1922, file no. 3686, GSWR Archive, IRRS.
- ¹⁵⁷ CE, 17, 25, 26 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁵⁸ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 103, 128-129.
- ¹⁵⁹ De Róiste diaries, 1 Feb. 1922, U271/A/42, CCCA.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 11 Feb. 1922, U271/A/42, CCCA.
- ¹⁶¹ CE, 11 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁶² McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', pp. 260, 268-270.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 8 Feb. 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Apr. 1922.

- ¹⁶⁴ 'Letter from William McGinn and Patrick Crowe to GSWR', file no. 3594, GSWR Archive, IRRS; Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway minutes, 13 Apr., 11, 25 May 1922, CIÉ archives, Heuston Station; Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway minutes, 8 May 1922, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station.
- ¹⁶⁵ *CE*, 27 Feb., 14 Mar. 1922, 7 Jan. 1924; *Voice of Labour*, 8 Dec. 1923.
- ¹⁶⁶ Eunan O'Hallpin, *Defending Ireland: The Irish State and its Enemies since 1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 30-31.
- ¹⁶⁷ Walsh's view of the strike is found in James Joseph Walsh, *Recollections of a Rebel* (Tralee: The Kerryman Ltd, 1944), pp. 62-63.
- ¹⁶⁸ Cathal Brennan, 8 June 2012, 'The Postal Strike of 1922', *The Irish Story*, retrieved 14 July 2017 from <http://www.theirishstory.com/2012/06/08/the-postal-strike-of-1922/#.UhTd-5LVbVl>.
- ¹⁶⁹ Walsh, *Recollections of a Rebel*, p. 62.
- ¹⁷⁰ *CE*, 19 Jan., 16 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 20, 23, 25, 27 Feb., 1 Mar. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 20 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁷² Letter issued to the press, 2 Mar. 1922, Post Office Workers' Union collection, ILHM, cited in Fitzpatrick, 'Labour, Ideology and the State in Ireland', p. 192.
- ¹⁷³ Brennan, 'The Postal Strike of 1922'; *CE*, 23, 25, 27 Feb., 1 Mar. 1922. The telegram read: "Anticipate sectional strike of employees disloyal to Free State on 1st prox. Provisional government determined to dispense with their services and substitute those of hundreds of loyal Irishmen in Great Britain seeking transfer. Would you please take immediate steps to ascertain the number of all ranks prepared to transfer under these conditions? Please acknowledge. Walsh, Postmaster – General."
- ¹⁷⁴ *Irish Times*, 11 Mar. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 6 Mar. 1922;
- ¹⁷⁵ Brennan, 'The Postal Strike of 1922'; Alfred Byrne, *Dáil Éireann Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 1, 13 Sept. 1922. For the response of the postal unions' Cork branches to the government's cost of living figures, see *CE*, 20 Sept. 1922.
- ¹⁷⁶ *CE*, 18, 20, 21 Sept. 1922.
- ¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6, 9 Sept. 1922.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Irish Times*, 11 Sept. 1922; *ibid.*, 11 Sept. 1922.
- ¹⁷⁹ Thomas Johnson, *Dáil Éireann Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 1, 11 Sept. 1922, cols. 109-112; *Irish Times*, 11 Sept. 1922. The government's full statement: "The Government does not recognise the right of Civil Servants to strike. In the event of a cessation of work by any section of the Postal Service picketing such as is permitted in connection with industrial strikes will not be allowed. The Government has determined to offer the fullest protection to those Officers who, remaining loyal to the Government, continue to carry out their duties. The Post Office Service is a vital State service. The Government is prepared to use, if necessary, all the forces at its disposal to ensure that no official who continues his service to the State is subjected to interference or intimidation."
- ¹⁸⁰ De Róiste diaries, 5 Mar. 1922, U271/A/43, CCCA.
- ¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 13 Sept. 1922, U271/A/46, CCCA.
- ¹⁸² *CE*, 12, 13 Sept. 1922.
- ¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 15, 18 Sept. 1922. On 20 September, a handbill distributed at a local demonstration captures the mood of those on strike: "Reasons for the Strike in a nutshell – the Postmaster-General breaks the agreement solemnly made with employees. The Postmaster-General reduces the wages of a postal clerk in Cork by thirty-seven shilling a week in twelve months; because the Postmaster-General states that the house rent is only 5s. 2d. per week; bacon, 1s. 7d. per lb; eggs, 1s. 5¼d. per dozen and all other food cheap in proportion!". See, *ibid.*, 21 Sept. 1922.
- ¹⁸⁴ Cited in Brennan, 'The Postal Strike of 1922'.
- ¹⁸⁵ *CE*, 2 Oct. 1922; various documents found in TSCB/3/S1798, Dept. of An Taoiseach records, NAI.
- ¹⁸⁶ Brennan, 'The Postal Strike of 1922'; Provisional Government minutes, 27 Feb. 1922, PG1/G 1/1, NAI.
- ¹⁸⁷ Martin Maguire, *The civil service and the revolution in Ireland, 1912-1938: 'shaking the blood-stained hand of Mr Collins'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 147.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 4, 11, 16, 17, 22, 30 Nov., 23 Dec. 1922; J.J. Walsh, *Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 5, 13 Dec. 1923.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Irish Times*, 9 June 1923; *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Dec. 1923, 8 May 1924; *Irish Independent*, 8 May 1924. The amalgamation of the three postal unions took place at conferences held on 7 and 8 June 1923. The Post Office Workers' Union was an industrial union for Irish postal workers.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Aug., 27 Oct. 1922; *Irish Times*, 27 Oct. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 27 Oct. 1922.
- ¹⁹¹ McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the National Union of Railwaymen in Ireland', p. 296.
- ¹⁹² *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Dec. 1922. The reduction sought by the GSWR was never revealed to the press. The company threatened to close its lines on 8 January 1923 if their demands were not acceded to.
- ¹⁹³ *Irish Times*, 30 Dec. 1922.
- ¹⁹⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Jan. 1923; GSWR minutes, 5 Jan. 1923, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station.

¹⁹⁵ Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway minutes, 15 Nov., 20 Dec. 1923, 3 Jan. 1924; Cork & Macroom Direct Railway minutes, 21 Dec. 1923, 4 Jan. 1924, CIÉ Archives, Heuston Station; GSWR Traffic & Works Committee minutes, 13 July 1923, 22 Feb., 7 Mar. 1924, GSWR archive, IRRS.

¹⁹⁶ In July 1924, the Dáil passed the Railways Act, 1924, which merged every railway company in the Free State into one privately-owned body: the Great Southern Railways Company. See McCabe, 'The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants', pp. 272, 301, 306; J.C. Conroy, *A History of Railways in Ireland* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd, 1928), pp. 310-315, 325. See *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Dec. 1923 for a more thorough explanation of the railway arbitration machinery.

¹⁹⁷ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 93.

10

Labour, Revolution and Counterrevolution in Cork and Derry

If Cork's adoption of syndicalism differentiated it from Derry Labour industrially, then Cork's greater embrace of republicanism from 1916 distinguished them politically. In Cork, the disintegration of the IPP and the AFIL, along with their feud, was reflected in a Labour movement that was firmly behind the republic from 1918, having previously acted as a conduit for intra-nationalist conflict via its two antagonistic trades councils. After the 1918 general election, Cork Labour was happy to act as an auxiliary to the republican movement and aid it accordingly. The 1918 general strike against conscription marked the beginning of Cork Labour's awareness of itself as a weapon in the struggle against British rule in Ireland. This consciousness intensified throughout 1919 as the war of independence gathered pace across the country and as state repression increasingly targeted the unions. A crescendo was reached that November with the IADAMU's strike against the Motor Permit Order, the first instance of direct union support for the national struggle. As Cork was an epicentre of the revolution, its trade unionists were central to Irish Labour's contribution to national independence, none more so than the Transport Union. Although the ITGWU and Sinn Féin ran on a joint-ticket in the 1920 local elections in several areas, Cork was the most prominent example of this alliance. The relationship between the two organisations in Cork was arguably closer than anywhere else in Ireland.¹ Cork was also central to the railway munition stoppage, Labour's most significant contribution to the republican cause. By late 1920, local Labour was effectively a republican ancillary organisation.

Far from harming working-class interests, Labour's embrace of the republic aided them. The political climate caused by republican insurrection oxygenated a Labour militancy that made historic gains for workers that employers found difficult to take away during the counterattack. Irish and international syndicalism must be put in its political context. Its proliferation owes much to the failure of the parliamentary process, especially in Spain, Italy and Ireland. The narrowness of the franchise and weakness of parliamentary socialist parties was responsible for the syndicalism's anti-statist, anarchist tinge in southern Europe. In the US, strict registration rules eliminated many black, immigrant and migrant workers from voting,

and it was among these groups that the Wobblies' message of class war at the point of production resonated most strongly. Even in Britain and France, where the possibility of parliamentary redress of grievances appeared more realistic, parliamentary socialists moderated their agendas in favour of 'welfare capitalism' shortly after making political gains. Syndicalism emerged at a time of stagnation in socialist thought and thrived in the period between pioneering Marxism and the victory of Lenin's vanguard party in 1917. Moreover, syndicalism was attractive to workers in these countries because it harnessed their antipathy to the capitalist state. At one extreme were the authoritarian regimes of Spain and Italy, where troops were regularly deployed to crush strikes and demonstrations. But anti-union coercion were also central features of the French and British states, resulting in violent clashes between workers and the authorities during strikes. Such experiences fuelled support for the syndicalist message that the capitalist state was a tool of the employers and parliamentary democracy was a sham.²

The Irish political context moulded native syndicalism in ways that were both distinct and similar. The emergence of the ITGWU has to be set against the backcloth of British domination, lack of a native parliament and the failure of constitutional nationalism. Hence, although the Transport Union concentrated on the industrial rather than political arena, republicanism and syndicalism were easy bedfellows. Syndicalism thrived in Cork and pushed Labour to the left. Several prominent trade unionists – from the ITGWU especially – were also members of Sinn Féin and/or the IRA, and this interaction accelerated the radical impulse. Another manifestation of this dynamic was how republicans forced Irish Labour to consider the issue of state power for the first time, politicising the movement as never before. The republican shadow administration demonstrated to Labour the political nature of the state, something especially apparent in a time of revolution. Labour discourse on the nature of the state evolved from a social democratic to a revolutionary syndicalist analysis, characterised by an adherence to a 'workers' republic' and/or a 'co-operative commonwealth'. By 1920, rhetorically at least, Labour's political project was a radically democratic proletarian alternative to the bourgeois, capitalist state. Thus, by July 1921 Cork Labour was immeasurably more unified, numerous, self-assured, anti-imperialist and socialist than it was in January 1919. Its embrace of republicanism from 1918 made it an open, if unofficial, ally of Sinn Féin, whose revolution was consolidated by Labour direct action.³ Tellingly, Sinn Féin never sought this support, but received it nonetheless.

While nationalist revolution was a unifying force for Cork's working class, the exact

opposite was the case in Derry where Labour tried desperately to hold together a working class so desperately divided. Unsurprisingly, it was slow to embrace the republicanism that, by 1920, had largely wiped out constitutional nationalism outside of Ulster. In Cork, by contrast, Labour was at the heart of revolutionary change. However, like syndicalism, political change in the south influenced Derry Labour, albeit to a much smaller degree. The debate on establishing an Irish Federation of Labour at the 1917 ITUC conference is representative of the divergence of Cork and Derry Labour that the embryonic revolution was causing. McCarron's stout defence of British unions in Ireland was rooted in their catering of both nationalists and Unionists in Ulster, and his sincere desire to uphold this fragile unity. From 1918, the revolution stretched this delicate harmony to breaking point and significantly widened the gulf with southern Labour.

The Derry Trades Council was put in an unenviable position. Its implementation of the 1918 general strike against conscription was a preview of what would be made explicit from January 1919: the difficulty of avoiding political splits in a city with a nationalist majority and a large Unionist minority in a time of nationalist revolution. Hence, the council's assertion that humanitarian and not political reasons were behind its support for the ITUC's 1918 anti-conscription stoppage, a claim it repeated with less credibility in April 1920. The humanitarian reasons given for participation in what were political strikes may explain why the IADAMU opted not to bring the strike against the Motor Permit Order to Derry. Protestants, however, did not buy it and a hardened clannishness on both sides resulted. The sectarianism that Logue had done his utmost to avoid partially emanated from the April 1920 general strike, occasioning the worst riots in Derry's history. By July 1920, the two sectarian camps were irreconcilable. Thus, nationalist railwaymen had little compunction in bringing the munitions embargo to Ulster despite the trades council's reticence in supporting what was clearly a political strike. As it was not hamstrung by sectarianism, Cork Labour was able to throw in its lot with Sinn Féin until mid-1921, when the party's pan-class nationalism caused the two movements to clash. Derry Labour's detachment from the revolution ensured its muteness on partition despite its nationalist majority. Cork Labour was actively involved in what was essentially a southern revolution born out of southern conditions. As a participant in that revolution, Labour also reflected an indifference to Ulster that enabled partition, indicative of the limits of Irish syndicalism and Labour-republicanism. A psychological partition had long existed in Ireland between north and south, even among nationalists, and Labour was no exception.⁴

In Cork, the revolution coincided with a proliferation of Irish trade unionism and the dislodging of several British unions. In Derry, however, the amalgamateds' long-term stranglehold over Labour was strengthened by the revolution. Even Peadar O'Donnell, one of Ireland's foremost Connollyite in the post-Connolly era, could not successfully extricate them in a nationalist city – a testimony to their established position in Ulster. Even in these disturbed times, room for expansion for Irish unions was slight as worthwhile gains could only be made by poaching, which risked the dreaded sectarian split. Several of the smaller Dublin unions collapsed or refused to enter Derry because of the heightened political tensions. Given that Derry's wages movement lacked a syndicalist character, the ITGWU's advantages over its British rivals were not as evident as in Cork. Moreover, the higher social insurances offered by some of these unions had a strong attraction. It is debatable whether or not the ITGWU's stay in Derry was divisive and counterproductive. Other Irish unions were too weak to compete with the amalgamateds and Unionism too conservative an ideology to produce a formidable Labour organisation, the UULA being a case in point. If the UULA was the ITGWU's sole competition, O'Donnell's faith that socialism would win over the Protestant working class to the republic may well have been vindicated. But the amalgamateds' skilful manoeuvrability in combining some degree of wage militancy with an aloofness to the national struggle kept most Protestants away from both the loyalist Ulster Workers' Union and the republican Irish unions. The ITGWU viewed the amalgamateds as a relic of British colonialism whose presence perpetuated the sectionalist, parochial and conservative attitude of northern workers. This assessment may have been correct, but its straightforward appeal to proletarian militancy was destined to fail in a city as split as Derry. With no such sectarian divisions in Cork, the same call to militancy was remarkably successful and allowed the union to poach many of its British rivals.⁵

The Corporations

The way the pre-1920 IPP/AFIL-dominated Cork Corporation treated its own employees illuminates the bourgeois nature of constitutional nationalism. Like the city's private sector employers, it resisted many calls for wage increases until the chorus of demands overwhelmed it from early 1917. In 1915, an IPP councillor declared that a request for wage increases for was:

one of the most brazen and indiscreet of officialism he had experienced at the Council. . . an attempt to wreck a system which was the only means by which they could maintain discipline and respectability. If the Corporation desired to control their officials it would take all the bayonets of the British Army. The more was done for these people the more they wanted.⁶

Under pressure from Labour, it took the Corporation until April 1916 to issue its first wartime wage advance for labourers. The 10 per cent increase was miserly considering the rate of inflation. But it was no less parsimonious than what prevailed in the private sector paid. Indeed, the nationalist Corporation was happy to track private-sector wage rates for these employees and never exceeded them. Corporation tradesmen, on the other hand, were paid above what the master builders would tolerate. With trade union complicity, the Corporation was happy to allow this labour aristocracy to be maintained until syndicalism compelled the unions to standardise rates across the board. This inequity generated antipathy among certain groups of Corporation workers that manifested itself in strikes, and the threat of them, from late 1917. The clerks' 1919 stoppage was the culmination of the workers' disillusionment with the old Corporation – a tangible demonstration of the zeitgeist. By January 1920, like the constitutional nationalism it represented, the Corporation was a relic of a bygone era and was swept aside in the separatist fervour that now engulfed the Rebel City.

Nine trade unionists, six from the ITGWU, now occupied seats on the Corporation. Their influence mitigated the petit-bourgeois Sinn Féin and ensured a Corporation more sympathetic to working-class plight. However, by its own definition and by its own metric, the Sinn Féin-ITGWU Corporation failed to deliver for workers. The 70s. rate advocated by its own cost of living commission as a minimum living wage was never given to its labourers, even though it was granted at some private sector firms like the breweries. Goulding's gave

their labourers an even higher rate. However, the Corporation took inspiration from the avarice of that private sector in 1924 when clerical and tradesmen's wages were cut. Nevertheless, it defended the labourers' 62s. 6d. rate for a considerable period after the employers had dismantled it. It took direct central government intervention following prolonged campaigning by the business class before it could be cut.

Accordingly, the experience of workers under the new Corporation is telling. It offers a glimpse of how Labour fared, and could expect to fare, under those at the heart of the Irish revolution. It shows the paternalistic view of republicans towards organised Labour, a perception informed by the different class interests of the two movements. The war of independence provided a common external enemy that gave a nationalistic veneer of the harmony of interests between Labour and the republic, a façade that began to crumble as soon as the truce was called. Having co-opted Labour, Sinn Féin adroitly kept it in line by subordinating it and giving it the minimum of what Labour achieved in the private sector. If Labour did not rock the boat, the republicans gave it a sympathetic ear. From July 1921, with the common enemy neutralised, the opposing class interests came to the fore and the two movements came into direct and sometimes bitter conflict. Relations would never heal and remained tense until Monahan became Commissioner, when relations between Labour and the Free State deteriorated even further. However, workers did better under the petit-bourgeois Sinn Féin regime than under the upper-middle-class constitutional nationalist one that it replaced.⁷ Within a few months, the clerks' grievances had been satisfied, tradesmen's wages were fully standardised and labourers received another 12s. 6d., a bigger individual increase than any the previous Corporation had given. Furthermore, in contrast to the Harbour Board, in November 1921 the Corporation resisted pressure from the IEIU to give preferential treatment to members of Irish unions in employment despite Sinn Féin's support for such a measure.⁸

An analysis of how the Unionist Corporation that governed Derry until January 1920 treated its own employees is important in several respects. Firstly, unlike Cork, there were no independent Labour representatives on the Corporation as Ulster's sectarian politics meant that common working-class concerns were swallowed up by the national question. This Corporation enunciated the true scale of Unionism's conservatism as an ideology and, paradoxically, its flexibility. To survive in a nationalist majority city, the Unionist elites were forced to satiate workers by partially accommodating the interests of the Protestant working class, whose support it desperately needed for self-legitimacy. Labour-Unionist votes were

often the difference in forcing wage increases through an institution led by an undemocratic rump that explicitly championed the interests of employers. Strikes were threatened but, in contrast to Cork, never materialised as just enough was conceded to stave them off. In this way, hegemony was maintained, and the political goal of Unionism fulfilled. However, the Corporation's domination by reactionary industrialists guaranteed that workers did better under the constitutional nationalist Corporation – its own bourgeois composition notwithstanding – albeit only slightly. Come the demise of both Corporations, Cork's municipal labourers earned 50s. a week while Derry's earned 46s. 6d., 7 per cent less.

The nationalist victory in Derry in the municipal elections appeared to signal a new dawn in the new Ireland-in-embryo. Although the new Corporation lacked the syndicalist character of the Sinn Féin-ITGWU coalition in Cork, the conservative Unionist establishment was horrified by it. Workers hoped to get more from this novel Corporation with its unprecedented working-class composition. Initially, the signs were positive as workers received a boost of 8s. 6d. in 1920. But, like Cork, non-Labour republicans on the Corporation were a bourgeois ruling class-in-waiting who stood in sympathy with workers but not in solidarity with them. By the time they were gerrymandered off the Corporation in 1923, nationalists and republicans had cut labourers' wages by 8s., having taken guidance from a Harbour Board that was dominated by Unionists and industrialists. Indeed, intra-class unity was evident regarding Corporation wages on several occasions, with working-class councillors struggling together in vain against a nationalist-Sinn Féin-Unionist bloc. Like Cork, Derry's republican-led Corporation shows the conservatism of those who led the Irish revolution. While both cities' working classes suffered as a consequence, far more damage was done in Derry. The conservatism of the republicans helped to ensure that Protestant workers would never leave the sectarian camp that bound them to the Union and to their employers. Local Unionism's domination by acerbic reactionaries like McFarland, Moore and Anderson provided a tantalising opportunity for republicans to appeal to Protestant workers' class instincts with a progressive social programme. But, like a *deus ex machina*, the UULA was brought over from Belfast to drain any growth in class consciousness among Protestant workers and to channel it instead into support for the Union.

With the return of the gerrymandered Unionist Corporation in 1923, Derry's working class was soon given a foretaste of how class relations would be in Northern Ireland. Political stability and the consolidation of partition gave the councillors the security they needed to wage class war against their own employees. Although the MEA bartered down cuts with warnings

of stoppage, the Corporation's authority had been asserted. When the Association led the call for partial pay restorations the following year, the Unionists were both intransigent and ruthless. With the blessing of the Belfast government and support from the Unionist press, the Corporation bled the MEA dry. While it was forced to make concessions, it obtained the bulk of its demands and succeeded in disempowering one of Derry's foremost unions. At peak rates, wages for Corporation employees in Cork were 14 per cent higher than Derry; by early 1924, the difference was 49 per cent, which shrank to 35 per cent after Monahan's first cut. By late 1924, municipal workers in both cities found themselves confronted with remarkably similar situations. Both were members of formerly powerful unions that were major casualties of recent labour wars; both had to deal with a central state hostile to local democracy; and both had to deal with unrepresentative local administrations. Hence, the stories of municipal Labour in Cork and Derry during this period are illustrative of the outcome of the Irish revolution as far as workers' class interests were concerned.

The Harbour Boards

A comparative analysis of the two Harbour Boards is similarly revealing. The Derry Port and Harbour Commissioners were decidedly less affected by transformational change than the Corporation from which some of its members were nominated. Its membership changed little throughout the revolutionary period and a Unionist consistently chaired it. The Commissioners were bastions of conservatism amidst revolution. Its treatment of its employees is indicative of how Unionist elites perceived the working class. Strikes broke out there before they did at either Derry Corporation or the Cork Harbour Board as the NAUL was regularly forced to assert the rights of the workers. The Tyneside union was remarkably successful and kept Harbour Board labourers among the best paid in the city, as they were in 1914. By the period of peak wages in 1920, these men were on rates superior to those given to building-trade labourers. This starkly contrasts with Cork where public authority labourers were paid the same as general labourers in the private sector, significantly lower rates than in the building trade. But the greater syndicalist character of Cork Labour ensured that even the lowest wages secured by labourers were higher than those of the Maiden City's best paid labourers. Derry's harbour labourers were still the city's best paid in 1923 and were therefore not featured in the 1924 fightback. The Derry Harbour Commissioners had taken a leading role in the counterattack, slashing pay and mercilessly breaking strikes, providing a model for the Corporation and the Employers' Federation. Like the Corporation, the Commissioners felt able

to take on the NAUL in the knowledge that they had the backing of the Stormont government. The experience of Derry's harbour workers was emblematic of the rise and fall of Labour during these years, and the place of Labour after partition and Unionist reaction.

Cork's harbour workers did comparatively well under the pre-1920 Harbour Board, with many clerks and tradesmen on wages above those prevailing in the private sector. Its labourers, however, were among the lowest paid in the city. The greater Labour and republican influences from 1920 gave harbour workers a direct stake in the Irish revolution and the ITGWU was keen to exploit this. Sinn Féiners like de Róiste and Labourites like Day now supplemented Kelleher's moderating effect on the traditionally establishment-dominated Harbour Board. Like the Corporation, it standardised tradesmen's pay at the higher rates. But like the Corporation, it too failed its most vulnerable workers – its labourers – by refusing to grant the 70s. wage to them. When the ITGWU sought the wage, the Board proved itself as anti-worker as any private sector employer. The culmination of that clash, the Cork harbour soviet, was crucial to the collapse of the republican-Labour alliance. The Harbour Board would never again show itself amenable to working-class interests and allied itself with the CEF during the 1923 counterattack. By 1925, it had come full circle and was once again a citadel of establishment interests.

The Irish revolution was even less kind to workers at the Cork Board of Guardians. The 1921 dispute between the vice-guardians and their employees was another pivotal moment in the collapse of the republican-Labour alliance that indicated the subordinated position of workers in the nascent Irish state. However, wages and salaries were superior at Cork's Harbour Board and Board of Guardians than at the Derry Harbour Commissioners. This demonstrates that workers fared better under the Irish revolution, conservative and bourgeois though many of its leaders were, than under the Unionist counterrevolution.

The Free State and Cork Labour

When the National Army invaded Cork in August 1922, General Emmet Dalton was given a hero's welcome by the city's bourgeoisie.⁹ De Róiste watched with revulsion as cliques, 'each vying with the other for power', tried 'to ingratiate themselves with the military victors'. 'The old "toadies"', he protested, 'were the first to pay Dalton "reverence"'.¹⁰ With Dalton's blessing, the two Chambers of Commerce, the CEF and the Cork Farmers' Union spearheaded the establishment of an unarmed municipal police force called the 'Cork Civic Patrol'. Advertisements for the force called for recruits with good education only, a move designed to exclude working-class men. It was overseen by the Cork Civic Committee, which included Nason and Day, and continued to operate until November, when the government introduced the Free State's Civic Guard.¹¹ In September, the Chambers of Commerce and the CEF formed a 'watch committee' to safeguard their property during the 'present disturbed times'.¹² This body became the Cork Commercial Committee and included representatives from the two Chambers of Commerce, the CEF, the Cork Farmers' Union and the Cork Traders' Protective Association. It survived well into 1923.¹³ But the Cork bourgeoisie need not have been so fearful. A strong police force to protect private property was a vital component of the Free State's schema of industrial relations.

From the beginning, the government of Saorstát Éireann sought to defeat industrial unrest by delineating points of principle beyond which it would not compromise. On 30 January 1922, the cabinet agreed to lay contingency plans for a national rail strike rather than guarantee a wage agreement during the railway crisis. Elsewhere, it declared strikes in the public service to be illegal. Accordingly, forty-nine Labour Exchange clerks in Cork were dismissed when they left their posts on 10 February 1922 to protest a 6s. cut in their 67s. wage.¹⁴ The postal strike marked the first example of forceful intervention from the state to manage the course of industrial action rather than merely responding to its excesses. By early 1923, with the civil war largely won, the government felt more assured in reverting to its preferred laissez-faire economic model. It no longer needed to actively restrain employers in the interests of stability as in 1922. A staggering of wage cuts had been the result of this, a policy aimed not at reducing class conflict but prolonging it to make it manageable. Greater control over the twenty-six counties impelled a modification of procedure from the government without an abandonment of principle. Dáil arbitration was gradually scaled down throughout 1922 until it was effectively redundant by early 1924, except for the most severe crises. Machinery of conciliation developed only where necessary – like on the railways – and where possible direct

negotiation between workers and employers was ensured through state-sponsored conferences. Though effective policing would not be introduced until June 1923, after the civil war's conclusion, the National Army filled the void in the meantime by protecting essential services during a dispute. Thus, scabs received military protection during Cork's January 1923 dock strike. Military interventions like this did not smash Labour, but it did prevent workers from outflanking the employers by maintaining the flow of commerce, creating stalemate strikes that would bleed unions dry.¹⁵ In this way, employers had the tacit backing of the government.

When Cork's dockers struck once more in July 1923, military intervention was again considered. Noting that the strike was 'assuming a grave aspect and that feelings on both sides were hardening', the government resolved to use the military if necessary to keep the peace.¹⁶ The Committee of the Order of the City of Cork urged the cabinet to do just that. Fearing the growing unrest, it claimed that the 'presence of military on the streets will be found necessary':

The position in Cork ... has now become quite unsupportable ... The city is governed, not by the Government but by the Transport Union . . . The Civic Guards when approached frankly confessed their powerlessness to do anything . . . The present utterly inadequate handful of men cannot possibly suppress intimidation and lawlessness. There is therefore widespread dissatisfaction with the present anarchic state of affairs and it is felt that unless this demoralisation is drastically and immediately countered the Government will have abdicated its responsibilities in Cork City.¹⁷

The 1923 lockout was the last major instance of state intervention in a local industrial clash. The intensity of the conflict ensured that a voluntarist approach to resolution was impossible. However, holding firm to its ideology of minimal intervention, the cabinet rejected all corporatist options and instead utilised conferences between capital and labour to resolve the crisis. Labour doggedness forced the employers to accept the result of this course of action. In this sense, the government's strategy was vindicated by the outcome of the crisis, a strategy that was, paradoxically, guaranteed by the cabinet's willingness to use repression to enforce it.¹⁸ By January 1925, the paternalistic attitude to public sector workers remained. When Monahan's wage-cutting provoked the possibility of a strike, the government decided that 'any requisite protection should be afforded' to 'support the Commissioner fully in all reasonable measures a good employer might ordinarily take'.¹⁹ Fittingly, the government's economic

philosophy received lavish praise from William Dinan, president of the Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping, at the Chamber's 1925 AGM.²⁰

Derry Labour and the Orange State

Partition impacted Derry deleteriously in a variety of ways. With its economic hinterland in neighbouring Donegal, now in a different state, the city's economy suffered badly and its industrial decline was accelerated by the new customs and tariffs. In May 1925, the Free State government imposed a 15 per cent tariff on shirts, having placed a duty on biscuits the year before that damaged Derry's milling, bread and biscuit industries. Cross-border trade with Donegal was severely affected.²¹ Partition also copperfastened the peripheral position of Derry in Ulster as the Unionist government effectively made Northern Ireland a Belfast-centric statelet. Moreover, Derry's nationalist majority made it a constant target of Stormont suspicion. None suffered more than Labour which had, in Stormont's eyes, a steadfast nationalist agenda. Hence, it was inevitable that sectarianism would raise its ugly head in Northern Ireland's public sector.

There were some instances of nationalist workers resisting Stormont until economic pressure won out. For example, about one-third of Northern Ireland's Catholic schools refused to recognise the government and thus had their teachers paid by Dublin until October 1922.²² But there was localised defiance too. In August 1923, much unrest was generated among Labour Exchange clerks in Derry when a Protestant, Mr. Dougan, of nine months' employment was promoted to undermanager instead of Mr. J.F. Hoey, a Catholic of twelve years' experience. Dougan was then transferred to Belfast and Hoey was made deputy manager of the Derry Labour Exchange. Two months later, the Ministry of Labour proposed that Hoey be transferred to Belfast and replaced by a Mr. Mercer, another Protestant. The ATGWU publicly promised to take drastic action if this happened. The police dreaded the prospect of the dockers and carters being brought out on strike. Catholics feared that the change would lead to religious/political discrimination against them. In November, the NFSU repeated the ATGWU's threat and the trades council passed a resolution refusing to work with the Belfast government until the transfer was cancelled. RUC protection was given to Mercer and nothing more came of the affair.²³

Partition also forced a reconfiguration of local industrial relations. As Derry Corporation did not officially recognise the republic until January 1922, the Dáil's arbitration

courts never operated in Derry as they had in Cork. Belfast's Ministry of Labour took over arbitration functions from its London equivalent in late 1921/early 1922, having established its own conciliation schemes from May 1921. Its first major test was to resolve the railway crisis within the six counties. Like the Provisional Government, Stormont knew it needed railwaymen more than shareholders and collaborated with Dublin via conferences of conciliation between the railway unions and the directors. The northern government was also willing to subsidise the companies to offset losses accruing from the February 1922 agreement. Despite their claims of near bankruptcy, the northern railway companies were able to pay the wages stipulated in the agreement until 31 December 1922 without any state aid. They had resolved to do this at a meeting with Andrews on 12 July 1922.²⁴ On 9 December 1922, the Railway Commission of Northern Ireland issued its final reports, divided into a majority report and a minority report. As in the Free State, the commission had been established the previous May pursuant to the February agreement to investigate the most efficient means of managing the railway system in Northern Ireland, including wages and conditions of staff. In contrast to its southern counterpart, it published a minority report that favoured nationalisation on an all-island basis and a majority report that rejected exactly that.²⁵ Throughout December 1922, several conferences were held to ensure peace on the railways from 1 January 1923 when the February agreement was due to expire. On 30 December, under the chairmanship of Andrews, it was agreed not to alter wages or conditions for two months. In the meantime, a committee representing companies and unions would draw up a scheme of pay and working hours.²⁶

The railway crisis was the northern government's last major intervention in a labour dispute in Derry. Its concept of class relations was remarkably like Dublin's, but with an even greater attachment to unregulated capitalism. Like the Free State, the Unionist government was happy to allow market forces to dictate wages with minimal intervention from Belfast. However, its own legitimacy problems aside, it did not feel the need to restrain employers in the name of security from 1921-23 the way Dublin did. This enabled the counterattack to be launched sooner in Derry than Cork. The northern government's rapport with the employers was cordial from the beginning, far more so than with the unions, even the loyalist ones. This is hardly surprising given Stormont's composition. Of the forty Unionist MPs, three were landowners, twenty were employers or merchants, ten were professionals and only four were working class.²⁷ Irish employers had opposed the introduction of trade boards and participated in them without enthusiasm, even when their rulings lowered wages. The bosses seized the opportunity to lobby for their abolition. They had a sympathiser in Andrews, himself a linen

manufacturer, whose 1923 Trade Boards Act more closely resembled the 1909 Act than the 1918 one. It minimised the role of the state in wage negotiations and abolished the flax and hemp trade boards, lacerating the numbers covered by the trade boards in Northern Ireland from 115,000 to 51,000. Trade boards provided subsistence wages which progressively declined from 1924-35. The shirtmaking trade board, which covered 6,000 in Derry, was maintained.²⁸

Given Stormont's commitment to laissez-faire, its Ministry of Labour involved itself in remarkably few of the many strikes that took place in Derry from 1922-24. When it did, its role was one of conciliation rather than arbitration and it was as likely to rule in favour of the employers as the workers. Even its role as a facilitator of conferences was scant, more so than its southern equivalent. But if differences existed between Belfast and Dublin on soft state intervention in industrial disputes, both were equally willing to utilise the forces of the state against Labour. In the absence of a military, the RUC kept a close eye on strikes in Derry, especially in the key industries and economic arteries, lest they become protracted. If they did, the B-Specials were sent in to protect scabs, as happened during the 1921 Watt's strike and as was considered during the inter-union shirt factory dispute in the spring of 1924. During the 1924 summer crisis, Craig's government discussed the possibility of intervening to ensure the safe provision of transport with scab labour.²⁹ But still, intervention was kept to a bare minimum. Andrews said as much in the Stormont parliament on 27 May when debating the situation in Derry, even though seven days later he proclaimed it to be the most serious calamity Northern Ireland had experienced since its establishment.³⁰ Although his Ministry intervened with kid gloves to stop the strikes from beginning, it was not involved in their termination. Appropriately, the crisis was ended by the Corporation and the Employers' Federation, an alliance that would rule the city in each other's interests for many decades thereafter.

Both governments saw themselves as guarantors of private property and enterprise, willing to protect them with draconian state force from the military or the B-Specials if necessary. Their selective interventions in industrial disputes in Cork and Derry aptly demonstrate this commonality, as does their lack of intervention when strikes broke out. That both governments shared remarkably similar attitudes to the working class while simultaneously representing the opposite sides of the Irish revolution is a testament to the class nature of the society that produced these revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries in the first place.³¹

Chapter Notes and References

- ¹ McCabe, *The 1920 Local Elections*, pp. 7-18; Michael Laffan, 'Politics in Time of War', in John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, John Borgonovo & Mike Murphy (eds.), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), pp. 459-461; see also Donal Ó Drisceoil's, article in the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, 'Losing a War it Never Fought: Labour, Socialism and the War of Independence', pp. 487-494.
- ² Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 57-63.
- ³ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 87, 88; Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 166, 300.
- ⁴ Tom Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland, 1858-1928* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 48-56; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 176.
- ⁵ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 53-54; O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 175.
- ⁶ CE, 27 Mar. 1915.
- ⁷ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, p. 11. The IPP leadership was primarily composed of merchants and upper echelon professionals.
- ⁸ Cork Corporation minutes, 14, 24 Sept., 12 Oct., 9 Nov. 1921, CP/CO/M/14, CCCA.
- ⁹ Borgonovo, *War and Revolution*, pp. 60, 125. As Dalton reported, 'I have been called upon by hundreds of prominent citizens who, apparently have nothing better to do than to wait for hours to congratulate me'.
- ¹⁰ Cited *ibid*, p. 125.
- ¹¹ CE, 14-24 Aug., 1, 6, 7, 12, 14, 15, 19, 20, 25, 26 Sept., 2, 7, 10, 12, 28 Oct., 2, 9 Nov. 1922, 6 Feb. 1923; Borgonovo, *The Battle for Cork*, pp. 125-126.
- ¹² Cork Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping minutes, 4 Sept. 1922, B619/B/1/5, CCCA.
- ¹³ CE, 9, 14, 25 Sept., 7, 28 Oct., 15, 25 Nov, 5 Dec. 1922, 29 Jan., 8 May, 6 June 1923; Cork Chamber of Commerce minutes, 8, 24 Sept. 1922, B619/A/01/05, CCCA.
- ¹⁴ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 158; Provisional Government minutes, 30 Jan., 10 Feb. 1922, G1/1, NAI; CE, 11, 13 Feb. 1922.
- ¹⁵ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 154-163; CE, 18 Jan. 1923.
- ¹⁶ Free State Government minutes, 1 Aug. 1923, PEC/G/2, NAI.
- ¹⁷ Quoted in Fitzpatrick, 'Labour, Ideology and the State in Ireland', p. 204.
- ¹⁸ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 157.
- ¹⁹ 'Extract of the minutes of the meeting of the cabinet held on 27 January 1925', TSCH/3/S4249, Dept. of An Taoiseach records, NAI.
- ²⁰ CE, 30 Jan. 1925.
- ²¹ Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, pp. 215-216. The tariffs on shirts would increase to 22.5 per cent in April 1932 and to 45 per cent that November with the coming to power of Fianna Fáil that year.
- ²² Gallagher, *Violence and nationalist politics*, p. 59; Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic Gateway*, p. 205; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 44.
- ²³ DJ, 19, 29 Oct, 12 Nov. 1923; RUC, IG reports on the labour exchange affair, 16 Aug., 1, 9 Nov. 1923, HA/5/1306, Min. of Home Affairs records, PRONI.
- ²⁴ DJ, 9 Jan. 1922; LLSR minutes, 16 June 1922, D2683/AA/10, PRONI; NCC draft minutes, 24 Aug. 1922, UTA/12/AC/4, UTA records, PRONI.
- ²⁵ See Government of Northern Ireland, *Railway Commission in Northern Ireland: minutes of evidence* (Belfast: John Adams, 1922); and Dáil Éireann, *Irish Railway Commission 1922: minutes of evidence* (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1922).
- ²⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 18, 20, 21, 28 Dec. 1922; *Irish Independent*, 19 Dec. 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 20, 22, 28, 30 Dec. 1922; DJ, 1 Jan. 1923.
- ²⁷ For an account of the upper-middle class's domination of Ulster Unionism and Stormont, see Neil C. Fleming, 'Leadership, the Middle Classes and Ulster Unionism since the Late-Nineteenth Century', in Lane (ed.), *Politics, Society and the Middle Class in Modern Ireland*, pp. 212-229.
- ²⁸ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 44, 50; Browne, 'Trade Boards in Northern Ireland', pp. 221-266.
- ²⁹ Letter from S.H.E. Parr to Major J. Watson, 23 May 1924, COM/13/1/54, Department of Commerce records, PRONI; DJ, 28, 30 May 1924.
- ³⁰ *Belfast Newsletter*, 28 May, 4 June 1924.
- ³¹ For a description of this society and how it influenced the Sinn Féin revolutionaries, see Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland*, pp. 13-32.

Conclusion

The nature of Irish society for the rest of the twentieth century was fundamentally influenced by what happened between 1914 and 1924. A class-based analysis of this period raises questions about the role of working class in a nationalist revolution. During such a revolution, how can proletarian interests be served by an alliance with bourgeois forces whose economic interests conflict with those of the working class? A comparative study of Labour in Cork and Derry from 1917-24 crystallises this dilemma in an Irish historical context. It reveals the class forces behind republican revolution and Unionist reaction, and those forces' attitudes towards the working class. Furthermore, it assesses whether a psychological disconnection existed between northern and southern nationalists, and if so, to what extent this was reflected within Labour.

The republican revolution was precipitated by the First World War, which demolished the old constitutional nationalist consensus and brought separatism from the margins to the political mainstream. Ulster Unionists remained utterly intransigent and mobilised as fervently against the new threat as they had done against the old. The necessities of war unintentionally took the unions off life-support and back into the pulse of Irish life. Mandatory, binding arbitration functioned by recognising unions on the factory floor and employers no longer had the luxury of surplus unskilled labour. Greater class consciousness and unionisation was the result. The Great War was the culmination of what the Industrial Revolution had given to warfare; its human cost was staggering. As the dead bodies mounted, the Irish public increasingly questioned its participation in the calamity, leading to the de-legitimisation of British rule in Ireland. Exorbitant inflation aided this process. The Easter Rising provided a catalyst for anti-British sentiment and the execution of its leaders was the seismic turning point in the de-legitimisation of British authority. Uprisings across Europe, not least the proletarian one led by the Bolsheviks, aerated Irish revolutionary impulses. From this wreckage came the war of independence, Unionist mobilisation and partition. Two Irish states emerged from this period of conflict: first Northern Ireland and then the Irish Free State. The Treaty settlement and the civil war both consolidated the new political reality.¹

By early 1917, Labour had risen from the ashes of the 1913 lockout and was on the precipice of syndicalism. In both Cork and Derry, unprecedented power and influence were awaiting the unions, as were unparalleled defeats. Syndicalism was made possible by a

confluence of the extraordinary national and international events that took place between 1914 and 1917. Unlike new unionism or Larkinism, it was created from international events outside of Irish Labour's control. By early 1916, Irish Labour was still licking its wounds from its defeat in Dublin and was in no position to engineer a revival. Unintentionally, it was the First World War that did this. In late 1916/early 1917, mass inflation and food shortages led to trade unions being inundated by labourers whose class consciousness was rooted in a profound sense of injustice. The character and role of unions changed utterly, as did the pattern of industrial relations. Labour was the conduit for, rather than the generator of, a discontent that could not be contained by the parameters of established trade unionism. A precondition for syndicalism was disillusion with the prevailing Labour struggles to defend workers' living standards. As such, international syndicalism was the spawn of a crisis in socialism rather than capitalism. In Ireland, where there was a scant socialist base on which to build, it was the product of a different ambience.

Syndicalism was a flexible ideology that adapted quickly to the Irish context. A product of revolution at home and abroad, it integrated with ease into a non-revolutionary Labour movement. Irish syndicalism encapsulates the ideology's strengths and weaknesses. If international syndicalism was shapeless, contradictory and incoherent, then so was its Irish variant. However, if international syndicalism was simultaneously capable of inspiring discontent and (even non-revolutionary) class consciousness, mobilising the masses, and generating and sustaining direct action, then Irish syndicalism was a minor but brilliant example of the ideology's fortes. It led to extraordinary, lasting gains for the working class that could not have happened without a redistribution of power and wealth. Its Irish iteration was Ireland's contribution to the social tumult and intense class conflict that characterised Europe's 'two red years' of 1919 and 1920. But syndicalism's impact on Irish Labour would be far more enduring.

For economic, political and ethno-sectarian reasons, syndicalism permeated Labour in Cork far more thoroughly than in Derry. Indeed, nothing symbolised the disunity of the Irish working class more than Cork's wholehearted embrace of syndicalism and Derry's half-hearted effort. This divergence was emblematic of fundamental differences between the two cities, which Labour reflected.

Since 1889, Irish Labour had sought to build trade unionism in an underdeveloped economy. From the 1850s, free trade between Britain and Ireland severely weakened Cork's manufacturing base, stunting local development and making Labour entirely dependent on its

British counterpart. Southern backwardness and northern sectarianism severely restricted both new model and new unionisms' ability to make gains in either Cork or Derry. Themes of modernisation and decolonisation suffused each of the three phases of transformation which built upon what the other had given to produce syndicalism. Labour unions evolved into industrial unions, into general unions and finally into the One Big Union; blacking evolved into the sympathetic strike and finally into generalised action. The maturation was reflected politically too: the formation of the ITUC in 1894 gave way to the establishment of an Irish Labour Party in 1912 and its adoption of a socialist constitution in 1918. The ITUC's decision in 1919 to create a single Irish Workers' Union was the pinnacle of Irish syndicalism.² But these transitions deepened the ridge between northern and southern Labour, as evidenced by the different trajectories of the wages movements in Cork and Derry.

The strong moral advocacy Larkin infused into Irish trade unionism was the basis for generalised action in the south from 1918, the only tactic capable of winning concessions in a de-industrialised economy with a vast pool of unskilled labour. Accordingly, an all-encompassing wages movement, though operational in both cities from 1919, advanced more rapidly in Cork. In both places a vast dispersal of unionisation occurred from 1917 as Labour spread from the manual sector to white-collar workers. Although the increases sought were similar, syndicalism gave Cork a greater willingness to strike than Derry, resulting in better wages except for building tradesmen. Progress on hours was faster in Cork, but by 1921 similar working weeks prevailed in both cities with Labour largely failing to achieve the forty-four-hour week.

The capitalist counterassault vividly revealed the differences between these syndicalist and non-syndicalist Labour movements. Cork's 1923 lockout demonstrates the importance of a decentralised structure and local control as pre-conditions for syndicalist direct action. It also illustrates how localism could be a force for proletarian spontaneity and solidarity. Syndicalism had always been hostile to hierarchical organisational structures, setting it apart markedly from established trade unionism which was more authoritarian in nature. The ITGWU's post-1914 emphasis on devolution and industrial unionism was stronger than syndicalist unions in Britain, America, Spain, France and Italy, many of which were more centralised and organised along craft lines. But the onset of the slump led caused Liberty Hall to enlarge officialdom at branch level and strengthen central control in an increasingly bureaucratic union machine. Irish syndicalism was the melding of direct action and industrial unionism, and this was its ruinous

flaw. The failure to create a rank-and-file movement in the south divorced militancy from industrial unionism during the slump.³

However, with wages falling across Britain and Ireland, the central ethic of syndicalism – working-class solidarity – galvanised Cork Labour to put up a gallant defence of its post-1917 gains in 1923. Unity and solidity forced the CEF to accept compromise. The crux of the conflict lay in retail employers' insistence on their right to reduce staff numbers during slack periods. Wages were a secondary factor. A moral drive for justice inspired workers as much as economic rationale, a testament to syndicalism's allure and a fitting farewell to it. As was the case nationally, and indeed everywhere syndicalism took hold, Cork Labour was unable to withstand the employers' state-backed counter-mobilisation without serious long-term damage. Syndicalism was the greatest causality.⁴ In Derry, where political stability allowed the counterattack to start much sooner, there was far less unity in combatting employers. Similarly, union co-ordination was poor during the 1924 clawback. There was no committee directing generalised action or mass meetings of workers characterised by militant speeches. Though the outcomes of both endgames were similar, Cork had more to be proud of given the severity of the CEF's demands and the weakness of union demands in Derry.

The three Cork soviets of this era were the most salient representation of the city's syndicalist swagger. They were created by the grassroots of Ireland's two most radical unions, the ITGWU and the NUR. ITGWU officials like Day, Kenneally and Barry genuinely supported the concept of a workers' republic, however amorously they understood it. The NUR was the quintessential industrial union. During the railway crisis, Cork railwaymen tried, and failed, to re-orientate industrial unionism in a revolutionary direction. These soviets were opposed not only by employers but by republicans and the national Labour leadership because they functioned as potential alternatives, rather than auxiliaries, to the wages movement. They were the result of disillusion with the self-proclaimed agents of revolutionary change – the republicans and trade union executives – when industrial unionism's limitations in obtaining gains and resisting the counteroffensive became clear. Such tensions were not unique to Ireland. International syndicalism was tormented by its immediate goal of achieving reforms with its goal of revolution. The CGT, CNT, USI and IWW were all crippled as organisations by this contradiction. In Ireland, O'Brien embodied syndicalism's moderate wing and his bureaucratic leadership did much to stifle revolutionary sentiment among the Irish working class from 1923.⁵ But he was not alone: most union leaders joined him in a collective and protracted drift to the centre. Derry Labour was not syndicalist enough to countenance soviets

or any viable alternative to national executive diktats. Its post-1923 rightward shift was thus less traumatic for the rank-and-file.

The cities' trades councils embodied the differences between northern and southern Labour. It was only in Cork where red flags were flown, the Bolsheviks were praised and promises of a workers' republic or a co-operative commonwealth were issued at trades council gatherings. However, Dowling was an even more powerful influence on CTC leaders than syndicalism. Class conciliation rather than class conflict more accurately reflected their agenda. The Derry Trades Council echoed the zeitgeist with its promotion of a proletarian counterculture through co-operatives, sports days and concerts. Its push against the ITGWU was unique and would have not happened without the amalgamateds. The Transport Union was deliberately isolated and the city's wages movement left devoid of its greatest purveyor of social and national revolution.⁶

The proliferation of syndicalism was predicated on the initiation of mental decolonisation. The major, though indirect, ideological agents of decolonisation, Larkinism and syndicalism, encountered local realities in Derry that compelled its Labour leaders to eschew modernisation. From 1917, the new milieu encouraged Irish craftsmen and recently organised clerks and assistants to establish native unions, the IEIU and the IUDWC being prime examples. Irish Labour's most successful ever period marked the first time in which the movement relied on native organisers and resources. This was syndicalism's most enduring legacy: it finally ended dependency on British Labour. Although the amalgamateds had not been killed off, there was now a viable alternative to them. The failure of Irish unions – the ITGWU in particular – to win significant support in Derry widened the gulf with Cork. Larkin had already pushed Labour's geographic orientation from north to south, from Belfast to Dublin; syndicalism completed the job. As a result, the ITUC increasingly became a southern-centric echo chamber of southern problems. The shrinking influence of British unions over Congress from 1917 marginalised northern trade unionism. McCarron's death brought this reality to Derry as Logue was anonymous within the national movement. Partition was merely the physical confirmation of the political and organisational division extant within Irish Labour. The ultimate contradiction of Irish syndicalism – an ideology premised entirely on proletarian unity – was its sequestering of Ulster, including its nationalist population, from the south.⁷

The Irish unions' lacklustre performance in Derry substantiates the depth of working-class ethno-sectarianism in the six counties, a debilitating problem that Labour has yet to overcome. Ulster radicals like Peadar O'Donnell struggled in vain to get the Dublin leadership

to embrace what he considered the only solution: class politics. But the sectarian instinct was too powerful in divided Derry. Most Ulster Protestants remained highly suspicious of Dublin unions, especially the ITGWU, as Trojan horses in the belly of which was a republican agenda. With no other alternatives but loyalist yellow unions and the UULA stooges, Unionists stuck with the amalgamateds. Conversely, these unions tolerated republicanism within their ranks to retain Catholics, who in turn remained loyal if the British delivered on wages. As they never endangered Unionism, British unions received benign neutrality from the UULA. By 1925, their position in the Maiden City had been solidified over the previous eight years, having seen off a major threat from the ITGWU and a minor one from the Ulster Workers' Union. The result was a dysfunctional Labour politics and a frail unity between nationalists and Unionists overseen by a conceited leadership desperate to avoid sectarian splits. With no such ethno-sectarian baggage to surmount, Irish unions thrived in Cork. By 1922, they had subsumed most labourers and assistants, as had most clerks. Considerable progress was also made in the building and engineering trades. Only the railways remained impervious.

The historians' verdict on the ITGWU's four-year presence in Derry has been negative, especially regarding O'Donnell. He has been blamed for the closure of Watt's distilleries, stoking sectarianism by appealing to 'Catholic nationalism' and engaging in Anglophobic attacks on British unions.⁸ Derry barely features in his later writings and by the 1980s he had allegedly come to regret bringing the ITGWU there at such a sensitive moment in its history, especially when levels of unionisation were already sufficient.⁹ However, this is contradicted by other interviews he gave in the same decade and by his 1985 observation that Derry Labour was infected with the 'vapid socialism characteristic of the British labour movement' until the ITGWU entered the scene.¹⁰ But it was this 'vapid socialism' that ensured that the Transport Union inadvertently deepened the sectarian divide among Derry's working class.

The organisation of women into trade unions from 1917 was something that defined Labour in both Cork and Derry. In the latter city, it was the First World War's most significant long-term consequence. The process was underway before the war with the introduction of an Irish shirtmaking trade board. Trade union membership peaked in 1918-19 (as it did in Britain) with a density that was comparatively high (at least 50 per cent) by the standards of British clothing workers. Subsequent membership declined in the 1920s also followed the British pattern.¹¹ Women's experience was remarkably similar in both Cork and Derry regarding the support they received. Men supported women's unionisation because it strengthened their own position, but there were limits to the generosity. Resisting the 'encroachment' of women

influenced the Derry cutters as strongly as any desire for better pay, hours or conditions. The same was true in Cork. Tailors resisted female labour at every opportunity and were willing to strike against it if necessary, as they did in January 1922.¹² But the compositional differences in the workforces produced major differences in the two cities as well. Male attitudes towards women was another reason for syndicalism's lack of success in Derry. The preponderance of female workers threatened male ascendancy, not just within the shirt industry but across society. Women had culturally designated roles in the shirtmaking process (like operating sewing machines) that men, despite their willingness to see women organise, were anxious to preserve. Like sectarianism, male hegemony could be maintained through British trade unionism, providing syndicalists with another roadblock that was difficult to overcome. Women were also more likely to join British unions, which linked them to the British movement where syndicalism was weak. Furthermore, women were more difficult to turn into a powerful force. All were unskilled, which created surplus supply and made them easily replaceable, and many had home commitments which made them more difficult to organise outside of work hours.¹³ Cork's significantly lower number of female workers meant that there no such challenges to surmount. This made the city much more suited to the ITGWU's unionisation of the unskilled and, consequently, syndicalism.

Why did syndicalism die? Internationally, state intervention is one of the most obvious factors. Authoritarian governments crushed the movements in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany and the Netherlands, and the Bolsheviks did the same to the Russian movement. State persecution also significantly weakened syndicalism in the US, Australia and Mexico. The ITGWU experienced some Free State repression in 1923, most notably during the Waterford farm labourers' strike, but there was little of this in Cork and so it cannot be considered a primary reason. Thorpe and van der Linden maintain that the emergence of the welfare state and state-sponsored collective bargaining structures did much to sap the international syndicalist appeal, as did changes in capitalism. 'Fordism', revolutionised the capitalist mode of production by allowing working-class people to operate as units of individualised mass consumption, purchasing many of the goods they produce within a system that permits capital to grow and workers' living standards to improve. There were also specific reasons for individual movements declined. In France, the state was initially friendlier to the syndicalists than in other countries, but militant strikes eventually drove frightened employers and state officials into an alliance to smash the CGT. In the US, the appearance of the motor car in the 1920s changed the culture of migratory labour, meaning that the physical protection that the

Wobblies could provide men was no longer as important. In Russia and Italy, many syndicalists were subsumed into the communist and fascist movements respectively. When presented with such milieus, syndicalist movements had three options: maintain their principles and risk marginalisation; abandon their principles and adapt to the new situation; disband, or merge into a non-syndicalist union. The IWW went for the first; the CGT picked the second; and the SAC, having initially opted for first, then chose the second before eventually accepting the third.¹⁴ Like most, the ITGWU also chose the second option.

Like the rest of Cork society, Labour began to politically re-align after the Easter Rising. It abandoned the IPP and the AFIL, and the reunited trades council rallied behind Sinn Féin. The synchronous food crisis produced the People's Food Committee, which did much to aid relations between the Labour and republican movements. The general strike against conscription effectively, if unofficially, made the CTC an ally of Sinn Féin. By December 1918, republicans controlled the council and pushed the Labour Party into abstaining from the that year's general election, a move strongly supported by the rank-and-file.

Throughout the war of independence, a tremendous synergy existed between Labour and republicans in the Rebel City. The struggle produced a climate conducive to radicalism. Political strikes were creations of Labour, not Sinn Féin, and the Dáil neither invoked nor sought to control them. After MacCurtain's murder, the CTC took matters into its own hands and launched its own general strike without ITUC approval. The council collaborated with the republican authorities and not Congress during the stoppages called in support of MacSwiney. The most outstanding political strike, the munitions embargo, crippled the British counterinsurgency and demonstrated the true power of organised Labour. Political strikes initially aided working-class interests by cultivating an impression that Labour was acting partly outside the law, which fostered an atmosphere of class warfare. Unions were willing to support direct action and even engage in violence to express a deep hostility to capital and private property, indicating an authentically anti-capitalist strain within Labour. However, by early 1921 the CTC fixation with the country's political affairs allowed the employers to seize the initiative to embark on the rollback.

Politically, the limits of Labour's radicalism had been exposed during the war of independence. Syndicalism's intellectual neglect of the state nurtured a belief that proletarian power could be attained solely by industrial means. Whilst Labour was undoubtedly politicised by the independence struggle, its refusal to politically engage with the republic confined revolutionism to the industrial arena. Consequently, it allowed Sinn Féin's embryonic

bourgeois state to mature into the reactionary Irish Free State.¹⁵ The ITUC's strike against 'militarism on both sides' underscores the extent to which it had failed to develop a coherent policy on the class nature of the state. The anti-Treaty IRA was no better in this respect and their governance of Cork brought no tangible benefits to workers. Labour's estrangement from the republicans was finalised when the anti-Treatyites' campaign became a guerrilla war that incurred job losses and wage cuts for workers.

As the war of independence brought the workers together in Cork, it drove them further apart in Derry. The Derry Trades Council incrementally replaced its implicit Redmondism with the ITUC's republicanism. It turned to Dublin on issues that were highly controversial and divisive in Ulster like conscription and the political prisoners' and railway munitions' strikes. Ergo, it became an easy target for Unionist propaganda. The UULA was the most effective cog in this campaign. Its deft playing of the Orange card whenever Labour looked like uniting did much to inflame communal tensions, already at breaking point by the war of independence. The 1920 riots, which climaxed in what the *Sentinel* called 'civil war week', emanated from the April stoppage.¹⁶ Peadar O'Donnell's war against British unions was reciprocated by the UULA, which collaborated with employers against the ITGWU. O'Donnell and Ridgeway, Derry's leading revolutionaries, tried to use their union as the means of linking the national and class wars to win over Unionist support. For their efforts, they were regularly maligned in the local press as anti-Catholic because of their socialism, anti-Protestant because of their republicanism, anti-British because of their antagonism to the amalgamateds, and anti-Derry because Ridgeway was a Belfast Protestant. Were it a choice between the ITGWU and the UULA, their struggle may have succeeded. But the 'apolitical' British unions ensured that it was not.¹⁷

Although Labour's political consciousness was transformed by the national revolution, traffic in the other direction was negligible. In Cork, even the CEF had shifted from moderate Unionism to pro-Treatyism when it became clear that the Treatyite party would not harm its interests. The paradox of the Irish revolution was that the seeds of reaction were sown into its *modus operandi*. The foundation of a shadow state whose institutions were modelled on those they sought to dislodge ensured that the Irish revolution would be a conservative one. Republicanism could accommodate, even nurture, radical aims from which workers benefited. However, as a pan-class, nationalist movement led by the petit-bourgeoisie, the republican goal was staunchly conservative. Social radicalism was at best secondary to separatist aims; class-based politics that endangered national unity was a threat.¹⁸ This was the course of the Irish

revolution. It is evident in how the public authorities that were strongly influenced by Sinn Féin from January 1920 treated their employees in both Cork and Derry.

In Cork, workers did better under the Sinn Féin-ITGWU Corporation than under the constitutional nationalist one, partially because the city's most militant union now had political power. Labour had sympathisers in MacCurtain and MacSwiney and could now exercise a greater influence on the Harbour Board. But the partnership began to unravel from the July 1921 truce as class differences dictated irreconcilable social outlooks. By late 1920, most workers had received their last pay increases from these institutions as Sinn Féin increasingly looked to the bourgeoisie for guidance, exemplifying who would ultimately emerge victorious from the revolutionary process. The harbour soviet was the straw that broke the camel's back, rupturing the largely amicable relations between the two movements. By the Corporation's dissolution, the Labour-republican alliance seemed like a distant memory.¹⁹

While Derry's historic 1920-23 nationalist Corporation was unquestionably a more progressive entity than the one it replaced, it is another case study of the Irish revolution's contradictions and class biases. Like Cork, Sinn Féin in Derry was primarily petit bourgeois in composition. Accordingly, during the slump the Corporation's non-Labour republicans and nationalists joined with Unionists, several of whom were capitalists, to cut wages. Trade unionists on both sides of the divide sided together to stop this anti-worker alliance. With Stormont's blessing, the Unionists regained the Corporation in 1923 and immediately escalated the war on workers, forcing the 1924 strike. However, the nationalist Corporation cut its employees' pay more deeply than the Unionist one had, a revealing instance of the class dynamics of nationalist revolution.

Similar dynamics are apparent when analysing the role of the central state in class conflict in both cities. Though Cumann na nGaedheal ministers were a social step below the Ulster Unionist elite, the Dublin and Belfast governments had remarkably similar perceptions of class. Both saw themselves as overseers of capitalism and private property, willing to intervene only to maintain the major economic arteries like the docks and railways. Conflict in these sectors forced both governments to compromise, as evidenced by the railway crisis. Although Belfast had a greater affinity to laissez-faire, the difference was minimal. Once the anti-Treatyites had been defeated, the Free State laid down a marker to Labour. The message was unambiguous: capitalist class relations would remain unaltered in the Irish Free State, as would bourgeois hegemony. The postal strike marked a key turning point in the Irish revolution's swing to the right. It is impossible to exaggerate the impact the civil war had in

informing the Provisional Government's view that the strike was a subversive political act. False though it was, this perception remained for many years thereafter, as republican-socialist Liam Mellows had predicted from his Mountjoy prison cell.²⁰

Although de Róiste had promised political power to the working class in 1918, it was the 1923 declaration of his Treatyite colleague, Kevin O'Higgins, that the Irish were 'probably the most conservative-minded revolutionaries that ever put through a successful revolution' that seems more apt.²¹ The situation for the proletariat in Derry was even worse than in Cork. Little did Stormont realise it was laying the foundations for an even more prolonged political conflict that would engulf the city from the 1960s. The turmoil of 1916-23 birthed two states where the ruling philosophies were aligned much more with the interests of employers than workers. Herein lays the tragedy of the Irish revolution: those who invested so much in it, the working class, received little in return whereas those who invested little, the employers, received much.

Chapter Notes and References

¹ Borgonovo, *Dynamics of War and Revolution*, pp. 230-233.

² O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 182-185, 191.

³ Ibid., pp. 112; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 119-124, 140-143.

⁴ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 184-186. For comparative histories of syndicalism in America, Italy, Spain, Britain, France and Canada, see Darlington, *Radical Unionism*; and Larry Peterson, 'The One Big Union in International Perspective: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, 1900-1925', in James E. Cronin & Carmen Sirianni (eds.), *Work, Community, and Power: The Experience of Labor in Europe and America, 1900-1925* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983). For histories of syndicalism in The Netherlands, Sweden, Mexico, Argentina, Canada, Portugal and Germany, see van der Linden & Thorpe (eds.), *International Syndicalism: an International Perspective*. For histories of it in Australia and New Zealand, see Frank Farrell, *International Socialism and Australian Labour: The Left in Australia, 1919-1939* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1981); and Erik Olssen, *The Red Reds: Revolutionary Industrial Unionism and the New Zealand Federation of Labour, 1908-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). For a comprehensive bibliography on syndicalism, see van der Linden & Thorpe, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 19-23.

⁵ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 53, 187; Darlington, *Radical Unionism*, pp. 127-129.

⁶ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 52.

⁷ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 190; O'Connor, *Colonisation and Mental Colonisation*, p. 34.

⁸ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 45-46. See Gavin, Kelly & O'Reilly, *Atlantic gateway*, for a negative review of O'Donnell's time in Derry.

⁹ Starrett, 'The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union in its industrial and political context', p. 332.

¹⁰ Finlay, 'Trade unionism and sectarianism', p. 108. O'Donnell's quotation is cited in O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 45.

¹¹ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 131, 137.

¹² O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 50-53; *ibid.*, pp. 126-133, 195-206. See *CE*, 21 Jan. 1922 for a report on a meeting of the CTC where it was claimed that the tailors' primary reason for going on strike was the introduction of female labour.

¹³ Finlay, 'Trade Unionism and Sectarianism', pp. 209-210. There is a popular perception that the shirt industry and Derry's female-majority workforce produced a matriarchical 'role reversal': that women worked and provided the family income while the unemployed men raised the children. Finlay found little evidence of this. See *ibid.*, pp. 75-78, 161-173.

¹⁴ 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 63-66; and 'Second Thoughts on Revolutionary Syndicalism', pp. 77-79, both found in van der Linden, *Transnational Labour History*.

¹⁵ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, pp. 91, 94, 185-186; Gavin Foster, 'Class dismissed? The debate over a social basis to the Treaty split and the Irish Civil War', *Saothar*, no. 33, 2008, pp. 73-88; see also Gavin Foster, *The Irish Civil War and Society: Politics, Class and Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

¹⁶ *LS*, 20 July 1920.

¹⁷ O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 48, 53-54.

¹⁸ O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, p. 91.

¹⁹ For a thorough account of how and why Cork Corporation was abolished, see Quinlivan, *Dissolved*.

²⁰ Martin Maguire, 'Civil service trade unionism in Ireland (part II), 1922-90', *Saothar*, no. 34, 2009, pp. 42-43. Mellows observed that, 'The unemployed question is acute. Starvation is facing thousands of people. The official Labour Movement has deserted the people for the flesh-pots of Empire. The Free State government's attitude towards striking postal workers makes clear what its attitude towards workers generally will be.' Cited in Brennan, 'The Postal Strike of 1922', (accessed 20 Nov. 2017).

²¹ Kevin O'Higgins, *Dáil Éireann Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 2, 1 Mar. 1923, cols. 1909-1910.

Appendix 1: Strikes in Cork, 1917-23

Workers	Date(s) of Strike	Demand	Outcome
CCSPC joiners	May 1917	50-hour week	Successful
Iron moulders	2-11 June 1917	7s. increase	4s. increase ¹
Bag openers on grain boats	24-27 July 1917	Wage of 8s. a day (2s. increase)	Compromise
Cork Spinning and Weaving Co. engineers	Sept. 1917	3s. given by the Committee on Production	Successful
Farriers	22 Oct. 1917	Wage increase	7s. 6d. increase ²
Sailors & firemen	20-23 Nov. 1917	20s. increase to make wages 80s.	17s. 6d. increase
Quayside piledrivers	27-28 Nov. 1917	10d. per hour (rate for Ford's labourers)	Compromise
Harness-makers	14-19 Jan. 1918	40s. minimum	40s. wage and a 52-hour week
Tobacconists' assistants	28 Jan. 1918-N/A	Reinstatement of dismissed workers	Unsuccessful
Coachmakers	4-7 Mar. 1918	7s. increase	5s. increase
Journeyman butchers	9-23 Mar. 1918	40 per cent increase ³	Unsuccessful
Breadvan drivers	2-13 Apr. 1918	12s. increase and improved conditions	5s. increase and a review of conditions
Fitters, plumbers & boilermakers	27-28 May 1918	No three-quarter time	Time granted but numbers reduced
Benchmen and machine operators	27 May-29 June 1918	Wage increase	33 per cent increase on piece rates
Boot and shoe operatives	Early June-early July 1918	Wage increase and union recognition	Compromise and union recognised
Mineral water workers	Early June-2 July 1918	Increase of 5-10s.	Compromise
CCSPC labourers	Early June 1918	Higher wages	7s. 6d. more for constant men 2½d. extra per hour for daily men.
Farriers	10-17 June 1918	Wage increases	Modified increases of 6s. 6d. for firemen and 7s. 6d. for floormen

Flax workers	29 June-1 July 1918	No deduction in bonus for time lost because of machinery breakdown	Compromise
Labourers, carmen, storemen etc.	7 June 1918	Wage increase	Modified increase given
Vanmen, carters & porters	28 June-1 July 1918	Increases of 10s. and 8s. to vanmen & porters respectively	New flat rate agreed
Labourers at Ford's	14-20 Aug. 1918	Wage increase	Unsuccessful
Labourers & carters	24-28 Aug. 1918	1s. per hour wage, half-day on Saturdays and better working conditions	Compromise
NUDL dockers	23-27 Dec. 1918	Implementation of Min. of Labour award	Successful
Coalporters at Scott Harley & Co.	31 Dec. 1918	Implementation of Min. of Labour award	Successful
Mattress-makers	13-18 Jan. 1919	5-6s. increase	Compromise
Corn porters & fillers	5-8 Mar. 1919	To be paid for waiting time	Successful
Coachbuilders	24 Mar.-17 May 1919	1s. 6d. an hour and a forty-seven-hour week	1s. 5d. an hour and a forty-seven-hour week
Plumbers	5 May 1919-N/A	1s. 6d. hourly	Successful
Egg-packers	12-14 May 1919	A 50s. minimum for men, 10s. increase for women and a forty-two-hour week for all	A 47s. 6d. minimum for men, a 7s. 6d. increase for women and a forty-eight-hour week.
Mattress-makers	13-18 June 1919	Wage increase	Compromise
Tailors	23-28 June 1919	10d. (from 3d.) per log hour	Successful
Gristmill & Cork Tanning Co. labourers	25 Aug.-6 Oct. 1919	10s. increase and the forty-four-hour week.	50s. and a fifty-hour-week
Gasworkers	27-30 Aug. 1919	Wage increase	Successful
Quay labourers	12-27 Nov. 1919	Better overtime rates and 10¼d. per ton (1d. more).	Successful
Grain porters	17-20 Nov. 1919	Extra rates of pay	Compromise
Benchmen, stitchmen & finishers	27 Oct.-13 Dec. 1919	Better piecework rates	Compromise
fitters, cutters, pressers and girls	16 Mar.-28 Apr. 1920	Wage increase	Compromise
Boot and shoe assistants	Late Apr.-21 May 1920	Wage increases	Compromise
Shop assistants & clerks	28 Apr.-22 May 1920	Wage increase	Compromise

Cycle mechanics (who earned 25-55s.) & improvers	16 May 1920-N/A	Hourly rates of 1s. 6d. and 1s. respectively, increases for apprentices, a forty-six-and-half-hour week and seven days paid annual holiday	-
Undertakers' drivers	10-16 July 1920	20s. increase	15s. increase, making wages 55s.
Engineers	1 June-12 July 1920	25s. increase	Successful
Cork Taxi Co. employees	7 July-11 Aug. 1920	75s. wage plus commission	80s. wage
Sailors & firemen	6-18 Oct. 1920	Wage increase	Work resumed at request of Lord Mayor of Dublin
Gas Company clerks ⁴	15-18 Nov. 1920	20s. increase	10s. increase
Mineral water operatives at Kiloh's	11-18 Aug. 1921	Dismissal of vanmen	Work resumed on old terms and the issue submitted to arbitration.
Dockers	22-25 Sept. 1921	6s. reduction	Unsuccessful
Reelers	30 Sept.-29 Oct. 1921	Wage Reduction	Compromise
Spinning & Weaving finishers.	26-30 Nov. 1921	To be paid for 'lying time'	Unsuccessful
Bar assistants at the Vineyard	19 Dec. 1921	Enforcement of standardised wage for a colleague	Successful
Tailors	2-15 Jan. 1922	Hourly cuts of 2d. for men and 1d. for women, 10 per cent off log rates and introduction of female labour	12½ per cent reduction under Dáil arbitration
Coachbuilders	1-31 July 1922	2d. per hour reduction	Unsuccessful
Engineers	Jan. 1923	Wage reductions	Successful
Soap workers	15 July-10 Sept. 1922	Reinstatement of three sacked workers	Settled by arbitration under the Cork Industrial Development Association and the Department of Industry and Commerce
Journeyman butchers	23-26 Jan. 1923	Re-hiring of colleague dismissed for refusing to perform certain duties	Successful

Source: CE, 1917-23; trade dispute books for select industries in the UK from 1917-21, LAB 34-36, Min. of Labour records, TNA.

Appendix 2: Strikes in Derry 1917-23

Workers	Dates	Demand	Outcome
Builders' labourers	Late May to mid-June 1917	Re-instatement of a dismissed colleague	Unsuccessful
Bottle-washers	9-12 Aug. 1917	8s. increase	4s. increase
Platers' helpers	12-15 Sept. 1917	Improved conditions	Improved conditions for platers' helpers & furnacemen
Shipyards labourers	12 Sept. 1917	No staff reductions	Successful
Labourers at William Thompson's	21-26 Sept. 1917	Wage increase	4s. increase
Engineers	Nov. 1917	No staff reductions	Successful
Platers & riveters	14-19 Jan. 1918	5s.	Successful
Jones and Lowthers laundry workers	Mid-Jan. 1918	Wage increase	Modified increase
Packers, washers, firemen	25 Jan.-4 Feb. 1918	Increases of 10s. for men & 5s. for boys	Increases of 5s. for men & 2s. 6d. for boys
Cornmill labourers	25 Feb.-2 Mar. 1918	Wage increase	Increases of 4s. at one firm and 2s. at the other
Carters & dockers	23-25 May 1918	failure to implement a Committee on Production award	Arbitration
Hosiery workers	3-8 June 1918	25 per cent increase	12½ per cent increase via arbitration
Carpenters, joiners and their labourers	7-12 June 1918	Wage increase	Workers sacked
Heater boys	17-19 June 1918	Conditions	Unsuccessful
Riveters, platers & caulkers	27 June-1 July 1918	10 per cent advance on piece rates	Successful
Bottlers, storemen & vanmen	2-10 Aug. 1918	Wage increase	5s. increase
Blacksmiths	6-12 Aug. 1918	Interpretation of wage award	Discussion promised
Caulkers, drillers, riveters & platers	12-13 Aug. 1918	Eviction of colleague	Successful
Platers & angle-smiths	28 Oct. 1918	Method of payment	Successful
Pork curers	13 Dec. 1918-4 Jan. 1919	Wage increase	Increases of 4s. to old hands and 3s. to new hands
Housepainters	1-3 Mar. 1919	Shipyards rate of 1s. 3d. per hour (from 10¾d.)	2d. an hour increase
Municipal drivers and collectors	3-8 Mar. 1919	Reinstatement of Colleagues	-
Mineral water bottle washers	8-10 Mar. 1919	Reinstatement of Colleagues	-
Cabinetmakers, upholsters & French polishers	8-30 May 1919	Hourly wage of 1s. 9d. (from 1s. 1d.) and a forty-eight-hour week (from fifty-four)	Wage of 1s. 8d. and a forty-eight-hour week

General labourers & shunters	19-30 May 1919	50s. wage	48s. wage and forty-eight-hour week
Shop assistants	June 1919	25s. increase	Modified increase
Motor drivers	June 1919	40s. wage (20s. increase)	Modified increase
Carters	June 1919	12s. increase	4s. increase
Coal-fillers	June 1919	4s. increase	Modified increase
Carpenters & joiners	1 July 1919	Wage increase	Granted
Bottlers, vanmen & mineral water workers	10 July-6 Aug. 1919	10s. increase on wages of 35-46s. and the forty-eight-hour week	Belfast rates granted, making wages 42s. for storemen & 46s. for bottlers
Shipyards painters	10 Sept.-8 Oct. 1919	Wage increase	5s. increase
Bakers	27-29 Sept. 1919	Wage increase	Arbitration
Seed merchant labourers	6-30 Oct. 1919	Wage increase & shorter hours	4s. increase and a forty-eight-hour week (from fifty)
Dockers	25 Oct. 1919	Wage of 20s. a day	Successful
Shipyards heater boys	1-2 Mar. 1920	Better fuel or a corresponding wage increase	Better fuel
Tailors	19 Apr. 1920	Hourly wage of 1s. 2d. (from 9¼d.)	Hourly wage of 1s. 1d.
Printers	9 June-19 July 1920	Wage increase	Unsuccessful
Dockers & carters	14-18 June 1920	Wage increase	Successful
Electricians	25 Sept.-10 Nov. 1920	Higher wages & shorter hours	Compromise
Dockers	23-28 Apr. 1921	New conditions	Successful
Dockers	20-23 Jan. 1922	Reinstatement of colleague	Inquiry into dismissal
Plumbers	1-14 Feb. 1922	Surplus apprentices	Additional apprentices dismissed
Housepainters	1 Mar.-12 Aug. 1922	Wage reduction	Modified reduction
Dockers	9-11 May 1922	Refusal to work with a stevedore	Stevedore maintained and dockside conciliation committee formed
Dockers	2-4 Sept. 1922	Against dismissal of two dockers	Settlement reached
Dockers	27-29 Sept. 1922	Refusal to obey orders	Work resumed
Plumbers & gasfitters	7-17 Nov. 1922	Wage reduction	Workers at one firm accept reduction; workers at the other are sacked
Shirtmakers at Rosemount	5-11 July 1923	Reduction in piece-rates	Reduction withdrawn
Fancy linen smoothers	18-21 July 1923	Wages issue	-
Carters	15 Aug. 1923	Wage reduction	Successful
Dockers	3-6 Dec. 1923	Reinstatement of a man sacked for assaulting a stevedore	Unsuccessful

Source: DJ, 1917-24; trade disputes records, 1917-23, LAB 34/38, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 57-60.

Appendix 3: Government Arbitration in Cork, 1919-21

Table 3. A: Ministry of Labour Arbitration Awards in Cork, 1919

Workers	Demand	Outcome	Month
Flourmill labourers	12s. increase and a forty-eight-hour week	7s. 6d. to men and 5s. to boys and women	Jan.
Wallis & Sons carters	10s. increase	7s. increase	Jan.
Corkmaker labourers	Wage increase	7s. 6d. increase, making wages 43s. 6d.	Jan.
Distributing Purchasing Office of Stuffs labourers	5d. an hour increase	1¼d. an hour increase	Mar.
Flourmill labourers	forty-seven-hour week	forty-seven-hour week	Mar.
Corn porters & fillers	Pay be 2s. 6d. per ton	1s. 7½d. per ton, 5s. increase for storemen and weighmen, and 2s. 6d. for boys	Mar.
Wool workers	25s. increase	8s. increase	Apr.
Railway carters	10s. increase	4s. increase	May
Railway shopmen	70s. 6d. wage and a 12½ per cent bonus	1s. increase	May

Source: *Report on conciliation and arbitration. Including particulars of proceedings under the Conciliation Act, 1896, the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act, 1912, the Wages (Temporary Regulation) Acts, 1918 and 1919, the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act, 1919, and the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, 1920, 221, XIX, UKPP.*

Table 3. B: Ministry of Labour Arbitration of Disputes in Cork, 1920

Workers/union	Demand	Outcome	Date
Flourmill labourers	10s. increase	7s. 6d. increase	27 Mar.
Carters	Wage increase	4s. increase	17 Apr.
Dockers	Wage increase	Wages of 16s. daily for casual men & 85s. weekly for permanent men	15 May
Sawmill machinists & labourers	Wage increase	3d. hourly increase for labourers. Hourly rates now 1s. 4d.	22 July
Flourmill labourers	Wage increase	Increases of 10s. for men & 5s. for women & boys	12 Oct.

Source: *Report on conciliation and arbitration, being particulars of proceedings under the Industrial Courts Act, 1919 [including the Wages (Temporary Regulation) Acts, as amended], the Conciliation Act, 1896, and the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act, 1919, 1921, 185, xiv, UKPP.*

Appendix 4: Disputes and strikes resolved by the Cork Conciliation Board, 1919-20

Disputes				
Trade/Company	Workers	Dates of Resolution	Demand	Outcome
Ogilvie & Moore	Assistants and Clerks	1 Mar. 1919	Higher wages	Improved wage scale for male learners and 22½ per cent advance for female learners
Cork Electric Tramways and Lighting Company	Tramwaymen	Early November 1919	A 10s. increase and reduced hours.	A 5s. increase and a 51-hour week (from 52) for firemen and 48½-hour week for yardmen and others
Strikes				
Trade/Company	Workers	Dates	Demand	Outcome
Cork Gas Company	Labourers	28 Aug.-7 Sept. 1919	50s. minimum wage	3s. a week increase
Cork Chemical and Drug Company	Clerks and assistants (except chemists)	11-14 Nov. 1919	9am start and increases of 20s. for men and 10s. for women and boys	10s. increase for men and 5s. for women and boys.
Jennings & Co.	Labourers & carmen	31 Jan.-7 Feb. 1920	50s. minimum wage	Compromise

Source, CE, 1919-20; Cork Conciliation Board minutes, Fr. Thomas Dowling papers, Capuchin archives

Appendix 5: Government Arbitration in Derry, 1919-21

Workers/union	Date	Demand	Outcome
Bottlers & vanmen	13 Feb. 1919	Better wages & conditions	Increases of 6s. for men & 3s for boys.
Builders' labourers at Ebrington Barracks	19 Mar. 1919	12½ bonus	Granted
Engineers	31 May 1919	15s. increase (to give Belfast rates)	Not granted
Shipyard carpenters & joiners	7 Oct. 1919	94s. wage	80s. 9d. wage
Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists	7 Oct. 1919	Wages of 81s. 3d. for machinists and 77s. 8d. for sawyers	Increases of 6s. for the former and 7s. for the latter, and 12½ per cent bonus for both
Shipyard plumbers	7 Oct. 1919	4d. an hour extra	6s. 6d. a week extra, making wages 79s. 10½d. (71s. & 12½ per cent bonus)
Bakers	8 Oct. 1919	Increases of 20s. and 15s. for bakers & packers respectively; 13s. a day for jobbers; 45s. wage (from 35s.) for labourers; 50s. wage (from 35s.) for servers	62s. 6d. wage for bakers & confectioners; 45s. wage for servers; male packers an extra 4s., female packers an extra 2s. 6d., child packers an extra 2s.; 5s. increase for labourers; and 10s. a day to jobbers
Dockers	20 Oct. 1919	Wage increases & a forty-six-hour week	Additional 5s. 3d. a week for permanent men and 10d. a day for casual men
Shipyard boilermakers, shipwrights, engineers & labourers	27 Jan. 1920	Increases of 15s. and 7s. 6d. for apprentices.	5s. increases (employers' offer)
Shipyard painters	27 Jan. 1920	Hourly wage of 2s. (from 5½d.)	5s. a week increase
Engineers	27 Jan. 1920	Hourly wage of and a weekly bonus of 2s. 9d.	5s. increase (employers' offer)
Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists	27 Feb. 1920	Higher wages	Hourly wages of 1s. 3d. for sawyers and 1s. ½d. for labourers.
Coachbuilders	1 Apr. 1920	Higher wages	70s. wage for LLSR shopmen
Shipyard, foundry and engineering workers	7 Apr. 1920	Higher wages	Increases of 3s. to timeworkers, but not for apprentices, and 7½ per cent to pieceworkers from 31

			March and again from 31 May.
Distillery workers	12 May 1920	15s. increase, time-and-a-half for nightshift work and double-time for Sunday work.	4s. increase (making wages 54s.) and no increase in overtime or Sunday rates
Builders' labourers	15 May 1920	6d. per hour increase	2d. per hour increase
Dockers	10 May 1920	Wages increases	Wage of 16s. a day for casual men; weekly wage of 86s. for permanent men for a forty-six hour week
Bakers	6 July 1920	62s. 6d. wage for bakers and confectioners; 20s. increase for servers; 60s. minimum for labourers and packers.	75s. wage for table-hands with doughmen and ovenmen to receive corresponding advances; 2s. 6d. extra a day for jobbers; increase of 7s. 6d. a week for packers and labourers; servers' claim rejected; Confections be paid the same as bakers
Bakers	6 Dec. 1920	20s. increase for bakers and confectioners; daily wage of 16s. 6d. for jobbers; 70s. minimum for labourers; 15s. advance for servers; a forty-four-hour week; annual seven-day holiday	Increases of 7s. for bakers and confections; 5s. for packers and labourers; 6s. for servers; 1s. 6d. daily for jobbers; the forty-eight-hour week unchanged

Source: Report for 1920 on conciliation and arbitration, being particulars of proceedings under the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, the Conciliation Act, 1896, and the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act, 1919; Report for 1919 on conciliation and arbitration. Including particulars of proceedings under the Conciliation Act, 1896, the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act, 1912, the Wages (Temporary Regulation) Acts, 1918 and 1919, the Restoration of Pre-War Practices Act, 1919, and the Industrial Courts Act, 1919.

Appendix 6: Peak Wages and Hours in Ireland, 1920

Table 6. A: Irish Portside Wages and Hours, 1920

Port & Occupation	Wage	Hours
Cork		
Casual men (cross-channel)	2s. an hour	-
Permanent men (cross-channel)	85s. a week	46 a week
Casual men (deep sea)	18s. 6d. a day	
Casual men (grain trade)	16s. a day	-
Storemen & weighmen (grain trade)	70s. a week	46 a week
Casual men (coal trade)	2s. an hour	-
Belfast		
Casual men (cross-channel)	2s. an hour	-
Permanent men (cross-channel)	88s. a week	46 a week
Foreign-going boats	18s. a day	-
Derry		
Casual men (cross-channel)	2s. an hour	-
Permanent men (cross-channel)	86s. a week	46 a week
Newry		
Casual men (cross-channel)	2s. an hour	-
Permanent men (cross-channel)	82s. 6d. a week	-
Drogheda		
Casual men (cross-channel)	15s. a day	-
Permanent men (cross-channel)	85s. a week	-
Galway		
In hold (coal trade)	15s. 7d. a day	-
On deck and in yards (coal trade)	14s. 7d. a day	-
Cross-channel, deep-sea & grain trade	14s. a day	-
Casual labourers in stores	13s. 7d. a day	-

Limerick		
Casual men (deep-sea & grain trade) (in hold)	16s.a day	-
Casual men (deep-sea & grain trade) (on quays)	17s. a day	-
Coal trade (in ship's hold)	17s. a day	-
Coal trade (other men)	16s. a day	-
Carters, fillers, shedmen (permanent)	69s. a week	-
Waterford		
Casual men (cross-channel)	1s. 10½d. an hour	46 a week
Permanent men (cross-channel)	85s. a week	46 a week
Casual men (grain trade)	15s. a day	48 a week

Source: Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920, p. 113.

Table 6. B: Irish Woodworkers' Wages & Hours, 1920

Locality	Sawyers	Woodcutting Machinists	Labourers	Hours
Cork	20	21½-24	16	47
Belfast	22.86	23.71	15.57	47
Dublin	21½	23	15½	47
Dundalk	18	-	-	47
Galway	14	14	12	51
Limerick	18	19½-22	15	47
Newry	14 & 16	18	-	47
Waterford	19½	19½	15	-

Source: Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920, p. 139.

Table 6. C: Irish Engineering Wages & Hours, 1920

Locality	Turners	Fitters	Smiths	Millwrights	Patternmakers	Hours
Cork	105s.	105s.	105s.	-	105s.	47
Belfast (including Lisburn)	86s. 3d.	84s. 3d.	84s. 3d.	-	87s.	47 & 48
Newry	85s. 3d.	85s. 3d.	85s. 3d.	85s. 3d.	85s. 3d.	48
Larne	84s. 3d.	84s. 3d.	84s. 3d.	84s. 3d.	-	-
Derry	81s. 6d.	79s. 6d.	-	-	-	-
Drogheda	80s	80s.	80s.	-	-	48
Ballymena	72s.	72s.	72s.	-	-	48

Source: Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920, p. 40.

Table 6. D: Irish Furnishing Tradesmen's Wages & Hours, 1920

City	Hourly Rate (in pence)	Hours
Belfast	27	47
Dublin	25½	44
Cork	24	47

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 133.

Table 6. E: Irish Carters' Wages, 1920

City	Single-Horse Carters	Double-Horse Carters
Cork	62s. 6d.	68s. 6d.
Belfast	65s.	70s., 72s. (light); 73s., 80s. (heavy)

Source: *Standard time rates of wages and hours of labour in the United Kingdom at 31st December, 1920*, p. 116.

Appendix 7: Wages & Salaries in Cork, 1916-24

Table: 7. A: Wage Scale at Lyons & Co. for Male and Female Apprentice Assistants, 1919

Year of Apprenticeship	Annual Salary
First	£40
Second	£52
Third	£65
Fourth (girls)	£78
Fifth (girls)	£90
Sixth (girls)	£108

Source: Lyons & Co. minutes, 14 Nov. 1919, U354/9, CCCA.

Table 7. B: Wage Scale at Lyons & Co. for Male Assistants, 1919

Year in Business	Annual Salary
First	£104
Second	£134
Third and Fourth	£150
Fifth and Sixth	£162
Seventh to Ninth	£174
Tenth to Twelfth	£186
Thirteenth and above	£212

Source: Lyons & Co. minutes, 14 Nov. 1919, U354/9, CCCA.

Table 7. C: Wages of Female Drapers' Assistants and Clerks in Cork, December 1919

Year of employment	Wage ⁵
First	15s.
Second	20s.
Third	25s.
Fourth	30s.
Fifth	37s.
Sixth	42s.
Seventh	47s.
Eighth	50s.

Source: *Drapers' Assistant*, vol. 17, Jan. 1920, Mandate Trade Union archives, O'Lehane House.

Table 7. D: Typographical Apprentices' Wages in Cork, September 1919

Year	Wage
First	8s. 6d.
Second	10s. 6d.
Third	12s. 6d.
Fourth	14s. 6d.
Fifth	16s. 6d.
Sixth	21s.
Seventh	27s. 6d.

Source: Typographical Association Cork branch minutes, 13 Sept. 1919, U217/A/4, CCCA.

Table 7. E: Annual Salaries in the Retail Drapery Trade, September 1921

Position	Men	Women	Office men	Office women
1 st year	£39	£39	£39	£39
2 nd year	£52	£52	£52	£52
3 rd year	£72	£72	£78	£78
4 th year	£91	£91	£104	£104
5 th year	£125	£112	£138	£124
6 th year	£142	£128	£155	£140
7 th year	£156	£140	£169	£152
8 th year	£170	£153	£183	£165
9 th & 10 th year	£184	£166	£197	£178
Over 10 th year	£208	£188	£221	£200
Charge hands	£240	£208	£243	£220

Source: *Drapers' Assistant*, Vol. 19, Sept. 1921.

Table 7. F: Minimum Wages in the Drapery Wholesale Trade, September 1921

Position	Wage
1 st year	22s. 6d.
2 nd year	27s. 6d.
3 rd year	37s. 6d.
4 th year	57s. 6d.
5 th year	67s. 6d.
6 th year	75s.
7 th year	77s. 6d.
8 th year	80s.
9 th year	85s.
10 th year and over	90s.
Charge hands and ledger clerks	105s.

Source: *Drapers' Assistant*, Vol. 19, Sept. 1921.

Table 7. G: Minimum Wages in the Retail Boot Trade, September 1921

Years of Service	Men	Women
One	15s.	15s.
Two	20s.	20s.
Three	25s.	25s.
Four	37s. 6d.	30s.
Five	47s. 6d.	40s.
Six	55s.	47s. 6d.
Seven	65s.	55s.
Eight	70s.	60s.
Nine	80s.	65s.

Source: *Drapers' Assistant*, Vol. 19, Sept. 1921.

Table 7. H: Minimum Wages in the Retail Hardware Trade, September 1921

Position	Wage
1 st Year	20s.
2 nd Year	25s.
3 rd Year	32s. 6d.
4 th Year	45s.
5 th Year	55s.
6 th Year	65s.
7 th Year	77s. 6d.
8 th Year	77s. 6d.
9 th Year	85s.
10 th Year and Above	92s. 6d.
Charge Hands and Ledger Clerks	105s.

Source: *Drapers' Assistant*, Vol. 19, Sept. 1921.

Table 7. I: Minimum Wages for Shorthand Typists in the Retail Sector, September 1921

Years of Service	Wage
One	35s.
Two	40s.
Three	47s. 6d.
Four	55s.
Five	60s.

Source: *Drapers' Assistant*, Vol. 19, Sept. 1921.

Table 7. J: Coachbuilders' Wages in Cork, 1917-25.⁶

Date	Wage
Jan. 1917	36s.
July 1917	40s.
Mar. 1918	45s.
July 1918	50s.
May 1919	66s. 7d.
June 1920	94s.
July 1922	86s. 2d.
Mar. 1924	82s. 3d.

Source: CE, 1917-1925; NUVB, quarterly & monthly reports, 1917-24, MSS.126/VB/4/1/1, MRC, UW.

Table: 7. K: Engineers', Fitters', Coppersmiths' & Blacksmiths' Wages in Cork, 1913-24

Date	Wage
1913	36s.
Jan. 1914	38s.
June 1915	40s.
Nov. 1916	44s.
May 1917	49s.
Aug. 1917	52s.
Dec. 1917	57s.
June 1918	62s.
Sept. 1918	65s. 6d.
Aug. 1919	80s.
May 1920	105s.
Oct. 1921	99s.
Dec. 1921	94s.
Nov. 1923	90s. 10d.
Jan. 1924	88s. 1½d.

Source: *Workmen's Register*, 1913-24, BL/BC/MB/334, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA.

Table 7. L: Sawmill Workers' Wages in Cork, 1917-23.⁷

Sawyers	
Date	Weekly Wage
Jan. 1917	34s.
May 1917	38s.
Jan. 1919	49s.
May 1919	59s.
Feb. 1920	62s. 6d.
May 1920	78s. 4d.
Nov. 1923	66s. 7d.
Labourers	
Date	Hourly Rate
Dec. 1919	8½d.
Feb. 1920	1s. 1d.
July 1920	1s. 4d.
Nov. 1923	1s. 1d.

Source: CE, 1917-20; LG, 1917-20.

Table 7. M: Electricians' Wages in Cork, 1917-24

Date	Wage
Mid-1917	36s.
Dec. 1917	40s.
Sept. 1918	61s. 6d.
Apr. 1919	74s.
Jan. 1920	88s. 7d.
May 1920	101s. 10d.
Oct. 1921	95s. 10d.
Dec. 1921	90s. 10d.
Jan. 1924	88s. 1½d.

Source: *Workmen's Register*, 1913-24, BL/BC/MB/334, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA.

Table 7. N: Maltsters' Wage in Cork, 1917-26

Date	Wage
Mar. 1917	28s. 6d.
Aug. 1917	32s. 6d.
Oct. 1917	34s.
Nov. 1917	36s.
Feb. 1918	43s.
Aug. 1918	50s.
Mar. 1919	58s.
May 1919	63s.
Mar. 1920	75s. 6d.
Oct. 1920	83s.
Oct. 1925	78s.
Jan. 1926	73s.

Source: Maltings' directors' minutes, 1917-25, BL/BC/MB/218, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA.

Table 7. O: Brewery Labourers' Wages in Cork, 1917-20

Date	Wage
July 1917	30s.
Feb. 1918	35s.
July 1918	40s.
Feb. 1919	45s.
May 1919	50s.
Mar. 1920	62s. 6d.
Oct. 1920	70s.
July 1925	65s.
Jan. 1926	60s.

Source: Murphy's brewery minutes, 1917-27, BL/BC/MB/205-215, Murphy's brewery collection, UCC.

Table 7. P: Bakers' Wages in Cork, 1914-22.

Date	Wage
July 1914	32s.
July 1917	40s.
Apr. 1919	42s.
May 1919	66s.
Dec. 1919	71s.
June 1920	84s.
Oct. 1922	96s.

Source: *CE*, 16, 26 May 1919, 19 Apr., 1 June 1920, 21 Oct. 1922.

Appendix 8: Wages agreed by unions and the CEF, October & November 1923

Table 8. A: Teenage Labour Wage Scale from 8 November 1923

Boys		Girls	
Age	Wage	Age	Wage
14-14½	10s.	15-16	12s.
14½-15	12s.	16-17	14s.
15-16	14s. 6d.	17-18	16s.
16-17	18s.	18-19	20s.
17-18	22s.	19-20	24s.
18-19	29s.	20-21	28s.
19-20	36s. 6d.	21 and over	30s.
20-21	40s.		

Table 8. B: Minimum Wages of Male Assistants and Clerks in the Hardware Trade, 1920-1924

Position in Business	1920 (Peak Rate)	12 Nov. 1923	1 Aug. 1924
1 st Year	20s.	18s. 6d.	17s. 6d.
2 nd Year	25s.	23s. 1½d.	21s. 10½d.
3 rd Year	32s. 6d.	31s. ¾d.	28s. 5¼d.
4 th Year	45s.	41s. 7½d.	39s. 4½d.
5 th Year	55s.	50s. 10½d.	48s. 1½d.
6 th Year	65s.	60s. 10½d.	56s. 10½d.
7 th Year	77s. 6d.	71s. 8¼d.	67s. 9¾d.
8 th Year	77s. 6d.	71s. 8¼d.	67s. 9¾d.
9 th Year	85s.	78s. 7½d.	74s. 4½d.
10 th Year and over	92s. 6d.	85s. 6¾d.	80s. 11¼d.
Charge Hands	105s.	97s. 1½d.	81s. 10½d.
Ledger Hands with Ten Years' Office Experience	105s.	97s. 1½d.	81s. 10½d.

Table 8. C: Wages of Female Assistants in the Hardware Trade

Years at Business	Wage
1 st Year	16s. 6d.
2 nd Year	20s.
3 rd Year	25s.
4 th Year	30s.
5 th Year	37s. 6d.
6 th Year and Over	45s.

Table 8. D: Wages of Female Typists and Clerks in the Hardware Trade

Years at Business	Wage
1 st Year	17s. 6d.
2 nd Year	22s. 6d.
3 rd Year	30s.
4 th Year	35s.
5 th Year	40s.
6 th Year and Over	47s. 6d.

Table 8. E: Wages of Girl Typists and Clerks

Years at Business	Wage
1 st Year	17s. 6d.
2 nd Year	22s. 6d.
3 rd Year	27s. 6d.
4 th Year	32s. 6d.
5 th Year	37s. 6d.
6 th Year	42s. 6d.
7 th and over	47s. 6d.

Table 8. F: Wages for Male Assistants in the Retail Grocery Trade, 1920-24

Position in Business	Peak Rate in 1920	Rate from 12 Nov. 1923	Rate from 1 Aug. 1924
1 st Year	20s.	18s. 6d.	17s. 6d.
2 nd Year	25s.	23s. 1½d.	21s. 10½d.
3 rd Year	32s. 6d.	30s. ¾d.	28s. 5¼d.
4 th Year	45s.	41s. 7½d.	39s. 4½d.
5 th Year	55s.	50s. 10½d.	48s. 1½d.
6 th Year	65s.	60s. 1½d.	56s. 10½d.
7 th Year	77s. 6d.	71s. 8¼d.	67s. 9¾d.
8 th Year	85s.	78s. 7½d.	74s. 4½d.
9 th Year	92s. 6d.	85s. 6¾d.	80s. 11¼d.
Charge Hands	110s.	101s. 9d.	96s. 3d.

Table 8. G: Wages for Female Assistants in the Retail Grocery Trade, 1920-24

Position in Business	Peak Rate in 1920	Rate from 12 Nov. 1923	Rate from 1 Aug. 1924
1 st Year	18s.	16s. 7¾d.	15s. 9d.
2 nd Year	22s. 6d.	20s. ¾d.	19s. ¼d.
3 rd Year	27s. 6d.	25s. 5¼d.	24s. ¾d.
4 th Year	32s. 6d.	30s. ¾d.	28s. 5¼d.
5 th Year	37s. 6d.	34s. 8¼d.	32s. 9¾d.
6 th Year	42s. 6d.	39s. 3¾d.	37s. 2¼d.
7 th Year and Over	47s. 6d.	43s. 11¼d.	41s. 6¾d.

Table 8. H: Wages for Warehouse, Office and Counting Housemen in the Wholesale Drapery Trade, 1920-24

Position in Business	Peak rate in 1920	Rate from 12 Nov. 1923	Rate from 1 Aug. 1924
1 st Year	22s. 6d.	20s. 9¾d.	19s. 8¼d.
2 nd Year	27s. 6d.	25s. 5¼d.	24s. ¾d.
3 rd Year	37s. 6d.	34s. 8¼d.	32s. 9¾d.
4 th Year	57s. 6d.	53s. 2¼d.	50s. 3¾d.
5 th Year	67s. 6d.	62s. 5¼d.	59s. ¾d.
6 th Year	75s.	69s. 4½d.	65s. 7½d.
7 th Year	77s. 6d.	71s. 8¼d.	67s. 9¾d.
8 th Year	80s.	74s.	70s.
9 th Year	85s.	78s. 7½d.	74s. ½d.
10 th Year and Over	90s.	83s. 3d.	78s. 9d.
Charge Hands and Ledger Clerks	105s.	97s. 1½d.	91s. 10½d.

Table 8. I: Wages of Lady Shorthand Typists in the Wholesale Drapery Trade, 1920-24

Position in Business	Peak Rate in 1920	Rate from 12 Nov. 1923	Rate from 1 Aug. 1924
1 st Year	35s.	32s. 4½d.	30s. 7½d.
2 nd Year	40s.	37s.	35s.
3 rd Year	47s. 6d.	43s. 11¼d.	28s. 1½d.
4 th Year	55s.	50s. 10½d.	48s. 1½d.
5 th Year	60s.	54s. 6d.	52s. 6d.

Table 8. J: Annual Salaries for Shop Assistants in the Retail Drapery Trade

Males			Females		
Years at Business	12 Nov. 1923	1 Aug. 1924	Years at Business	12 Nov. 1923	1 Aug. 1924
1 st	£36. 1s. 6d.	£34. 2s. 6d.	1 st Year	£36. 1s. 6d.	£34. 2s. 6d.
2 nd	£48. 2s.	£45s. 10s.	2 nd Year	£48. 2s.	£45. 10s.
3 rd	£66. 12s.	£63.	3 rd Year	£66. 12s.	£63s.
4 th	£84. 3s. 6d.	£79. 12s.	4 th Year	£84. 3s. 6d.	£79. 12s. 6d.
5 th	£113. 15s. 6d.	£107. 12s. 6d.	5 th Year	£103. 12s.	£98.
6 th	£131. 7s.	£124. 5s.	6 th Year	£118. 8s.	£112.
7 th	£144. 6s.	£136. 10s.	7 th Year	£129. 10s.	£122. 10s.
8 th	£157. 5s.	£148. 15s.	8 th Year	£141. 10s. 6d.	£133. 17s. 6d.
9 th & 10 th	£170. 4s.	£161.	9 th & 10 th Years	£153. 11s.	£145. 5s.
Over Ten Years	£192. 8s.	£182	Over Ten Years	£173. 18s.	£164. 10s.
Charge Hands	£222.	£210.	Charge Hands	£192. 8s.	£182.

Table 8. K: Annual Salaries for Office Clerks in the Retail Drapery Trade, 1920-24

Males			Females		
Years at Business	From 12 Nov. 1923	From 1 Aug. 1924	Years at Business	From 12 Nov. 1923	From 1 Aug. 1924
1 st	£36. 1s. 6d.	£34. 2s. 6d.	1 st Year	£36. 1s. 6d.	£34. 2s. 6d.
2 nd	£48. 2s.	£45s. 10s.	2 nd Year	£48. 2s.	£45. 10s.
3 rd	£72. 3s.	£68. 5s.	3 rd Year	£72. 3s.	£68. 5s.
4 th	£96. 4s.	£91.	4 th Year	£96. 4s.	£91.
5 th	£127. 13s.	£120. 15s.	5 th Year	£114. 14s.	£108. 10s.
6 th	£143. 7s. 6d.	£135. 12s. 6d.	6 th Year	£129. 10s.	£122. 10s. 10d.
7 th	£156. 6s. 6d.	£147. 17s. 6d.	7 th Year	£140. 12s.	£133.
8 th	£169. 5s. 6d.	£160. 2s. 6d.	8 th Year	£152. 12s. 6d.	£144. 7s. 6d.
9 th & 10 th	£182. 4s. 6d.	£172. 7s. 6d.	9 th & 10 th Years	£164. 13s.	£155. 15s.
Over Ten Years	£204. 8s. 6d.	£193. 7s. 6d.	Over Ten Years	£185.	£175.
Charge Hands	£227. 15s. 6d.	£212. 12s. 6d.	Charge Hands	£203. 10s.	£192. 10s.

Table 8. L: Wages for Assistants in the Oil and Colour Trade from 23 November 1923

Position in Business	Female	Male
1 st Year	15s.	12s.
2 nd Year	18s.	20s.
3 rd Year	21s.	26s.
4 th Year	24s.	33s.
5 th Year	27s.	45s.
6 th Year	30s.	52s. 6d.
7 th Year	32s.	60s.
8 th Year	34s.	62s. 6d.
9 th Year	36s.	65s.
10 th Year	37s.	70s.
Charge Hands	42s. 6d.	75s.

Table 8. M: Minimum Rates for Clerks and Typists from 23 November 1923

Position at Business	Female	Male
1 st Year	16s.	17s.
2 nd Year	20s.	21s.
3 rd Year	25s.	28s.
4 th Year	28s.	36s.
5 th Year	30s.	46s.
6 th Year	35s.	54s.
7 th Year	38s.	62s. 6d.
8 th Year	40s.	65s.
9 th Year	42s. 6d.	70s.
10 th Year	44s.	75s.
Charge Hands	50s.	80s.

Table 8. N: Wages in the Seed and Manure Trade from 23 November 1923

Position in Business	Female	Male
1 st Year	15s. 6d.	17s. 6d.
2 nd Year	20s.	22s.
3 rd Year	25s.	29s.
4 th Year	31s.	39s.
5 th Year	36s.	48s.
6 th Year	40s.	56s.
7 th Year	43s.	64s.
8 th Year	45s.	67s.
9 th Year	47s. 6d.	74s.
10 th Year	47s. 6d.	78s.
Charge Hands	55s.	87s.

Table 8. O: Wages for Teenagers in Soap and Candle Trade from 23 November 1923

Boys		Girls	
Age	Wage	Age	Wage
14-15 (first six months)	10s.	15-16	12s.
14-15 (second six months)	12s.	16-17	14s.
15-16	14s.	17-18	16s.
16-17	16s.	18-19	20s.
17-18	20s.	19-20	22s. 6d.
18-19	25s.	20-21	25s.
19-20	30s.	Over 21	27s. 6d.
20-21	35s.		

Table 8. P: Wages for Adult Male Workers in the Soap and Candle Trade from 23 November 1923

Age	Wage
21-22	38s.
22-23	42s.
23-24	45s.
24-25	48s.
25-26	52s.
Over 26	54s.

Table 8. Q: Dockside Wages and Reductions from 25 October 1923

Coal Section	
Storemen & carters	60s.
Casual workers	1½d. per hour reduction
Tonnage workers	½d. per ton reduction
Cross-channel section	
Single-horse carters	60s.
Double-horse carters	62s.
Loaders	58s.
Storemen	4s. reduction
Store clerks	4s. reduction
Checkers	4s. reduction
Casual workers	1½d. per hour reduction
Continental & deep-sea section	
Casual workers	1½d. per hour reduction
Tonnage workers	½d. per ton reduction
Grain section	
Daily casuals	13s. per day
Daily weighmen	14s. per day
Storemen	58s. per week
Weighmasters	58s. per week
Filling & portering grain	1s. 10d. per ton
Timber section	
Casual workers	1s. per day reduction

Source: CEF, Trades Disputes 1923.

Appendix 9: Prices in Ireland and the UK, 1890-1930

Table 9. A: UK Wholesale Prices Indices, 1880-1920 (1900=100)

Year	Coals & Metals	Textile Fibres	Food & Drink (Total) ⁸	Miscellaneous Materials	Total Index
1880	64.8	130.0	140.9	124.4	129.0
1881	61.9	127.6	138.6	123.0	126.6
1882	62.2	123.4	141.0	123.7	127.7
1883	60.7	119.1	139.7	121.6	125.9
1884	57.5	115.2	123.9	114.5	114.1
1885	54.6	108.9	115.4	111.4	107.0
1886	52.6	99.9	109.9	101.7	101.0
1887	53.9	102.7	106.5	95.3	98.8
1888	56.6	101.2	110.5	98.0	101.8
1889	62.7	105.1	110.4	103.1	103.4
1890	74.9	105.4	108.5	99.4	103.3
1891	70.1	101.4	116.3	95.0	106.9
1892	65.2	95.6	109.9	92.5	101.1
1893	59.0	96.4	108.6	89.3	99.4
1894	60.0	88.6	101.9	84.5	93.5
1895	56.8	84.3	98.9	84.9	90.7
1896	55.5	92.9	93.3	86.5	88.2
1897	56.3	86.8	97.4	86.9	90.1
1898	61.7	80.0	102.2	89.7	93.2
1899	72.4	82.9	98.0	91.3	92.2
1900	100	100	100	100	100
1901	82.2	93.3	100.1	96.3	96.7
1902	76.1	92.3	100.6	92.5	96.4
1903	74.1	101.7	101.2	91.7	96.9
1904	70.9	112.9	101.2	88.3	98.2
1905	71.3	106.7	101.0	91.1	97.6
1906	78.3	121.1	105.5	95.6	100.8
1907	86.9	127.4	107.0	99.7	106.0
1908	78.5	109.8	108.7	94.8	103.0
1909	73.6	112.4	109.2	96.5	104.1
1910	76.6	136.2	111.6	104.3	108.8
1911	74.7	128.9	119.9	105.5	109.4
1912	84.9	119.6	117.7	110.1	114.9
1913	92.5	135.0	120.9	109.4	116.5
1914	86.7	128.8	154.1	111.3	117.2
1915	116.7	119.8	108.7	143.8	143.9
1916	165.8	180.1	189.4	204.0	186.5
1917	182.0	270.4	246.2	256.3	243.0
1918	204.9	354.4	260.3	268.6	268.1
1919	180.2	373.3	279.7	317.8	296.5
1920	419.2	503.7	334.1	336.6	368.8

Source: Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, pp. 728-729.

Table 9. B: UK Wholesale Prices, 1920-30 (1913=100)

Year	Food (Total) ⁹	Coal	Iron & Steel	Other Metals & Minerals	Cotton	Wool	Other Textiles ¹⁰	Other Articles ¹¹	Total Index
1920	271.8	-	357.8	-	480.2	-	-	272.9	307.3
1921	209.0	242.9	209.9	131.9	192.3	158.3	193.7	195.6	197.2
1922	165.2	171.7	136.8	116.2	182.2	160.6	173.3	166.0	158.8
1923	154.5	179.3	147.2	114.1	201.9	179.2	159.7	161.9	158.9
1924	166.3	172.4	142.9	120.3	227.8	219.0	165.6	157.6	166.2
1925	166.5	146.0	126.0	121.6	209.8	196.9	171.9	157.4	159.1
1926	154.8	184.6	123.5	120.1	158.3	169.5	147.5	145.0	148.1
1927	152.0	133.6	119.9	111.9	154.7	170.2	138.5	142.5	141.6
1928	152.3	117.9	112.3	107.1	164.2	185.9	137.8	142.3	140.3
1929	145.3	124.5	114.2	116.0	154.4	165.6	131.6	135.5	136.5
1930	126.6	121.4	112.7	95.0	121.2	122.4	101.7	123.8	119.5

Source: Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 729.

Table 9. C: UK Retail Price Index, 1892-1914 (1900=100)

Year	Food	Coal	Clothing
1892	103.9	74.4	101.0
1893	99.3	83.4	100.3
1894	94.9	70.5	99.1
1895	92.1	68.8	97.8
1896	91.7	68.2	98.6
1897	95.5	70.2	98.2
1898	99.5	72.1	97.0
1899	95.4	79.3	96.2
1900	100.0	100.0	100.0
1901	100.4	89.0	100.6
1902	101.0	84.6	99.9
1903	102.8	80.9	99.7
1904	102.4	79.4	102.3
1905	102.8	78.4	103.0
1906	102.8	78.4	104.5
1907	105.0	88.9	106.2
1908	107.5	85.6	107.1
1909	107.6	84.1	108.4
1910	109.4	83.8	110.7
1911	109.4	85.1	113.4
1912	114.5	87.0	115.5
1913	114.8	90.7	115.9
1914 (Jan.-July)	111.6	92.5	117.4

Source: Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 739.

Table 9. D: UK Retail Price Index, 1915-30 (July 1914=100)

Year	Food	All Items
1915	131	123
1916	160	146
1917	198½	176
1918	215	203
1919	219	215
1920	256	249
1921	229½	226
1922	176	183
1923	169	174
1924	170	175
1925	171	176
1926	164	172
1927	160	167½
1928	157	166
1929	154	164
1930	145	158

Source: Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 739.

Table 9. E: UK Cost of Living Index, 1889-1930 (July 1914=100)

Year	Food	Rent	Clothing	Fuel	Sundries	Overall
1880	115	91	86	86	95	105
1881	112	91	86	90	91	103
1882	111	91	85	85	91	102
1883	112	92	83	88	87	102
1884	104	92	82	87	83	97
1885	94	93	81	87	80	91
1886	91	93	81	85	76	89
1887	88	93	80	84	76	88
1888	89	93	79	86	78	88
1889	91	93	79	86	80	89
1890	90	93	81	93	81	89
1891	92	94	81	91	77	89
1892	93	95	80	91	74	90
1893	88	96	79	85	68	89
1894	85	96	79	85	68	85
1895	82	97	78	83	68	83
1896	82	98	79	84	68	83
1897	85	98	78	85	68	85
1898	88	99	77	85	67	88
1899	85	99	76	92	69	86
1900	89	100	79	116	91	86
1901	89	100	79	116	91	91
1902	90	100	73	99	81	90
1903	92	100	79	94	82	91
1904	91	100	79	94	82	91
1905	92	100	87	91	85	92
1906	91	100	96	92	95	93
1907	94	100	93	103	97	95
1908	96	100	75	100	82	93
1909	96	100	77	98	85	94
1910	97	100	88	98	92	96
1911	97	100	94	99	95	97
1912	102	100	94	101	100	100
1913	103	100	101	100	104	102
1914 (Jan.- July)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: A.L. Bowley, *Wages and Income in the United Kingdom since 1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1937), pp. 121-122.

Table 9. F: Free State Cost of Living Index, 1922-32 (July 1914=100)

Year¹²	Food	Rent	Clothing	Fuel & Light	Cost of Living
1922 (Apr.)	191	127	194	216	191
1923	198	128	183	202	190
1924	196	127	174	201	188
1925	203	127	190	205	195
1926	187	127	206	197	188
1927	178	127	197	218	182
1928	175	127	196	172	177
1929	173	127	206	176	177
1930	172	128	212	183	179
1931	154	130	207	174	166
1932 (Feb.)	151	-	-	-	162

Source: Irish Free State, *Statistical Abstract* (Dublin: Stationary Office), 1931, 1932.

Appendix 10: Wages in the Cork & Derry Building Trades, 1872-1930

Table 10. A: Building Trade Wages in Cork, 1916-24

Workers	Wage	Date
Tradesmen (except plumbers & painters)	37s. 6d.	Sept. 1916
Painters	36s. 1½d.	Sept. 1916
Plumbers & gasfitters	38s. 3d.	Oct. 1916
Plumbers & gasfitters	41s. 5¼d.	Nov. 1916
Tradesmen (except carpenters & joiners, plumbers & painters)	42s. 6d.	Apr. 1917
Carpenters & joiners	41s. 6s.	Apr. 1917
Carpenters & joiners	43s. 9d.	May 1917
Plumbers	46s. 9d.	Jan. 1918
Masons & bricklayers	44s. 7½d.	Jan. 1918
Plumbers	47s. 11d.	Apr. 1918
Carpenters & joiners	58s. 4d.	Apr. 1918
Plasterers	54s. 2d.	Apr. 1918
Painters	39s. 7d.	Apr. 1918
Painters	50s.	May 1918
Painters, plasterers, masons & bricklayers	66s. 8d.	Apr. 1919
Plumbers	75s.	May 1919
Building tradesmen (except Plumbers, carpenters & joiners)	70s. 10d.	Nov. 1919
Carpenters & joiners	78s. 4d.	Jan. 1920
Building tradesmen (except plumbers)	78s. 4d.	Jan. 1920
Plumbers	83s. 4d.	Jan. 1920
Building tradesmen (except plumbers)	94s.	May 1920
plumbers	100s.	May 1920
Building tradesmen (except plumbers)	82s. 3d.	Nov. 1923
plumbers	87s. 6d.	Nov. 1923

Source: LG, 1916-21; CE, 1917-24; *Workmen's Register*, 1914-24, BL/BC/MB/334, Murphy's brewery collection, UCCA

Table 10. B: Building Tradesmen's Wages, 1872-1930 in Cork (per week unless stated otherwise)

Year (31 Dec.)	C&J	M&B	Stncttrs	Sltrs	Plstrs	Plmbrs	Pntrs
1870	30s.	-	-	-	-	34s.	30s.
1871	-	-	-	-	-	-	30s.
1872	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1873	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1874	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1875	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1876	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1877	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1878	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1879	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1880	33s.	30s.	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	30s.
1881	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1882	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1883	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1884	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1885	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1886	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1887	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1888	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1889	33s.	-	-	-	-	7¼d. hrly	-
1890	33s.	33s.	-	-	33s.	7¼d. hrly	33s.
1891	33s.	33s.	-	-	33s.	7¼d. hrly	33s.
1892	33s.	33s.	33s.	-	33s.	7¼d. hrly	33s.
1893	33s.	33s.	33s.	-	33s.	32s. 7½d.	33s.
1894	33s.	33s.	33s.	-	33s.	34s.	33s.
1895	33s.	33s.	33s.	-	33s.	34s.	33s.
1896	33s.	33s.	33s.	-	33s.	34s.	33s.
1897	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	-	34s. 6d..	34s.	33s.
1898	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	-
1899	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	-
1900	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s. 6d.
1901	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	-	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1902	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	-	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1903	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	-	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1904	34s. 6d.	36s.	-	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1905	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1906	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1907	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1908	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1909	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1910	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1911	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1912	34s. 6d.	36s.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1913	34s. 6d.	36s.	-	34s. 6d.	34s. 6d.	34s.	34s.
1914	37s. 6d.	36s.	-	-	37s. 6d.	-	36s. 2d.
1915	37s. 6d.	-	-	-	38s. 3d.	-	36s. 2d.
1916	37s. 6d.	37s. 6d.	-	37s. 6d.	41s. 5d.	41s. 5¼d.	38s. 3d.
1917	41s. 8d.	44s. 7½d.	-	41s. 8d.	41s. 8d.	45s.	39s. 7d.
1918	58s. 4d.	54s. 2d.	-	-	54s. 2d.	62s. 4d.	50s.
1919	78s. 4d.	78s. 4d.	78s. 4d	78s. 4d.	78s. 4d.	83s. 4d.	78s. 4d.

1920	94s.	94s.	94s.	94s.	94s.	100s.	94s.
1921	94s.	94s.	94s.	94s.	94s.	100s.	94s.
1922	94s.	94s.	94s.	94s.	94s.	100s.	94s.
1923	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	87s. 6d.	82s. 3d.
1924	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	87s. 6d.	82s. 3d.
1925	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	87s. 6d.	82s. 3d.
1926	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	87s. 6d.	82s. 3d.
1927	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	87s. 6d.	82s. 3d.
1928	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	87s. 6d.	82s. 3d.
1929	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	82s. 3d.	87s. 6d.	82s. 3d.

Source: LG, 1894-1930; *Report on Standard Time-Rates of Wages in United Kingdom, 1900*, 1900, Cd.317, LXXXII, pp. 128-129; *Workmen's Register*, 1912-36, BL/BC/MB/334-335, Murphy's brewery material, UCCA; Cronin, 'Work and Workers', pp. 730-731.

Table 10. C: Builders' Labourers' Wages in Cork, 1892-1930

Year (Dec. unless stated otherwise)	Wage
1880	13s.
1881	-
1882	-
1883	-
1884	-
1885	-
1886	-
1887	-
1888	-
1889	14s.
1890	14s.
1891	15s.
1892	15s.
1893	15s.
1894	15s.
1895	15s.
1896	16s.
1897	16s.
1898	16s.
1899	16s.
1900	17s.
1901	17s.
1902	18s.
1903	18s.
1904	18s.
1905	18s.
1906	18s.
1907	18s.
1908	18s.
1909	19s.
1910	19s.
1911	19s.
1912	19s.
1913 (Oct.)	19s.
1914	20s.
1915	21s.
1916	21s.
1917	27s. 7½d.
1918	37s. 6d.
1919	62s. 8d.
1920	78s. 4d.
1921	78s. 4d.
1922	78s. 4d.
1923	66s. 7d.
1924	66s. 7d.
1925	-
1926	-
1927	58s. 9d.
1928 (Mar.)	54s. 10d.
1928	52s. 10½d.

1929	52s. 10½d.
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Source: *LG*, 1894-1931; *Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence, Appendices (Group C) Volume II, Textile, Clothing, Chemical, Building and Miscellaneous Trades*, 1892, C.6795-VI, p. 240; Cronin, 'Work and Workers', pp. 730-731; *CE*, 1893-1930.

Table 10. D: Building Trade Increases and Wages in Derry, 1917-25

Date	Workers	Increase/Decrease	Wage
1 Jan. 1917	Bricklayers, carpenters & joiners	-	36s.
1 May 1917	Bricklayers, carpenters & joiners	1d. an hour increase	40s. 6d.
2 July 1917	Painters	Increases of ½d. an hour and a weekly war bonus of 2s.	42s. 6d.
1 Jan 1918	Plumbers	1d. an hour increase	45s.
Sept. 1918	Painters	5s. bonus increase	-
1 Jan. 1919	Painters	-	45s. (plus bonus)
1 Apr. 1919	Painters	5d. an hour increase	-
9 July 1919	Bricklayers, carpenters & plasterers	¾ an hour increase	73s. 5¼d.
28 Sept. 1919	Plumbers	6s. 6d. a week increase	-
28 Sept. 1919	Woodworkers	6s. a week increase	-
28 Sept. 1919	Sawyers	7s. a week increase	-
Dec. 1919	Electricians	Uniform rates adapted	-
1 Mar. 1920	Painters.	6d. hourly increase (to 1s. 9d.) and a forty-seven-hour week (from fifty)	82s. 3d.
1 June 1920	Bricklayers	3d. an hour increase	94s. 11½d.
July 1920	Tradesmen	1d. an hour increase	99s. 10½d.
Sept. 1921	Tradesmen	2½d. an hour decrease	90s. 1d.
May 1922	Tradesmen	1d. an hour decrease	86s. 2d.
Nov. 1922	Tradesmen	5d. an hour decrease	66s. 7d.
June 1924	Tradesmen	1d. an hour increase	70s. 6d.

Source: LG, 1917-25; DJ, 1917-25; O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, p. 32.

Table 10. E: Building Tradesmen's Wages in Derry, 1892-1930

Year	C&J	M&B	Sltrs	Plstrs	Plmbrs	Pntrs
1892	28s. 3d.	-	-	-	-	-
1893	28s. 3d.	-	-	-	26 1½d.- 28s.	-
1894	33s.	-	-	-	-	-
1895	-	-	-	-	-	-
1896	35s. 4¼d.	28s. 6d.	-	27s. 6d.	-	-
1897	-	30s. 7¼d.	-	31s. 10½d.	-	-
1898	-	-	-	-	-	-
1899	30s. 7¼d. & 32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	-	-	-	-
1900	30s. 7¼d. & 32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	30s. 7¼d.	32s. 11½d.	-	35s. 3¾d.
1901	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	-	32s. 11½d.	-	-
1902	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	-	32s. 11½d.	-	-
1903	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	-	32s. 11½d.	-	-
1904	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	-	32s. 11½d.	-	-
1905	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1906	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1907	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1908	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1909	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1910	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1911	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1912	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1913	32s. 11½d.	32s. 11½d.	37s. 8d.	32s. 11½d.	29s. 3d.	32s. 11½d.
1914	-	-	-	-	-	-
1915	-	-	-	-	-	-
1916	39s.	39s.	-	-	-	-
1917	43s. 6d.	43s. 6d.	-	-	-	45s.
1918	-	-	-	-	-	45s. (plus bonus)
1919	79s. 5¼d.	84s. 2½d.	-	-	-	62s. 6d.
1920	99s. 10½d.	99s. 10½d.	99s. 10½d.	99s. 10½d.	99s. 10½d.	99s. 10½d.
1921	90s. 1d.	90s. 1d.	90s. 1d.	90s. 1d.	90s. 1d.	90s. 1d.
1922	66s. 7d.	66s. 7d.	66s. 7d.	66s. 7d.	70s. 6d.	66s. 7d.
1923	66s. 7d.	66s. 7d.	66s. 7d.	66s. 7d.	70s. 6d.	66s. 7d.
1924	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.
1925	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.
1926	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.
1927	70s. 6d.	76s. 4½d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.
1928	70s. 6d.	76s. 4½d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.
1929	70s. 6d.	76s. 4½d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.
1930	70s. 6d.	76s. 4½d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.	70s. 6d.

Source: LG, 1893-1930; Royal Commission on Labour, Minutes of Evidence, Appendices (Group C) Volume II, Textile, Clothing, Chemical, Building and Miscellaneous Trades, p. 462.

Appendix 11: Wages set by Irish Trade Boards¹³

Table 11. A: Rates set by the Shirtmaking Trade Boards (Ireland & Northern Ireland), 1914-23

Date Operative	Cutters	Cutters' assistants	Other men	Women	Piecework (male)	Piecework (female)
June 1914			-	3½d.		4½d.
June 1915			-	3¼d.		4¼d.
Sept. 1917			-	3¾-4½d.		4¾-5½d.
Dec. 1917			-	4½d.		5½d.
Jan. 1919			-	5½d.		6½d.
Aug. 1919			-	7½d.		8½d.
Sept. 1919	1s. 5d.	1s. ½d.	-	7½d.	1s. 5d.	8½d.
May 1920	1s. 6½d.	1s. 3d.	-	8d.	1s. 6½d.	9d.
Dec. 1920	1s. 8d.	1s. 6d.	-	8d.	1s. 6d.	9d.
Nov. 1921	1s. 6d.	1s. 4d.	47s. weekly	7d.	1s. 6d.	8d.
2 Apr. 1923	1s. 6d.	1s. 4d.	-	6d.	1s. 6d.	7d.

Table 11. B: Hourly time-rates set by the Tailoring Trade Board (Ireland), 1913-20

Date Operative	Cutters, knifemen, tailors, fitters- up, passers, pressers, machinists	Under-pressers & plain machinists	All other male and home workers	Women
1913				3d.
14 July 1917	6-7d.	6-7d.	6-7d.	3¼-4¼d.
21 Dec. 1917	8d.	8d.	8d.	4½d.
	8d.	8d.	8d.	4½d.
12 Mar. 1920	1s. 4d.	1s. 2d.	1s. ¾d.	8d.

Table 11.C: Hourly piece-rates set by the Tailoring Trade Board (Ireland), 1920

Date Operative	Cutters, knifemen, tailors, fitters- up, passers, pressers, machinists	Under-pressers & plain machinists	All other male and home workers	Women
12 Mar. 1920	1s. 5½d.	1s. 3½d.	1s. 1½d.	9d.

Table 11. D: Hourly Male Time-rates set by Ready-Made and Wholesale Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board (Ireland), 1920-21

Date Operative	Measure cutters	Tailors, fitters-up, passers, pressers, machinists, Stop and knife cutters	Under-pressers, plain machinists	Warehousemen, packers, porters
12 Mar. 1920	1s. 8½d.	1s. 6d.½	1s. 2½d.	1s. 4½d.
18 Oct. 1920	1s. 8½d.	1s. 6d.½	1s. 2½d.	1s. 4½d.
14 Oct. 1921	1s. 8½d.	1s. 6½d.	1s. 2½d.	1s. 1½d.

Table 11. E: Hourly Male Piece-rates set by the Ready-Made and Wholesale Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board (Ireland), 1920-21

Date Operative	Measure cutters	Stop cutters, knife cutters	Tailors, fitters-up, passers, pressers, machinists	Under-pressers, plain machinists	Warehouse men, packers, porters
12 Mar. 1920	1s. 10d.	1s. 8d.	1s. 8d.	1s. 4d.	1s. 6d.
18 Oct. 1920	1s. 10d.	1s. 8d.	1s. 8d.	1s. 4d.	-
14 Oct. 1921	1s. 10d.	1s. 8d.	1s. 8d.	1s. 4d.	1s. 3d.

Table 11. F: Hourly female wages set by the Ready-Made and Wholesale Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board (Ireland), 1920

Date Operative	Cutters, trimmers, fitters-up	Other workers	Piecework
Sept. 1920	9¾d.	8¾d.	9¾d.

Table 11. G: Hourly male rates set by the Retail Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board (Ireland), 1920-22

Date Operative	Time-rates (male)	Piece-rates (male)	Time-rates (female)	Piece-rates (female)
22 July 1920	1s. 7d.	1s. 8½d.		
6 Jan. 1921	-	-	1s.	1s. 1d.
14 Mar. 1921	1s. 2d.	-	10½d.	11½d.
3 May 1921	1s. 6½d.	1s. 8d.	-	-
18 Aug. 1921	1s. 8½d. & 1s. 9d.	1s. 10d. & 1s. 10½d.	-	-
2 Jan. 1922	1s. 7d.	1s. 8½d.	1s.	-
10 Mar. 1923	1s. 5d.	1s. 6¼d.	10¾d.	11¾d.
19 May 1924	-	-	9¾d. ¹⁴	10½d. ¹⁵

Table 11. H: Hourly Male Time-rates fixed by Ready-Made and Wholesale Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board (Northern Ireland), 1922-23

Date Operative	Measure cutters	Tailors, fitters- up, passers, pressers, machinists, stock and knife cutters	Under-pressers, plain machinists	Warehousemen, packers, porters
1 Apr. 1922	1s. 6¼d.	1s. 4½d.	-	-
15 Feb. 1923	1s. 4¼d.	1s. 4d.	11½d.	1s. ¾d., 1s. 10¼d. (respectively) .

Table 11. I: Hourly Female rates set by the Ready-Made and Wholesale Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board (Northern Ireland), 1922-23

Date Operative	Time-rates	Piece-rates
1 Apr. 1922	7d.	8d.
15 Feb. 1923	5¾d.	6¾d.

Table 11. J: Hourly Male Piece-rates fixed by the Ready-Made and Wholesale Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board (Northern Ireland), 1922-23

Date Operative	Measure cutters	Tailors, fitters- up, passers, pressers, machinists, Stop and knife cutters	Under-pressers, plain machinists	Warehousemen, packers, porters
1 Apr. 1922	1s. 7½d.	1s. 5¾d.		
15 Feb. 1923	1s. 5½d.	1s. 3½d.	1s. ½d.	1s. 2d., 1s. ½d. 11¾d. (respectively) .

Table: 11. K: Hourly Rates set by the Dressmaking & Women's Light Clothing Trade Board (Ireland), 1920-21

Date Operative	Cutters	Cutters' assistants	Other men	Women (factory)	Piecework (female)	Piecework (Male)
16 Aug. 1920	1s. 6½d.	1s. 3d.		8d.		
10 Jan. 1921				9d.	10d.	
6 May 1921	1s. 8d.	1s. 6d.	1s. ½d.	8d.	9d.	1s. 8d.
19 Aug. 1921	1s. 8d.			8d.	9d.	
15 Dec. 1921				9½d.	10½d.	

Table 11. L: Hourly time-rates set by the Dressmaking & Women's Light Clothing Trade Board (Northern Ireland), 1921-23

Date Operative	Cutters	Cutters' assistants	Other men	Women (factory)
22 Dec. 1921				9½d.
22 Apr. 1922	1s. 4d.	1s. 4d.	11½d.	6½d.
18 July 1922	1s. 4d.		11½d.	6½d.
19 Mar. 1923				7-8½d.

Table 11. M: Hourly piece-rates set by the Dressmaking & Women's Light Clothing Trade Board (Northern Ireland), 1922-23

Date Operative	Cutters	Cutters' assistants	Other men	Women (factory)
22 Apr. 1922	1s. 5½d.	1s. 5½d.	1s. 1½d.	7½d.
18 July 1922	1s. 5½d.	1s. 5½d.	1s. 1½d.	7½d.
19 Mar. 1923	1s. 6½d.	1s. 6½d.		8-9½d.

Table: 11. N: Hourly Rates set by the Hat, Cap and Millinery Trade Boards (Ireland and Northern Ireland), 1920-24

Date Operative	Time-rates (male)	Piece-rates (male)	Time-rates (female)	Piece-rates (female)
26 May 1920	1s. 2d.	1s. 3½d.		
1 Mar. 1921			9½d.	10½d.
3 Aug. 1923	1s. ½d.		8¼d.	
19 May 1924			6¾d., 7¾d.	

Table 11. O: Rates set by the Wholesale Mantle and Costume Trade Board (Northern Ireland), 1923

Date Operative	Time rate (Male)	Piece rate (Male)	Time rate (Female)	Piece rate (Female)
7 Apr. 1923	1s. ¼d.		6d.	7d.

Table 11. P: Rates set by the Laundry Trade Board (Northern Ireland), 1924

Date Operative	Time-rate	Piece-rate
1 Oct. 1924	6½d.	7d.

Appendix 12: Wage Alterations in Cork & Derry, 1917-25

Table 12. A: Wage Increases in Cork, 1917-25

Workers	Increase	Date
Gasworkers	4s. 8d.	First quarter of 1917
Iron moulders	5s.	Apr. 1917
Drapers' assistants	New wage of 25s.	July 1917
Boot & shoe operatives	5-8s.	July 1917
Boot & shoe operatives	10s.	Aug. 1917
Drapers' assistants	33½ per cent bonus	Aug. 1917
Breadvan drivers ¹⁶	5s.	Aug. 1917
Gasworkers	3d. 6d. & 1s. 9d. (for boys)	Oct. 1917
Tailors	20 per cent	Dec. 1917
Tramwaymen	-	Dec. 1917
Journeymen butchers	40 per cent (old wage was 25s.)	Jan. 1918
Grocers' assistants at Madden's	25 per cent	Feb. 1918
Grocers' assistants at Lipton's	2-20s.	Feb. 1918
Clerks at Guy's printing works	20 per cent	Feb. 1918
Motor-makers	4s.	First quarter of 1918
National Shell Factory checkers, guagers, examiner and assistant superintendents	Hourly wage advanced to 6½d. and a 6s. a week increase	May 1918
National Shell Factory messengers, charwomen, canteen attendants and cloakroom women	Hourly wage advanced to 5½d. and a 6s. a week increase	May 1918
Drapers' assistants	4s. a week for porters and 2d. in the shilling for girls in the draperies.	May 1918
Drapery porters	5s.	July 1918
Flourmill workers	5s.	Oct. 1918
Flourmill workers	7s. 6d. to men and 5s. to boys and women	Jan. 1919
Flourmill workers	7s. 6d. for men and 3s. 9d. for women and boys	Mar. 1920
Upholstery sewing workers and female polishers	1d. an hour, making hourly wages 9½d.	Apr. 1919
Furnishing tradesmen	3d. an hour, making hourly 1s. 4d. wages	Apr. 1919
Printing house machinists	12s. 6d. for night men, 11s. for day men, 5s. for boys and a fortnight's annual holiday.	May 1920
Wholesale and retail porters and packers	3s. 11d.	May 1920
Tramwaymen	10s.	May 1920
Egg and butter workers	15s.	May 1920
Soap workers	15 per cent rise and a forty-seven-hour week	May 1920
Gristmill workers	6s.	May 1920
Timeworkers handling coal	3s. 4d. a day	May 1920
Gristmill workers	4s.	Aug. 1920

Flourmill workers	10s. for men and 5s. for women and boys.	Oct. 1920
Assistants at Egan's, McKenzie's & the Central Boot Stores	Wage increase	Nov. 1922
Assistants Dwyer's, Bailey's & McNay's	Wage increase	May 1923
Assistants at Gill's	Wage increases and reduced hours	May 1923

Source: *DJ*, 1917-25.

Table 12. B: Alterations at the City of Cork Steam Packet Company, 1917-23

Workers	Alteration	Date
Quayside labourers	Increase of 2d. an hour	Oct. 1917
Quay labourers and carmen	Increase of 1½d. an hour for men and ½d. for boys	Nov. 1917
Office Staff	Monthly increases of 40s. for married male office staff, and 20s. and 10s. for single men and women	Nov. 1917
Seafarers	Increase of 17s. 6d. (making wages 77s.)	Dec. 1917
Carters & loaders	Increase of 7s. 6d. ¹⁷	June 1918
Coal carmen	Increase 4s. 6d.	June 1918
Teenage quayside labourers	Increase of 7s. 6d.	June 1918
Labourers	45s. wage and a forty-seven-hour week (from sixty)	Sept. 1918
Labourers	Increases of 5s. for men and 3. for boys	Oct. 1919
Labourers	Increase of 5s.	Nov. 1919
Labourers	Increase of 20s. a week, making wages 14s. a day	May 1920
Labourers	Incorporation of war bonuses into rates, making wages 70-80s. ¹⁸	Nov. 1920
Store clerks & checkers	4s. a week cut	Sept. 1921
Store clerks & checkers	4s. a week cut	Feb. 1923
Store clerks, checkers & watchmen	4s. a week cut	Oct. 1923
Salaried staff	8s. 4d. a month cut	Oct. 1923

Source: City of Cork Steam Packet Co. collection, U370/F/190-199, CCCA.

Table 12. C: Wage Advances in Derry, 1917-21

Workers	Advance(s)	Date
LLSR drivers & firemen	Higher wage scale	June 1917
Dockers	1d. per hour for casual men & 3s. a week for permanent men	Aug. 1917
Coal porters	1d. per ton	Aug. 1917
ASE	3s.	Aug. 1917
Gasworkers	3s. 1d.	Jan. 1918
Fitters	1d. an hour	Jan. 1918
Gas Company office staff	Annual salaries of £52, £70, £110, £115 and £200.	Jan. 1918
Shirt cutters & apprentices	5s. & 2s. respectively ¹⁹	Feb. 1918
Distillery workers	3s. for adults and 1s. for boys	First quarter of 1918
Bleachers	4s.	First quarter of 1918
Shirt factory mechanics and firemen	5s. and 2s. 6d. for apprentices	First quarter of 1918
Munition workers at Mackie & Co.	7½ per cent bonus	First quarter of 1918
Railway workers	25s. to men, 12s. 6d. to boys and women, and 6s. 3d. to girls	May 1918
bottling and aerated water workers	5s. and less hours	Mid-1918
distillery and yeast workers	4s. for men and 2s. 6d. for boys	Mid-1918
Pork curers	Improved wages	Mid-1918
Gas company carters	Wage of 1s. an hour	June 1918
Engineers	3s. 6d.	Aug. 1918
Railway workers	5s. to men and 2s. 6s. to boys	Sept. 1918
Gas company firemen & labourers	4s. 8d. & 2s. 4d. respectively	Oct. 1918
Box factory women	25 per cent wage	Dec. 1918
Gaslight company firemen & labourers	4s. 8d. & 7s. respectively	Jan. 1919
Boot & shoe operatives	45 per cent increase	Feb. 1919
Gas workers	Eight-hour day	Mar. 1919
Irish Boot & Shoe Operatives	New weekly wage scale: 13s. to 56s. for men and 12s. to 30s. for women	Mar. 1919
Irish Boot & Shoe Operatives	Forty-Seven-Hour Week	June 1919
Electricians	Belfast rates	May 1919
Carters	4s., making wages 48s. for a forty-eight-hour week. ²⁰	May 1919
Pork curers	4s. a week	Aug. 1919
Plumbers	6s. a week	Sept. 1919
Carpenters & joiners	6s. 6d. a week	Sept. 1919
Sawyers	7s.	Sept. 1919
Gaslight company yardmen and firemen	Hourly increase of 1d. for yardmen and 1½d. for firemen	Sept. 1919
Gaslight company yardmen, firemen and enginemen.	Wage increases	Dec. 1919
Gaslight company labourers & firemen	5s.	Apr. 1920

Tailors	Wage of 11d. per log hour	Sept. 1920
Flourmill labourers	Increases of 5-6s. for men and 2s. 6d. to 3s. for boys and women	Oct. 1920
Railway workers	Increases of 2s. for trafficmen, 1s. for boy engine, and 4s. for the rest.	Nov. 1920
Tillie's warehouse staff	10 per cent raise	Dec. 1920

Source: LG, 1917-25; undated memorandum of agreement between the NUBSO and the Irish Manufacturers Association, LAB 83/1591, Min. of Labour records, UKNA; NUBSO, Monthly Reports for May 1919, 547/P/1/35, NUBSO collection, MRC, UW.

Table 12. D: Wage Alterations in Derry, 1921-25

Workers/union	Alteration	Date
Engineers	3s. a week cut	May 1921
Masons & bricklayers	3½d. an hour cut	June 1921
Masons & bricklayers	1d. an hour raise	July 1921
Dockers	1s. a day cut	Sept. 1921
Engineers	3s. a week cut	Sept. 1921
LLSR workshop apprentices	Wages lessened to 100 per cent above 1914 levels	Sept. 1921
Flour & gristmill workers	5s. a week reduction	Dec. 1921
Gaslight company labourers and firemen.	½d. per hour cuts	Jan. & Mar. 1922
Coopers	Cuts of 1d. per hour for timeworkers and of 5 per cent for pieceworkers.	Feb. 1922
Seamen	Cuts of 25s. for ordinary seamen and 30s. for able seamen and firemen on monthly vessels; cuts of 8s. and 10s. 6d. on weekly vessels	Mar. 1922
Shipyard engineers	Cuts of 7s. 6d. & 10s. 6d.	May 1922
Railway shopmen	Weekly bonus cuts of 16s. 6s. for labourers & 5s. 6d. for engineers	Sept. 1922
Compositors, machinemen, linotype operators, bookbinders and machine rulers	5s. decrease, giving bookbinders and jobbing compositors a 7s. 6d. minimum	Jan. 1923
Seamen	On monthly vessels, cuts of 15s. for ordinary seamen, 20s. for those in the engine room and catering departments, and of 30s. for boilermakers and electricians; on weekly vessels, cuts of 5s. for ordinary seamen and of 5-6s. for trimmers.	Apr. 1923
Seagoing wireless telephonists	Cuts of 22s. 6d. to 27s. 6d. a month.	May 1923
AEU	4s. 9d. increase for shed fitters and turners obtain an hourly rate 1d. higher than fitters.	Sept. 1923
Shipyard engineers	10s. cut	Oct. 1923
Merchant ship engineers	2s. 6d. cut	Oct. 1923
AEU	Increases of 1s. for shed fitters, 2s. for turners and 5s. for machinists	Dec. 1923
Shipyard engineers	5s. increase	May 1924
Railway engineers	5s. increase	Sept. 1924
Sawyers & labourers	2d. hourly increase (rates now 1s. 7d. & 1s.)	Sept. 1924

Source: DJ, 1921-25.

Appendix 13: Affiliates of Derry Trades Council, 1893 & 1920-1923

Unions/Workers	1893	1920	1921	1922	1923
Asylum attendants (Derry)		X	X	X	X
Asylum attendants (Letterkenny)		X	X	X	X
IADAMU		X	X	X	X
Irish Federated Bakers	X				
Irish Amalgamated Bakers' & Confections' Union			X	X	X
Boilermakers		X	X	X	X
NUBSO	X				
Boxmakers		X	X	X	X
Ancient Guild of Incorporated Brick & Stonelayers	X				
Butchers		X	X	X	X
Cabinetmakers	X				
Carpenters & Joiners	X	X	X	X	X
National Union of Clerks		X	X	X	X
Coachbuilders	X				
Coopers		X	X	X	X
ETU		X	X	X	X
ASE/AEU		X	X	X	X
National Union of Gasworkers & General Labourers	X				
Insurance Agents		X	X	X	X
Knights of Labour	X				
NAUL		X	X	X	X
NUDL		X	X	X	X
ASLEF		X	X	X	X
Masons & Bricklayers	X	X	X	X	X
MEA		X	X	X	X
Musicians' Union		X	X	X	X
Painters & Decorators		X	X	X	X
Plasterers' Union		X	X	X	X
Operative Plumbers		X	X	X	X
Postmen's Federation		X	X	X	X
RCA		X			
ASRS	X				
Sailors & Firemen	X	X	X	X	X
Associated Scottish Iron Shipbuilders' Helpers Association	X				
Shipping Clerks		X	X		
Shipwrights' Association	X				
Shirtcutters		X	X	X	X
Operative Stonemasons	X				
Tailors		X	X	X	X
ASTT	X	X	X		
Londonderry Teachers' Association		X	X	X	X
INTO (Donegal)		X	X	X	X
INTO (Gweedore & Rosses)		X	X	X	X

Woodcutters		X	X	X	X
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Source: O'Connor, 2: *Larkinism and syndicalism*, pp. 61-62.

Notes and References

¹ Wages were now 48s., an increase of 12s. since 1914.

² Before the strike, floormen earned 35s. and firemen 37s. 6d.

³ Specifically, the butchers wanted wages of 49s. for first class men and 40s. for second; piecework rates of 4s. for skinning cattle and 1s. for skinning sheep and fat dressing

⁴ These clerks were members of the ICWU and not the ITGWU.

⁵ This scale was operative after recent increases of 12s. 6d. to 19s. for female assistants and clerks.

⁶ Included in this category are coachbuilders, smiths, trimmers, wheelwrights, vicemen and coachpainters. They were organised by the United Kingdom Society of Coachmakers until 1919, when this union became the National Union of Vehicle Builders.

⁷ Sawyers were organised by the Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists, a British union. Their working hours were fifty in May 1917.

⁸ Included in this are the wholesale prices for corn; animal products; sugar, tea and tobacco; and wine and foreign spirits. See Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, p. 728 for individual indices for these items.

⁹ This includes wholesale prices for cereals, metal and fish, and other foods. See *ibid*, p. 729 for individual indices for these items.

¹⁰ This includes wholesale prices for silk and artificial silk, linen, jute and hemp.

¹¹ This includes wholesale prices for paper, leather, rubber, timber, bricks, stone and slate, glass, china, etc.

¹² Refers to January of the year unless otherwise stated.

¹³ *LG*, 1913-25

¹⁴ Hourly time-rates of 8½d. for buttonholers and machinists, and 6½d. for other female workers.

¹⁵ Hourly piece-rates of 9¼d. for buttonholers and machinists, and 6½d. for other female workers.

¹⁶ The breadvan drivers had threatened strike if their demands were not met.

¹⁷ After this increase, most Steam Packet Co. labourers earned over 40s. Single-horse carters now earned 39s. 6d. and double-horse carters now earned 41s. 6d.

¹⁸ Wages were

¹⁹ When the cutters sought another improvement from the SMF in August, they were threatened with a lockout. The dispute was referred to arbitration. See letters of correspondence between the SMF, Belfast and District Amalgamated Society of Cutters and the Ministry of Labour, 7 Mar., 3 Aug., 17, 30 Sept. 1918, LAB/2/435/IC6298/2/1918, Min. of Labour records, UKNA

²⁰ The carters had threatened strike unless the master carriers made concessions.

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