

1913 The Great Lockout: A Survey

Paul O'Brien

The 1913 lockout was a pivotal moment in Irish history. This essay will present a survey of the literature published to date on the lockout. These publications together provide us with an important archive documenting and analysing the social and political context of 1913, while at the same time examining the key strategic positions and events leading up to and surrounding the lockout. They also provide us with a valuable insight into the political men that were Jim Larkin and James Connolly.

The historical response to the lockout can be divided into four waves. Firstly, that produced during, and in the immediate aftermath, of the lockout. Secondly, that written in the period 1920 to 1970 when there was little interest in Labour history. Thirdly, the 'new labour history' associated with the emergence of the Irish Labour History Society (1973) between 1970 and 2000. Lastly, a series of publications, particularly the collected works, letters, and journalism of James Connolly published to coincide with the upcoming centenary of the lockout.

Comemorating the centenary of the lockout is made ever more resonant by the fact that in 2013, Ireland is in the deepest social, economic and political crisis in the history of the state. There are lessons to be learnt and conclusions to be drawn from the history of the lockout for the contemporary struggle.

Background

Jim Larkin rather than James Connolly was the dominant figure in the founding of

the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) and the lockout in 1913. He arrived in Belfast in January 1907. Within a year Larkin had established the National Union of Dock Labourers in every port in Ireland, but his militant methods alarmed the leadership of the union. In December 1908 he was suspended from his position within the NUDL. A few weeks later, on December 28th, Larkin launched a breakaway union: the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. The ITGWU represented a new style of trade unionism that reached out to the unskilled worker.



Jim Larkin during the Lockout

What came to be known as 'Larkinism' was part of an international wave of militancy and represented an Irish variant of syndicalism, or what has been described more correctly by Bob Holton as 'proto-syndicalism, something that is less than revolutionary consciousness, but more than trade union consciousness'.¹ Syndicalism originated in France as a response to the failure of the existing socialist parties to represent the economic or political interests of the unskilled worker.

¹ Quoted in John Newsinger, 'Irish Labour in a time of Revolution', *Socialist History*, no. 22, (2002), p. 5.

Syndicalism emphasised direct action, militancy, and strikes to build workers consciousness, culminating in a general strike where workers could take control of industry and organise production for the benefit of all.

Larkin succeeded in making Dublin one of the best organised trade union cities in Europe. The ITGWUs use of the sympathetic strike and the doctrine of ‘tainted goods’ was the cornerstone of its strategy to force employers to recognise the union and negotiate for better wages and conditions for the men and women who, up to then, had been at the mercy of their employers. Larkin set out to shift the balance of class forces in Ireland in favour of labour.

The revolutionary syndicalist politics of the ITGWU were a direct threat to the employers of Ireland. As William Martin Murphy of the Employers Federation put it; ‘either Larkin rules Dublin or we do’. Murphy understood better than most the threat that the ‘new unionism’ as developed by Larkin and Connolly posed. He set about breaking the hold of the ITGWU in Dublin.

Locked Out

In August 1913 William Martin Murphy, head of the Dublin employers group, informed dispatch workers of *The Irish Independent* that they must choose between Larkin and their jobs. A similar ultimatum was given to the tramway workers. The employers began a war of extermination against the unions, and against Larkin. The Federated Employers issued a document in which they demanded that the employees of 404 firms sign. It read:

I hereby undertake to carry out
all instructions given to me by

or on behalf of my employers
and, further, I agree to immediately resign my membership of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (if a member), and I further undertake that I will not join or in any way support this union.

Dublin workers refused to sign this document and the Dublin lockout began. Thirty-seven Dublin unions supported Larkin. Half-starved, without funds, they held out for eight months. When representatives of the British labour unions attempted to negotiate a settlement, the employers broke off negotiations. Meetings were held in England, and both Connolly and Larkin appealed to British labour for aid. Only sympathetic strikes in England could have secured the victory of the Irish workers. In December 1913, a Special Trade Union Congress was called in England in order to deal with the demands that the British workers come to the support of their brothers and sisters in Dublin by supporting strikes and a blockade of Dublin. The officials of the British trade unions turned this Congress into an effort to defeat Jim Larkin. Without the support of British workers Dublin went down to defeat.

Contemporary Reports

The *Irish Worker*² (1911-1914) gives a real flavour of the both the heroism and suffering endured by the working class over the eight months of the lockout. However, Larkin never addressed the outcome of the strike and the terrible defeat suffered by the workers of Dublin. Larkin was a leader and an agitator, rather than a theoretician and his contributions to the *Irish Worker* lack any political analysis of the strike and

²The index for the *Irish Worker* is published in *O’Casey Annual* No 3 (Macmillan Press, London, 1984), pp. 47-114.

what it meant for the class struggle in Ireland. Larkin, worn out by his efforts during the dispute, left for America in 1914 and did not return to Ireland until 1923.

James Connolly's articles in the *Irish Worker* during the strike are more political. Connolly's articles examine the role of the trade union bureaucracy, the relationship between nationalism and socialism, international solidarity and the relationship between British and Irish workers. He also poses the question of the need for a workers militia, which found fruition in the Irish Citizen Army formed during the lockout to protect the strikers and their families.

These articles are brought together in a new two-volume edition of the *Collected Works of James Connolly*³ and are an invaluable insight into the political thinking of the period.

As the strike drew to a close and in the immediate aftermath of the dispute Connolly set out his analysis of the lockout in a number of publications. Writing in October 1913 in *The Irish Review*, a literary magazine that was sympathetic to labour, Connolly rehearsed the historical context of the strike and the political and economic policies of the ITGWU. His explanation of the sympathetic strike stands even today as a model of militant trade unionism:

It is the recognition by the Working Class of their essential unity, the manifestation in our daily industrial relations that our brother's fight is our fight, our sister's troubles are our troubles, that we are all members one of another. In practical operation, it means that when any body of workers

are in conflict with their employers, that all other workers should co-operate with them in attempting to bring that particular employer to reason by refusing to handle his goods.⁴

The lockout was a terrible defeat for the working class of Dublin and for the revolutionary syndicalist politics of Larkin and Connolly. Workers were forced to accept a return to work on any terms offered by the employers. Membership of the ITGWU fell from 30,000 at the beginning of the strike to 5,000 at the end. Thousands of workers lost their jobs and many in desperation signed up for the killing fields of France just a few months later. In November 1914 Connolly, in a review of *Disturbed Dublin*⁵ by Arnold Wright, attempted to counter that propaganda of the Employers Federation and claimed it was a 'drawn battle':

The flag of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union still flies proudly in the van of the Irish working class, and that working class still marches proudly and defiantly at the head of the gathering hosts who stand for a regenerated nation, resting upon the people industrially free.⁶

In some ways *Disturbed Dublin* is an interesting book. It purports to be a history of the lockout, but Wright was paid £500 by the Employers Federation and Wright amply repays his paymasters in his analysis of the strike. Despite this, it gives an insight into the emerging native Irish ruling class and it also contains some useful social and statistical information about

³ James Connolly, *Collected Works*, Ed. Donal Nevin. 2 Vols. (SIPTU, Dublin, 2011).

⁴ Connolly, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1 p. 507.

⁵ Arnold Wright, *Disturbed Dublin*, (London, Longman Green, 1914)

⁶ Connolly, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1 p. 491.

Dublin in the first decade of the 20th century.

In February 1914, as the strike went down to defeat, in the Scottish socialist paper *Forward*, Connolly lashed the British trade union bureaucrats who had sacrificed the workers of Dublin ‘in the interests of sectional officialism’. In this article there is no talk of a ‘drawn battle’. He spells out the terrible defeat they suffered:

And so, we Irish workers must go down into hell, bow our backs to the lash of the slave driver, let our hearts be seared by the iron of his hatred, and instead of the sacramental wafer of brotherhood and common sacrifice, eat the dust of defeat and betrayal.⁷

A year later in April 1915 in *The New Age*, a British socialist paper, Connolly reflected on the lessons of the great unrest for the trade union movement. Despite the fact that the ‘New Amalgamated Unions’ had overcome the sectional divisions of the old craft unions, Connolly points out that the amalgamations and federations are being carried out:

by officials absolutely destitute of revolutionary spirit...into the new bottles of industrial organisation is being poured the old, cold wine of Craft Unionism.⁸

This article is still very relevant and lays out the core socialist argument for rank and file control of the unions.⁹

⁷Connolly, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1 p. 415.

⁸Connolly, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1 p. 514.

⁹ This article was reprinted as *Old Wine in New Bottles*, (ITGWU, Dublin, 1921).

¹⁰James Connolly, *Between Comrades: Letters and Correspondence 1889-1916*, Ed. Donal Nevin, (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 2007)

¹¹ Ernest Kavanagh, *Artist of the Revolution*, Introduced and Edited by James Curry, (Mercier Press, Cork, 2012).

¹²W. P. Ryan, *The Irish Labour Movement*, (Talbot Press, Dublin, 1919), p. 248.

¹³Sean O’Casey, *The Story of the Irish Citizen Army*, (Maunsel & Co., Dublin, 1919).

Also worth referring to is *Between Comrades*¹⁰, the letters and correspondence of James Connolly, which give a real flavour of the lockout and the political relationship and the tensions that arose between Larkin and Connolly in the course of the lockout. A collection of the political cartoons of Ernest Kavanagh¹¹, who contributed to the *Irish Worker*, was published in 2012. Kavanagh consistently attacked William Martin Murphy and the Dublin Metropolitan Police exposing them as thugs controlled by politicians and employers.

1920-1970

James Connolly said to his daughter Nora on the eve of his execution in April 1916: ‘The Socialists will never understand why I am here. They all forget that I am an Irishman’.¹² Connolly’s role during the 1916 rising dominated the historical literature of the labour movement as they tried to develop a political analysis of the relationship between nationalism and socialism following his execution in 1916. For the following fifty years, with few exceptions, the political lessons of the lockout and the implications for building a revolution movement in Ireland were generally ignored.

Sean O’Casey, in many ways the first revisionist, in his pamphlet on the history of the Irish Citizen Army¹³ published in 1919 was one of the first to explore the relationship between the workers movement and the nationalist movement, against the

background of the lockout and the founding of the Irish Citizen Army. It has few pretensions either as history or theory. This was a polemical piece to reinstate the centrality of class in the ongoing debates. Similarly, W.P. Ryan in his history of the Irish Labour Movement published in 1919¹⁴, was a lonely voice in a history dominated by nationalist politics. Of interest are the concluding chapters on ‘The Rise of Larkinism’ and ‘The Struggle of 1913’.

The history of the lockout in the period between 1920 and 1970 was dominated by writers and historians influenced by the rightwing reformist politics of the Irish Labour Party or those of the Connolly Association in England, which had close ties to the Communist Party of Great Britain. The 1913 lockout was generally ignored in the post-independence period by Irish writers. In the few working class histories that were produced the revolutionary syndicalist politics of Larkin and Connolly and the active participation of workers in the events that shaped the emerging state are absent. In these narratives, writers such as R.M. Fox and William O’Brien downplay the lockout and instead emphasise the role of the bureaucracy as the precursor of the modern trade union movement.¹⁵

Of far more consequence were the publications by C. Desmond Greaves and T.A. Jackson¹⁶, who were acknowledged as the

leading Irish Labour historians of the period. They were respectively members of the Connolly Association in England and the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Greaves was commissioned to write the official history of the ITGWU which appeared in 1982.¹⁷ The first volume covers the period 1909 to 1923. The second volume never appeared for whatever reason.¹⁸ This is a very useful and informative history that gives adequate emphasis to the importance of the lockout but is marred, as John Newsinger notes, by the way Greaves used every opportunity ‘to diminish Larkin, to call into question his judgement and temperament’.¹⁹

Greaves also wrote what was for a substantial period the standard biography of James Connolly²⁰, which was published in 1961 by Lawrence & Wishart, the Communist Party publishers. Here he argues that Connolly had developed a ‘stages theory’ of history. This meant the national question had to be resolved before it was possible to undertake the fight for socialism. This, for Greaves and for the majority of labour historians who were influenced by the Communist Party, explains why Connolly led the Irish Citizen Army into the GPO in 1916. It also explains why Greaves places the lockout in the context of the national question in Ireland that 1913 ‘paved the way for 1916’. What is missing is any analysis of syndicalist politics, or why such a revolutionary upheaval

¹⁴ W. P. Ryan, *The Irish Labour Movement*, (Talbot Press, Dublin, 1919).

¹⁵ See R.M. Fox, *James Connolly: The Forerunner*, (The Kerryman, Tralee, 1946), *The History of the Irish Citizen Army*, (Cahill, Dublin, 1943). William O’Brien, *Forth the Banners Go*, (Three Candles, Dublin, 1969). *Fifty Years of Liberty Hall*, (ITGWU, Dublin, 1959).

¹⁶ T.A. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own*, (Cobbett Press, London, 1947).

¹⁷ C. Desmond Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union*, (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1982).

¹⁸ In 2009 SIPTU (formally the ITGWU) published a new history of the union. Francis Devine, *Organising History* (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 2009), which makes a single reference to the Greaves book and devotes just 14 pages out of 1204 to the lockout.

¹⁹ John Newsinger, ‘Irish Labour in a time of Revolution’, *Socialist History*, No. 22, (2002), p.10.

²⁰ C. Desmond Greaves, *The Life and Times of James Connolly*, (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1961).

failed to build a socialist party that could have been decisive in the forthcoming fight against war and the British presence in Ireland. Other publications from this period includes a biography of James Larkin²¹ by Emmet Larkin, an American academic, that is very useful on the details of the lockout. This has the merit of understanding that the founding of the ITGWU and the events leading up to the lockout were the beginning of a revolutionary working class movement in Ireland. This cannot be said for Arthur Mitchell's *Labour in Irish Politics*²² which emphasises the role of parliamentary politics over that of workers' self activity.

1970-2000

E. P. Thompson, in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), set out 'to rescue the... artisan... from the condescension of posterity'. What came to be known as 'history from below' was one of the guiding principles that inspired the founding of the Irish Labour History Society and the publication of their journal *Saothar* in 1973.

Over the last thirty-seven issues *Saothar* has provided an outlet for a new generation of labour historians, imbued with the spirit of history from below. Document studies, a series of Labour lives, sources, reviews, labour history bibliographies, and essays have opened up labour history to both academics, and more importantly, to working class historians.

Saothar No.4 in 1997 devoted an issue to Jim Larkin on the fiftieth anniversary

of his death. Surprisingly, this was the only issue that dealt with the lockout in any great detail. W. Moran's article on the British Labour movement and 1913 is a useful analysis of the British TUC and its failure to support the workers in Dublin. Dermot Keogh's article on William Martin Murphy attempts to give a more balanced view of Larkin's implacable enemy. Keogh's *The Rise of the Irish Working Class*, which followed in 1982, gives substantial space to the lockout in a well researched series of chapters. However, this is marred by his assertion that in 1913 'trade union militancy should not be confused with social revolutionary zeal' and his assertion that:

no significant section of the fledgling ITGWU, and this includes the 'second string' leadership with the exception of Connolly and Larkin, were either politicised revolutionary socialists, or syndicalists.²³

There has always been a reformist current within the ranks of the contributors to *Saothar* that have rejected the revolutionary implications of the events surrounding the lockout. Indeed, one of the founding editors of *Saothar*, Emmet O'Connor, in his book *James Larkin*²⁴ instigated a 'full scale assault on Larkin's reputation... describing him baldly as possessing an insecure and egotistical personality'.²⁵ In addition O'Connor has published *A Labour History of Ireland*²⁶ and *Syndicalism in Ireland 1917-1923*²⁷, which are well researched. In the opening chapter of *Syn-*

²¹ Emmet Larkin, *James Larkin*, (Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1965).

²² Arthur Mitchell, *Labour in Irish History*, (Irish University Press, 1974).

²³ Dermot Keogh, *The Rise of the Irish Working Class*, (Appletree Press, Belfast, 1982), p. 4.

²⁴ Emmet O'Connor, *James Larkin*, (Cork University Press, Cork, 2002).

²⁵ Fintan Lane acknowledges the controversial nature of O'Connors book in the editorial of *Saothar* No. 28. Kieran Allen's review in the issue contests O'Connor's analysis.

²⁶ Emmet O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland*, (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1992).

²⁷ Emmet O'Connor, *Syndicalism in Ireland*, (Cork University Press, Cork, 1988).

dicalism in Ireland, O'Connor spells out the influence of syndicalism on the Irish labour movement leading up to the lock-out. But too often O'Connor concentrates on the clash of the leading personalities, rather than the different politics and perspectives of those involved.

Another useful publication from the political tradition of this journal is Kieran Allen's *The Politics of James Connolly*. The section on the lockout is not extensive but the strength of this book is that the lockout is posed in political terms rather than economic or trade union terms:

The lockout passed a decisive test for all sections of society. The rhetoric, prejudices and pretensions of all groups were measured on the simple test: which side were they on.²⁸

It is to *Saothars* credit that they have always provided space for alternative views. John Newsinger, who also writes in the tradition of this journal, has written a number of articles on the lockout and on the politics of Larkin, that explore the political lessons of the period.²⁹ Hopefully, the 2013 issue of *Saothar* will explore the lockout as more than just an anniversary to be commemorated or explored, but will also provide space for political analysis and the relevance of the socialist politics of Larkin and Connolly to the crisis today. Worth a mention is the booklet issued in 1982 by the Department of Education *1913: A Divided City*³⁰, which should be reissued for the anniversary.

2000-2013

The dominant narratives of the lockout and of the life and politics of Larkin and Connolly in the last decade or so have been written by Donal Nevin and Pádraig Yeats.

Donal Nevin is the former General Secretary of the ICTU, who since his retirement has been prolific in the production of a series of books that record the memoirs and assessments of historians and contemporaries of Larkin and Connolly. Nevin's *Trade Union Century*³¹, published in 1994 on the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the ICTU introduced a new style of labour history - one that was less analytical, and less political. It is more commemorative, but never the less very useful in making available a series of essays, articles and documents that trace the development of the Irish trade union movement. This was followed by *James Larkin: Lion of the Fold*³², a series of essays, lectures, documents, and assessments celebrating the achievements of Jim Larkin. Also included are the Thomas Davis lectures on the lockout, which were presented on RTE in 1997. This publication was never intended to be a critical look at Larkin's life. It is more of a compendium that brings together many voices, past and present, to give an overview of Larkin's contribution to Irish working class history.

Of far greater substance is Nevin's biography of James Connolly.³³ Nevin is not an ideologue, and in this expansive life of Connolly he lays out the background and history of the lockout from Connolly's perspective. Nevin's book is useful in the way that he charts the division between economics and politics - the three-legged stool

²⁸Kieran Allen, *The Politics of James Connolly*, (Pluto Press, London, 1990), p. 117.

²⁹See *Saothar* No 28, p. 125, No. 18, p. 101.

³⁰ Curriculum Development Unit, *1912: Divided City*, (O'Brien Press, Dublin, 1982).

³¹ Donal Nevin, *Trade Union Century*, (Mercier Press, Cork, 1994).

³²Donal Nevin, *James Larkin: the Lion in the Fold*, (Gill & Macmillan, 1978).

³³Donal Nevin, *James Connolly: A Full Life*, (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 2005).

that the syndicalism politics of Connolly and Larkin rested upon the trade unions to fight for economic gains, the Labour Party to contest elections, and a socialist party to propagandise for a socialist society.

Nevin edited the two volumes of Connolly's *Collected Works*, and the *Collected Letters of Connolly*. Both of these publications contain original material that substantially adds to our understanding of the lockout. They have the added benefit of showcasing Connolly's ability as a writer. Almost everything that Connolly wrote is a master class in how to communicate with a working class audience. Connolly's writings are totally accessible even when he is advancing complex arguments. He has a prose style that all socialists should strive for. These volumes also show how much we have underestimated Connolly as a theorist.

The biography of Larkin's nemesis, William O'Brien³⁴, has much to say about the lockout and the bureaucratisation of the ITGWU in the period following Connolly's execution. The group of labour historians that found an outlet in the pages of *Saothar* included women such as Mary Jones, Mary Cullen, Marie Mulholland, Rosemary Cullen Owens, and Maria Luddy, who went on to make important contributions on the role of women in the lockout and in working class history.³⁵

Padraig Yeates's *Lockout: Dublin 1913*³⁶ is a monumental work that will surely stand as the definitive history of the lockout for years to come. Yeates leaves no stone unturned or archive unconsulted

to present an almost day by day account of the lockout. In telling this great story Yeates provides a social and political survey of Dublin on the eve of the Great War and the 1916 Easter Rising. Yeates is at his best in describing the sheer misery visited upon the poor of Dublin and the heroic struggle that went down to a terrible defeat.

Yeates was in the past the industrial correspondent of the Irish Times and a former member of the Workers' Party and this is reflected in the political analysis that runs through the book. Yeates suggests that the lockout was 'an unnecessary one'³⁷ even if it was inevitable given the personalities of Larkin and Murphy. He suggests that the British trade union leaders were unfairly criticised for their handling of the dispute by Larkin and Connolly in order to deflect criticism from their own shortcomings. His thesis is that Larkin was 'deluding himself in thinking that the sympathetic strike could turn Dublin into the birthplace of a syndicalist revolution'.³⁸ According to Yeates all the evidence, which he backs up by Board of Trade statistics, points to the fact that sectional strikes were more successful than mass sympathetic strikes. On the other hand, he has no time for bureaucrats such as William O'Brien, who took over the ITGWU after the death of Connolly and the departure of Larkin to America.

Despite these political criticisms this is a wonderful book. Yeates can't help but admire the heroic struggle of the Dublin working class and the sheer force of personality of Larkin and Connolly during the

³⁴Thomas J. Morrissey SJ., *William O'Brien*, (Four Courts, Dublin, 2007).

³⁵See Marie Mulholland, Kathleen Lynn, (Woodfield Press, Dublin, 2002). Rosemary Cullen Owens, Louie Bennett, (Cork University Press, Cork, 2001). Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy, Eds., *Female Activists*, (Woodfield Press, Dublin, 2001). Mary Jones, *Those Obstrepous Lassies*, (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1988).

³⁶Padraig Yeates, *Lockout: Dublin 1913*, (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 2002).

³⁷ Yeates, p. 581.

³⁸ Yeates, p. 586.

lockout. He also astutely observes the way that in the years following the lockout it suited the leadership of a range of political tendencies - from Fianna Fáil on the right to the union bureaucracy and the Labour Party on the left - to leave the 'ideological lines blurred'.³⁹ He also understands that the message of 1913: 'an injury to one is the concern of all' was burnt into the soul of the Irish working class, and that the 'memory of 1913 is routinely invoked whenever there is a dispute over union recognition, or indeed any other form of social injustice'⁴⁰, a tradition that needs to be sustained and rebuilt.

Summary

The Dublin lockout in 1913 was the high point of The 'Great Unrest'.⁴¹ Leon Trotsky was not alone in suggesting that 'during those days a dim spectre of revolution hung over Britain'⁴², and he could have added, in Ireland as well. The outcome of the 'Great Unrest' in both Britain and Ireland would ultimately decide who controlled the trade unions -the rank and file members or the bureaucracy. Despite the militancy of the rank and file, the bureaucracy managed to impose their control over the movement and this shift in the balance of power in the trade unions was decisive during the events that led to the establishment of the conservative Irish independent state in 1922.

The strikes of 1910-1914 led to a growth in the unionisation of the general worker and a number of victories in Britain and Ireland for better pay and conditions. The

'Great Unrest' is dealt with in great detail in *The Making of The Transport and General Workers Union* (the British based union now know as Unite).⁴³ This book also provides an interesting insight into the position of the British unions on the lockout.

The Great Unrest threw up a mass movement in both Britain and Ireland, but the syndicalist ambiguity about politics and the emphasis on industrial struggle meant it was unable to fuse together the industrial struggle with the fight against war, the fight for women's suffrage, and the fight for Irish freedom, into a coherent block that could challenge the social and political nature of the British state. In Ireland, the failure of Larkin and Connolly to unite the economic, socialist, and national struggle left a space for the growth of nationalism. After the 1916 Easter Rising the economic and social question was shunted into the background. Had they built a network of activists out of the great upheavals of 1910-1914, the political outcome of the War of Independence might have been very different.

Perhaps this claims both too much, and too little, for Connolly and Larkin. It claims too much in the sense that no one before the Russian Revolution of 1917 had put forward the model of a revolutionary party that could steer a course between the twin dangers of economic struggle and of liquation into the nationalist or reformist movement. It claims too little in that it obscures the explosion of a series of economic and social struggles that was leading the workers of Ireland towards the need for a

³⁹ Yeates, p. 581.

⁴⁰ Yeates, p. 587.

⁴¹See Mike Hayes, 'The British working Class in Revolt', *International Socialism*, No. 22, Winter 1984, (International Socialism, London, 1884).

⁴²L. Trotsky, 'Where is Britain Going?', *Collected Writings and Speeches on Britain*, (New Park, London, 1974), p. 8.

⁴³Ken Coates & Tony Topham, *The Making of The Transport and General Workers' Union*, 2 Vols., (Blackwell, London, 1991).

party that offered an alternative outcome to the politically bankrupt Free State in 1922. Very perceptively the Russian revolutionary V. I. Lenin, writing in *Pravda* in September 1913 about the possibilities inherent in the class struggle in Dublin that had ‘become accentuated to the point of class war’, observed that:

The Irish nationalists are already expressing the fear that Larkin will organise an independent Irish workers’ party,

which will have to be reckoned with in the first Irish national parliament.⁴⁴

Despite the attempt by Connolly to purchase a place for Labour by participating in the 1916 rising, the heroic attempts to build both the Communist Party of Ireland by Roddy Connolly and his comrades, and by Larkin and the Irish Workers’ League in the early nineteen twenties, militant socialist politics remained marginal in Ireland.

⁴⁴ V. I. Lenin, ‘Class War in Dublin’, *Collected Works*, (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968), Vol. 19, p. 332.