

ARISE!

1913 Dublin Lockout

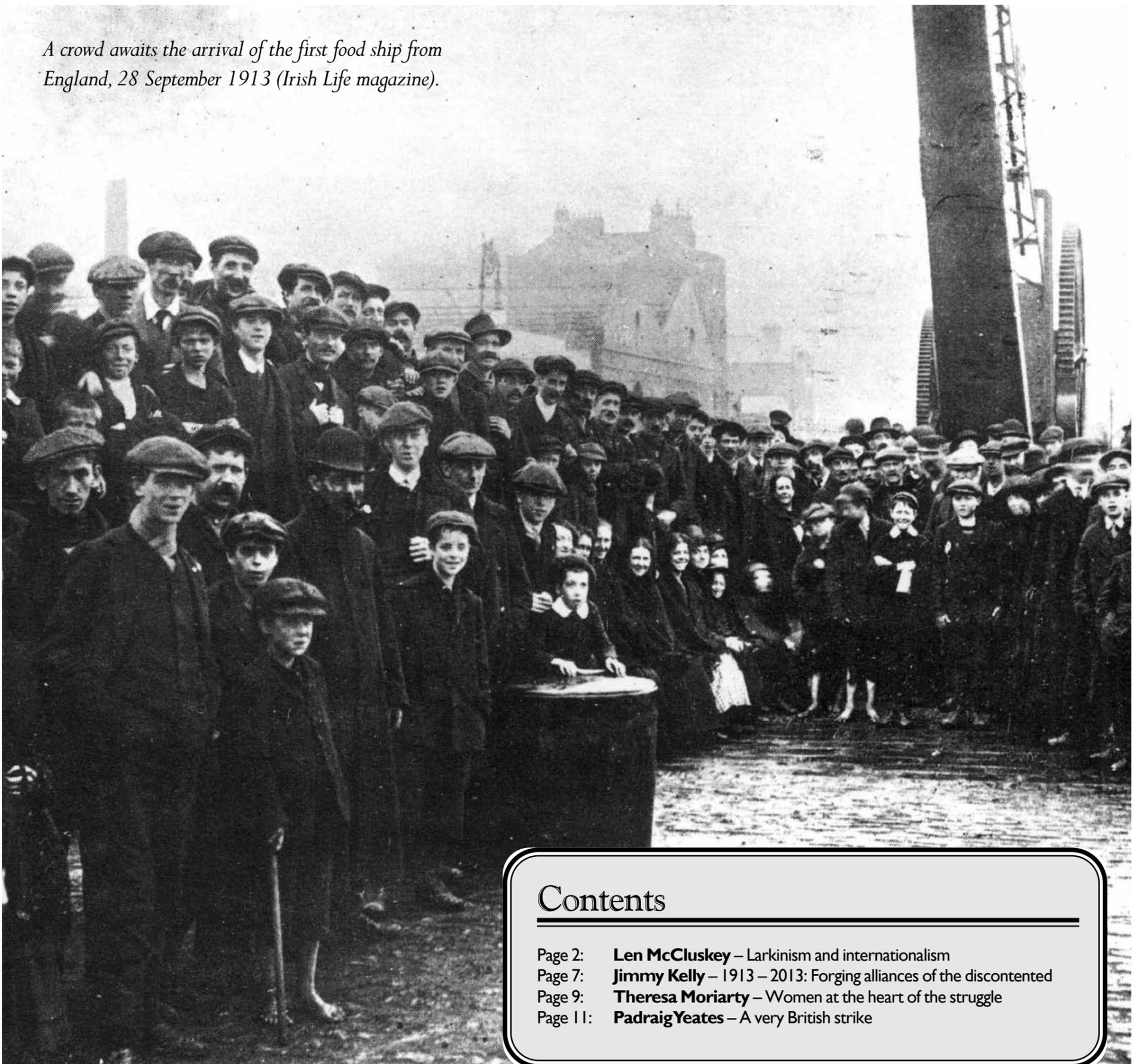
The Irish Region of Unite the Union is publishing this magazine to mark the centenary of the 1913 Dublin Lockout

Picture: Baton charge by the Dublin Metropolitan Police during the 1913 Dublin Lockout

Larkinism and internationalism

This is an edited version of a lecture delivered by Unite General Secretary **Len McCluskey** to a meeting organised by Unite with the support of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions and Dublin Community Television. The event took place in Dublin on May 29th 2013

A crowd awaits the arrival of the first food ship from England, 28 September 1913 (Irish Life magazine).



Contents

- Page 2: **Len McCluskey** – Larkinism and internationalism
Page 7: **Jimmy Kelly** – 1913 – 2013: Forging alliances of the discontented
Page 9: **Theresa Moriarty** – Women at the heart of the struggle
Page 11: **Padraig Yeates** – A very British strike

It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to speak about a man – from my own city – who I consider a personal hero.

I want to touch on a number of themes relating to Larkinism and our understanding of internationalism.

I intend to start by setting the scene – touching on international socialism and the global capitalist class as it stands today.

Then I will look back on the Great Lockout in the context of how it played out nationally and internationally, examining the globalisation of its day which took place in an age of empires -particularly the British empire.

And then – without wanting to lecture the Irish on their labour Leader Jim Larkin – I want to outline his role and the concept of Larkinism, including the phenomena demonstrated by those individuals loosely described as Larkinites.

I want to finish tonight by looking at Larkin's own objectives and how these impacted internationally on the labour movement during his lifetime – and to ask what lessons we can learn today.

So, firstly, to consider our current setting.

The global financial crash of 2008 made one thing abundantly clear: capitalism succeeded in becoming the single dominant global model by which we all live and work.

Since the collapse of many socialist countries in Eastern Europe the world economy has – decade by decade – become more fragmented between rich and poor, seen growing inequality and fewer checks and balances on its free-market ethos.

This disparity is as true for people as it is for states – widening inequality, wealth concentrated at the top, a shrinking percentage of GDP going into the pockets of

workers, and governments unable or unwilling to bring about the reform people so desperately need.

Across the world, multilateral institutions and the agreements that emanate from them are little more than a fig-leaf – perhaps concealing some of the embarrassment of world leaders, but doing nothing to rectify the structural inadequacies of today's capitalist class.

The same capitalist class that has – for the best part of our lifetime – created the global institutions through which wealth is manipulated, the rich allowed to grow richer, whilst ever greater proportions of the world's population are left starving on the scrap heap.

The internationalism of the capitalist class is simply to preside over a race to the bottom for workers all over the globe.

Their neo-liberal agenda must be challenged by us – the trade union movement – globally, whilst at the same time acting on a national basis to contest for state power and organise workers in our home territories. We must do this by being open to new kinds of alliances.

By working with community groups, NGOs, new political progressive forces and forming alliances which will find their expressions on a global level.

This means that today's trade unions cannot simply be organs that negotiate in the work place for their members (whilst this will always remain our primary function), but they must fight the restrictions and failed policies too often meted out by government.

Today's trade union movement must be a vehicle through which we not only address member's bargaining demands but also lead the fight – in the political arena – for everything that affects working people.

I am proud that Unite is leading by example. We are committed to building a new sense of optimism for our movement, whether that is at home through our community membership bringing the unemployed into the trade union family to help lead our campaigns for a new settlement from government; or internationally where we have established the first genuinely global trade union, Workers Uniting, with our comrades in the United Steelworkers.

A global trade union with shared objectives, learning from our distinct experiences.

Both these examples (extending trade union membership and building global alliances) are rooted in Larkinism.

The most important thing we can do is empower our members – as the core element of the union movement – so that they are not passive in our cause, but instead are leading our vision to transform society for themselves and future generations.

That is what Jim Larkin stood for.

Unions must take an active lead on the streets and in communities.

Our own democratic structures are key to building solidarity, establishing accountability and determining appropriate strategies.

The objectives that we set must involve us in a discussion with the members where they set these objectives – so they are not determined by us, for them.

The blunt truth however is this – that the real struggle ultimately takes place at a national or even a local level.

Yet this does not undermine the importance of internationalism for our movement which is essential to our outlook if we are to take on global capitalism. Let me turn to your history – or our shared

Jim Larkin

Jim Larkin was born on Combermere Street in Toxteth, Liverpool, and as a barefoot youngster would wander the same streets in the heart of the Liverpool docklands where I spent the formative years of my working life.

Indeed, I am proud to say that my home city of Liverpool would play a crucial part in the forging of indomitable links between the British labour movement, the Irish labour movement, and the broader cause of international working-class solidarity.

Both the Labour party and the trade unions had initially faced difficulties making progress in Liverpool, with spontaneous protests against slave wages and intolerable living conditions failing to translate into recruits for the labour movement.

It has been said that if the Glasgow working men of this period were good socialists but lousy rioters; Liverpool working men were quite the reverse.

All of this began to change, however, after the 1911 Transport Strike, in which Larkin played an

instrumental role, and which would serve as inspiration for his conduct in Dublin two years later.

1911 saw industrial action in Liverpool on an unprecedented scale, with up to 100,000 people attending a demonstration in Sheil Park, providing an essential foundation for the recruitment of Liverpool workers into the union movement and the capturing of the city for Labour.

It is quite fitting that Jack Hayes, a contemporary of Larkin's and a fellow Irish nationalist, was the first Labour MP to sit for a Liverpool constituency after his election for Edge Hill in 1923.

Both the 1911 Transport Strike and the 1913 Dublin Lockout took place in the context of massively increasing militancy and working-class protest across Britain and Ireland.

Following a trebling of union membership between 1888 and 1910, in the period 1910 to 1914, membership of trade unions rose by over sixty per cent, from 2.1 million to 4.1 million, while membership of so-called 'new unions' increased by over 300 per cent.



Larkin addresses a crowd in Beresford Place from the window of Liberty Hall, 1913.

Crucially, trade unionism during this time was reaching out to workers who had, until then, suffered from lack of union representation. This period has been characterised as the 'Great Unrest': from 1910 until the outbreak of the war, working days lost rose to ten million or more each year.

Strikes across the country featured vicious and disproportionate responses from employers and the British state, with mass lockouts, victimisation and police brutality widespread.

The militancy of this period, although similar to the Syndicalist movements of Europe, was informed by class solidarity.

Frustrated with government hostility towards social reform and Home Rule for Ireland, many labour leaders, shop stewards and ordinary working men and women lost faith in Westminster politics and instead sought to exert change from below, with Ben Tillett denouncing Parliament as 'a farce and a sham... the rich man's Duma'.

The impact of Larkin was felt throughout Ireland and Britain. Jack Jones, one of the great general secretaries of our predecessor union the (A)TGWU, was born in 1913 (another centenary celebration for us in Unite) and he bore the middle name Larkin – James Larkin Jones.

His father was involved in the solidarity action with Larkin during the strike. Like Larkin and Jack Jones, I worked on the Liverpool docks - a place which is no stranger to struggle and a place which in many respects is as Irish as anything can be across the water.

Because of underdevelopment in Ireland the Irish working class was used as a cheap source of labour, and it is true to say that before places like Galway or many other parts of Ireland had a working class there was an Irish working class in Manchester, Birmingham and many other English cities.

Therefore many of the leaders of the Irish working class came from an emigrant background.

James Connolly described these people as coming from the British school of socialism - names like James Connolly, Jim Larkin, Michael Davitt and the unsung hero Gilbert Lynch.

I want to mention Gilbert Lynch because his story

highlights not only the link between the Irish and British working class but the role that men like him and Connolly played as Irish republicans.

Gilbert was born in Stockport near Manchester and worked in the cotton mills. He was involved in the ILP and sworn into the Irish Republican brotherhood in Manchester in 1913. He fought in the 1916 rising as a republican, a member of the ITGWU and a labour member of Dail Eireann. Gilbert had an uncanny knack of turning up at the right time and the right place.

He was in the GPO in 1916, he helped persuade the republicans in Fianna Fail to enter the free state, and when Larkin and the Workers Union of Ireland were trying to find a way back into the broad trade union movement it was he who made the point of order that helped Larkin gain admittance to the Dublin council of trade unions.

Gilbert left the ITGWU and joined the TGWU; he was district secretary until the mid-1960s.

It's important to look at the vast sweep of globalisation in America and Europe and how workers were reacting to it at the time.

In practically every country in the industrialised world before 1914 there were strikes, civil unrest and popular disturbances.

These strikes swept through Russian textiles workers, and in Germany engineering employers were using scab labour to defeat strikes.

The Swedish government introduced legislation to imprison picketers.

In Britain, because of the Taff Vale judgement, unions became liable for employer losses in a strike.

General strikes occurred in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Sweden and Italy between 1902 and 1904. The first Russian revolution took place in 1905.

In the year 1910 Britain was torn asunder by industrial conflict which was part of a reaction against the globalisation of that time.

The British government established a commission on industrial relations and was increasingly concerned about violence and direct action in strikes.

In 1913 there were 1,459 strikes in Britain; many of

these were unofficial, organised by rank and file against the wishes of union officials – 11.6 million days were lost in Britain that year. This turmoil first hit Ireland in Belfast.

Jim Larkin was sent Belfast by the National Union of Dock Labourers, where and he set about organising workers. The employers' resistance was savage against his campaign to organise dockers and carters in Belfast.

His activities produced a split in the Orange Order, a strike in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the deployment of thousands of British troops to protect scabs and the use of the only cavalry charge within the United Kingdom against workers since the Peterloo massacre. It's no wonder Ben Tillett, in his annual report to his union, described the class war as the most savage ever seen.

Looking back at the situation 100 years ago, with growing international economic trade and pressure on industrialists to improve efficiency – there was a counterbalance alongside this with the rising influence of socialist economic theory which challenged the notion that wages should be determined by profit and left to find their own level in the market.

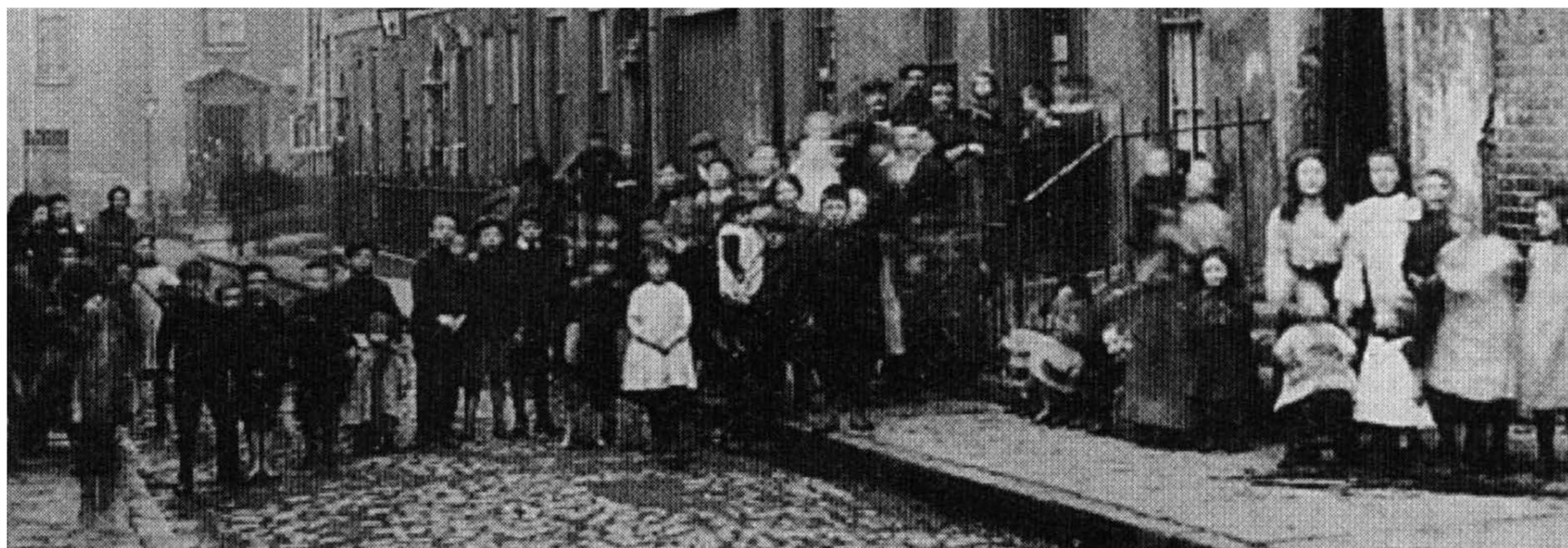
This was a conflict between old and new social values which were an ideal environment for people like Larkin, Connolly, Ben Tillett, Keir Hardie and one of the most famous of them all: Tom Mann.

These people embodied socialist theory and idealism blended with the pragmatism of getting the workers to act on what the workers themselves, defined as their needs.

This may be summed up best in what Jack Kearney described as Larkin's socialism. 'Socialism does not spread by itself because of its own inner logic or consistency. It spreads when there is something in it that makes it a response to the needs of the hour'.

And when Larkin left the National Union of Dock Labourers to create the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union – he did so with the intent of developing his syndicalist ideas.

He believed socialism would only prevail with trade unions at the heart of the democratic system.



Inhabitants of just one of the many overcrowded slum tenements that dotted inner city Dublin c.1913. ('Darkest Dublin Collection', Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland).

The Dublin lockout

history, as it's a history that courses through my veins. The Dublin Lockout. More than 20,000 workers involved in industrial dispute.

Just as if an individual suffers a loss of memory they cannot function properly, we as a movement cannot progress without understanding our own history.

To know where you are going you must know from where you have come.

Whilst the events in 1913 are of course a product of the particular circumstances of that time, we must learn their lessons all the same. The Dublin Lockout and Larkin's role in it are especially important for me.

Almost twenty years after the right to organise was largely accepted by employers in the rest of the United Kingdom, it produced a savage conflict in Dublin.

I believe that this is largely because service workers who suffered from precarious conditions – who were in effect treated like throw-away commodities – were difficult to organise and these workers would have formed the bulk of the working class in Dublin.

Only 20% of workers in Dublin were employed in manufacturing. The city had grown rapidly due to the migration of people from the land to the city caused by the famine.

There was a stark divide between rich and poor in Dublin, where the death-rate was worse than in Calcutta. The infant mortality rate reached 142 out of 1000.

But if we look at this from a class perspective, we find that the professional classes had an infant mortality

rate far less than half than in the working class areas.

Poor housing and ill health were notorious in the city of over 5,000 tenements with more than five people living in each room. 643 of these were one-room tenements with more than eight people living in them.

The poor in Dublin were hugely vulnerable to killer diseases like TB and pneumonia. Into this tinder box arrived Jim Larkin in 1908.

He set about organising workers with some success. He organised dockers, carters, gas workers - and he increased wages by 15% to 20%.

Sometimes artists can catch the mood of a situation better than historians or academics.

It is the great communist playwright Sean O'Casey who catches the impact of Larkin on the Dublin workers of the time.

Indeed Desmond Greaves, James Connolly's biographer, said of Sean O'Casey that once the name Larkin was mentioned in a conversation his eyes would light up and this would be followed by a string of reminiscences of Larkin.

This is how O'Casey describes the impact of Larkin in Dublin:

"Throughout the streets he strode, shouting into every dark and evil smelling hallway, the great day of change has come, Circes swine have a better time than you have, come out from your vomit, out into the sun. Larkin is calling you all? And many were afraid, and hid themselves in corners. Some ventured as far as the dreary and dusty doorways to peer out, and to say, Mr Larkin, please excuse us, for we have many things to do and to suffer we must care for the

cancerous and the tubercular sick, and we must stay to bury our dead. But he caught them by the sleeve, the coat collar, and shouted, come forth, and fight with the son of Amos who has come to walk among the men and women of Ireland, let the sick look after the sick, and the dead bury the dead. Come ye out to fight those who maketh the ephah small and the shekel great, come out that we might smite the winter house with the summer house til the house of ivory shall perish and the great house shall have an end and Sean joined the union."

Member's Perspectives: Colie Conneely

The Lockout to me was the first time in Ireland that ordinary workers stood up en masse to fight for both better wages and working conditions. They were not only fighting for themselves, but for the future of all workers both in Ireland and abroad. They were also - more importantly, I believe - fighting for a political system that recognized them for more than just having strong backs. Eventually, the Labour Party came into being as a direct result of the lock out.

Fast-forward to today, and again workers seem to be fighting for the future - but this time it is against the political system and party which they brought about after the Lockout. Now that Party is there enemy, yet claims to be representing them. Can there be another Lockout for the future of the next generations of workers, both white and blue collar? We will just have to wait and see.

Lessons and outcome of the lockout

The best analysis of the outcome of the lockout is to be found in the writings of James Connolly, who declares the outcome as a drawn battle where neither side got total victory.

William Martin Murphy – press baron, businessman and politician – described the end of the strike as a complete victory for the employers. He was less concerned about Larkin than about the impact of Larkinism on the mind-set of working men. In this he was probably correct.

The other remarkable feature of the dispute was that it cured some of the most intense rivalry between unions who were in fierce competition but who had transformed themselves through the dispute to express solidarity.

The strike also had an impact in Britain, where Larkin had challenged a whole section of the British working class to take direct industrial action to isolate the Dublin employer.

This was in contrast to the strategy put forward by the reformist leadership. Although the food ships and money from Britain were of huge significance and certainly helped the dispute and the workers, they

were a poor substitute for solidarity action and the blocking of Dublin port.

It is summed up by Connolly's biographer Desmond Greaves: "The splendid solidarity movement in Britain was side tracked into a campaign to send food ships to Dublin. As an adjunct to a sympathetic strike movement or boycott this would have been admirable".

It was to be a substitute and as such totally inadequate. Larkin left for America to raise funds for the union in the aftermath of the strike. He was also suffering from mental and physical exhaustion.

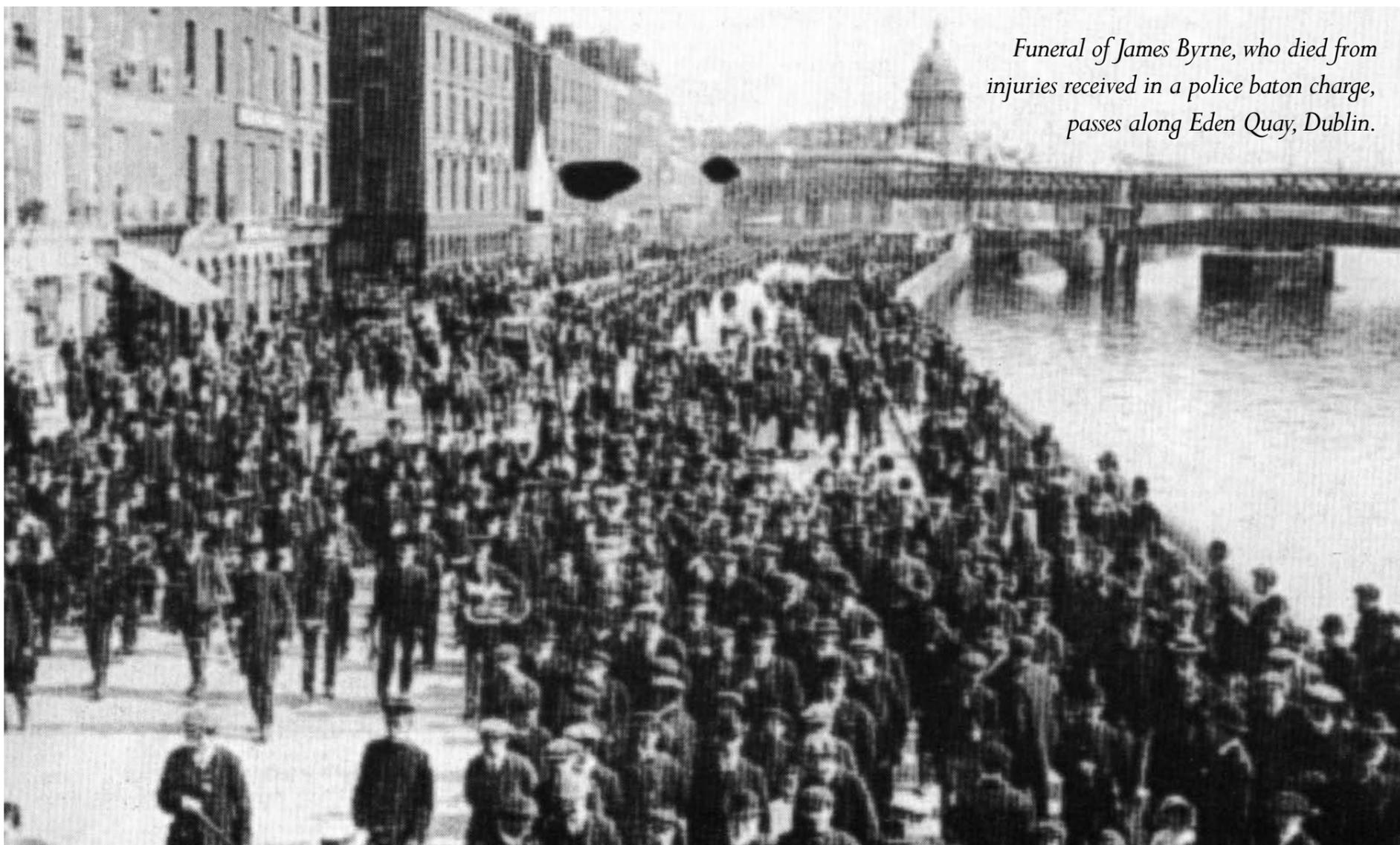
When America joined the First World War, Larkin was in the forefront of opposing it, arguing that one should take direct action to frustrate the war effort.

This led to a set of circumstances where he was to lead a split in the American socialist party and found a new party called the Communist Labour Party.

During the red scare in America Larkin was tried for criminal anarchy and sentenced to five to ten years in Sing Sing prison. From America he strongly supported the 1916 rising.



Coal leaving Tedcastle, McCormick and Company's depot under armed escort. (Freeman's Journal, 6 October 1913).



Funeral of James Byrne, who died from injuries received in a police baton charge, passes along Eden Quay, Dublin.

Larkinism

Let me turn to what we now call Larkinsim. Larkinism is not a neat and tidy creed. There is very little of it written down as a theory.

In fact the only document you can find where Larkin was forced to express his ideas in a written form is the affidavit that he swore in his trial in America. In this he affirms his opposition to social democracy and social reform as an end in themselves.

His belief in the Russian revolution, his strong attachment to Irish nationalism, his deep conviction as a practicing catholic – In some ways these views were contradictory but within his personality he was able to blend them together. Larkin was, above everything else, a man of action.

He did not believe in talking about injustice – he believed in organising to get justice. He negotiated significant wage increases for his members and he used these successes to recruit new members.

He organised the most downtrodden, deprived and neglected workers – no one was excluded from the trade union family.

The fundamental characteristic of the type of workers that Larkin organised in Dublin was that they were generally service workers in precarious employment.

Blessed with dazzling oratory and presence, Larkin was the very antithesis of the normal trade union style, both in his attitude and his philosophy.

He distanced himself from the union in Liverpool as he sought to extend the benefits of organised labour beyond the usual workers to include all unskilled labour.

If you had to sum up what kind of trade unionism Larkin believed in, it would be fighting-back trade unionism rooted in democratic participation of the workers themselves who he believed would transform and liberate themselves by their own activity.

For Larkin the union was an alternative to the wage trap, to exploitation. He saw the role of the union beyond wage negotiation. He saw the union using its assets for the pleasure of his members, and said:

“We have our own park of 162 acres, our own vinery and gardens, and we bring our women and men down there on Sunday or Saturday afternoon and teach the boys and girls how to cultivate the garden, and show them the beauty of life in its full expression... We make our family life focus around the union.”

This is a wonderful illustration of Larkinism – and it is as relevant today as it was in his own lifetime.

Larkin is not a plastic saint but his energy, commitment and vision can be used to inspire and rejuvenate a younger generation of trade unionists who must find their own ways and means of incorporating Larkin's ideas and actions in the fight against the challenges of today's capitalism.

Since their inception trade unions have been a force for good in our society. Men like Larkin showed us what we could achieve at our best.

In Britain, we saw the abolition of child labour, the suffragettes' movement for women's votes, the fight against fascism, the creation of the welfare state and the National Health Service.

We saw the establishment of equal pay legislation, the minimum wage, right through to maternity and paternity rights – achievements only obtained through protest and organised labour.

On each of these issues the trade unions were on the side of the angels.

Larkin proved that the ability of governments, mine and mill owners, dock companies and the land-owning elite to exploit working people unchecked was only possible before labour became organised and unionised.

Our goals and our dreams must be to re-assert the values of the past in a way that helps us capture the future.

In this struggle we must have the courage to challenge the powerful to achieve the world we want and deserve:

A world of full employment, a world of participatory democracy in which workers opinions and ideas are used to enhance the quality of the product and service they deliver.

The road to this future is one of struggle. In the words of **Tony Woodley**, the last general secretary of the TGWU:

'If we struggle we may not always win, but if we do not struggle we are sure to fail'.

This is in my view an expression of Larkinism for the 21st century.

1913-2013

Forging alliances of the discontented

By Jimmy Kelly

Below: William Martin Murphy's newspapers remained unrepentant after the events of 'Bloody Sunday' as this cartoon from the Saturday Herald, 6 September 1913, shows.

Below right: Group photo in Liverpool, 1913. Speakers at a meeting organised by the Liverpool Trades Council in support of Dublin workers: James Larkin, James Connolly, Big Bill Haywood (IWW) and Mrs Bamber.

In September 1913, James Larkin told a meeting in Manchester that he had what he termed a "divine mission ... to make men and women discontented". Ironically, a few weeks later Dublin's Catholic Archbishop, William Walsh, justified the Church's objections to the so-called 'Kiddies' Scheme' organised by the English socialist and feminist Dora Montefiore by saying that sending children to England "will make them discontented with the poor homes to which they will return sooner or later".

The notion of discontent was a subversive concept in an age when many churchgoers regularly sang a hymn containing the lines:
The rich man in his castle
The poor man at his gate
He made them high and lowly
He ordered their estate

In 1913, Dublin's working class, organised by Larkin, was no longer content to stay at the gate outside their employers' castle. Nor were other elements of civil society content to remain in their pre-ordained estate. The women's suffrage movement was becoming increasingly vocal and its publication the

Irish Citizen – jointly edited by the feminist and radical Francis Sheehy-Skeffington – was as outspoken as the Irish Worker edited by Larkin.

While the phrase 'The Great Unrest' is generally used to denote a period of heightened industrial tensions between 1910 and 1914, it could with equal validity be used to describe the growing momentum for women's political and economic rights.

In that year of discontent, the boundaries between different aspirations, and between the civil society groups pursuing those aspirations, were blurred. 10 Beresford Place – Larkin's Liberty Hall – provided meeting rooms for a range of organisations, while an equally wide range of groups and individuals supported the strikers. In September, the Irish Women's Franchise League transferred its weekly open-air meetings from Foster Place (beside the Bank of Ireland) to Beresford Place (beside Liberty Hall) to demonstrate their solidarity with the strikers.

While one could argue that many of those supporting the strikers were motivated as much



Member's Perspectives: Bridie McCreesh

The Lockout turned the way for workers all over the world.. It showed people were prepared to fight for what they should have been entitled to, and that the bosses were losing their draconian hold on them.

There should have been more media coverage of this centenary.



The distribution of food to the needy from a warehouse on the quays.



Top: Official proclamation issued on 29 August 1913

Above: Cartoon by Will Dyson, The Daily Herald (London), 9 December 1913.

by nationalist sentiment as by progressive politics, the tacit alliance between Larkin's Transport Union and the women's movement had its roots in something different.

Expressing concern for the women locked out by Jacobs, the Irish Citizen reminded its readers that – unlike John Redmond and the Home Rulers – Larkin had always been a supporter of women's rights. As Theresa Moriarty writes elsewhere in this magazine, women (and, indeed, children) were at the heart of the struggle in 1913 – not least because of the activities of the Irish Women Workers' Union, launched in 1911 following a strike by the young women in Jacob's biscuit factory. Led by Larkin's sister Delia, the IWWU was affiliated to the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union.

James Larkin recognised that the working people he sought to organise were defined not merely by their labour but also by the other attributes which go to forge identity and, often, disadvantage. He knew, for example, that merely organising women to improve their wages and working conditions would be insufficient while they remained politically disenfranchised.

It is a lesson that remains valid today, and it is a lesson reflected in Unite's commitment to community organising; to campaigning for equality; and to working in partnership with other civil society organisations, at local, national and international level, to achieve a more equal society.

Discontent does not arise in a vacuum – in 1913 or 2013.

In 1913, Dublin's unskilled workers – those whom Larkin sought to organise – lived in overcrowded

tenements, vulnerable to disease, infection and malnutrition. Over 20,000 households lived in a single room, and Dublin's death rate rivalled that of Calcutta. At the beginning of September 1913 the appalling housing conditions were highlighted by the collapse of two tenement buildings in Church Street on Dublin's north side, killing seven people and injuring many more.

Unemployment was high – at times reaching 20 per cent – and, due to the lack of a manufacturing base, there was a high number of unskilled workers, often employed on a casual basis. The average labourer's wage was under a pound a week – and women could expect to earn about half that, often from domestic work.

Fast forward to today, and although much has improved much remains contested. In the Republic of Ireland, the right to collective bargaining has still not been legislated for. Wage floors have been under sustained attack since the onset of the economic crisis, and growing numbers of workers in both the Republic and Northern Ireland find themselves in precarious employment, often working from day to day, week to week or month to month in a manner which would have been familiar to the casual labourers of 1913. Social protection and public services in both jurisdictions are shrinking, disproportionately impacting on those at the bottom of the income pyramid. And, in 2013, food poverty is once again a reality for many families on this island.

In the face of such challenges the trade union movement needs to forge new alliances to give expression to the discontent of working people and develop progressive alternatives.

Jimmy Kelly is the Irish Regional Secretary of Unite the Union

Member's Perspectives: Finbar Ryan

As part of the commemoration of the 1913 Lockout, I was bitterly disappointed that there was no float to commemorate this event in the St. Patrick's day parade. I am given to understand that the Trade Union movement wanted to, but it was argued by the organizers that this was not in keeping with the overall 'Gathering' theme.

This fact alone could put off a lot of people from returning to Ireland for a visit, most of whom would be economic migrants in the first place. Working people are currently being driven to the brink by austerity with the promise of more to come. Let us all join for a national strike the day before and the day after Patrick's day to end austerity and commemorate the 1913 Lockout.

Women at the heart of the struggle

By Theresa Moriarty



Members of the Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU) who 'suffered terms of imprisonment in the cause of labour'. Jim Larkin's sister, Delia, who was secretary of the IWWU, is seated at the centre in a white blouse. (National Library of Ireland).

When Father **Michael Curran** wrote in the opening days of the Dublin lockout, to the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, **William Walsh**, convalescing in Switzerland, he described the disorder in the city was the work of 'the scum of the slums versus the police', pointing out that 'The women, girls and street arabs are the worst'.

He reached for the most extreme comparison to describe the new forces unleashed on Dublin's streets. History supplied only one similar event, when monarchy, clergy, and aristocracy had all been swept away.

The women and even the young girls were simply

barbarian maniacs, yelling and practically threatening the police and trammel them with their fists. I could only compare it to the French revolution.

With women on the streets, fearlessly, publicly, challenging the civil authorities, his world turned upside down.

The city streets had been increasingly contested territory during industrial conflicts since 1911, but young, working-class women workers were still relative newcomers to such protests. They had broadcast their public arrival in small but noisy strikes from 1911. The scale of the 1913 mobilisation, with thousands-strong street meetings, processions and

intensive picketing, ensured women were a constant public presence throughout the lockout.

Some were members of the Irish Women Workers' Union, a new trade union organisation and the only one in Dublin to recruit women factory workers. It had been launched barely two years earlier as a sister union to the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union, in 1911 following a strike by the young women in Jacob's biscuit factory.

It was at Jacobs where the first lockout of women workers took place, before the first week of the month's lockout was over. Before other Dublin employers joined **William Martin Murphy** to

demand that their workers sign their anti-ITGWU, pledge Jacobs had locked out their workforce.

On Monday, 1 September 1913 - the morning after the police baton charges and riots that had engrossed the city - Jacobs shut its doors on 3,000 employees, most of them young women. The company insisted workers could not wear union badges at work. Trouble had been brewing since Saturday, when men had been sacked for refusing to handle strike-bound flour arriving from Shackleton's mills in Lucan.

When the factory went to reopen, inviting locked-out workers to return, while preparing to employ new workers, picketing at Jacobs' became a focus of struggle during the lockout. Since the police treated pickets more like unlawful assemblies than legally protected industrial practice, picket lines and the streets around Bishop Street became a frequent site of conflict.

Many of the IWWU members imprisoned during the lockout - Larkin claimed nearly sixty women, while Padraig Yeates estimates around 40 - were Jacobs' workers. The few names we know of these young, energetic and defiant women were almost all Jacobs' workers, among them **Molly Doyle, Rosie Hackett, Lily Kempson and Mary Ellen Murphy.**

The only young woman who was killed during the lockout, **Alice Brady,** left few traces of her short life of 16 years. An address: 21A, Luke Street. Her trade union, the IWWU. Where and when she was shot, during a strike-breaking coal delivery to St. Mark's in

Pearse Street on 18 December 1913. A cause of death, lockjaw from the infection of the shotgun wound on 1 January 1914. The solemn ceremony of her funeral, followed by thousands; the unmarked grave where her remains lie.

Casualties were not necessarily strikers. Bystanders were not safe from attack. Strike-breakers were increasingly armed during attempts to deliver tainted goods. Fifty year old **Bridget Rowe** was shot as she watched a clash between pickets and scabs beside a coal depot.

Women were drawn into the dispute in a number of different ways, and from different places - within their homes, and from the smaller factories and workshops more typical of Dublin women's workplaces than Jacob's.

As the lockout spread across the whole city and county, and as it dragged out from weeks into months, the struggle became transformed, from a confrontation about the right of men to join any union of their choice, the Dublin lockout became - as the Dublin writer, Jim Phelan remembered - 'a fight to the death between the businessmen of Ireland and the city of Dublin'. In that struggle women - and children - were at its heart.

Theresa Moriarty is an independent researcher in women's labour history and author of "Who will look after the kiddies? Households and collective action during the Dublin Lockout, 1913" (2002) and "Delia Larkin" (1998)

Member's Perspectives: Anne Smith

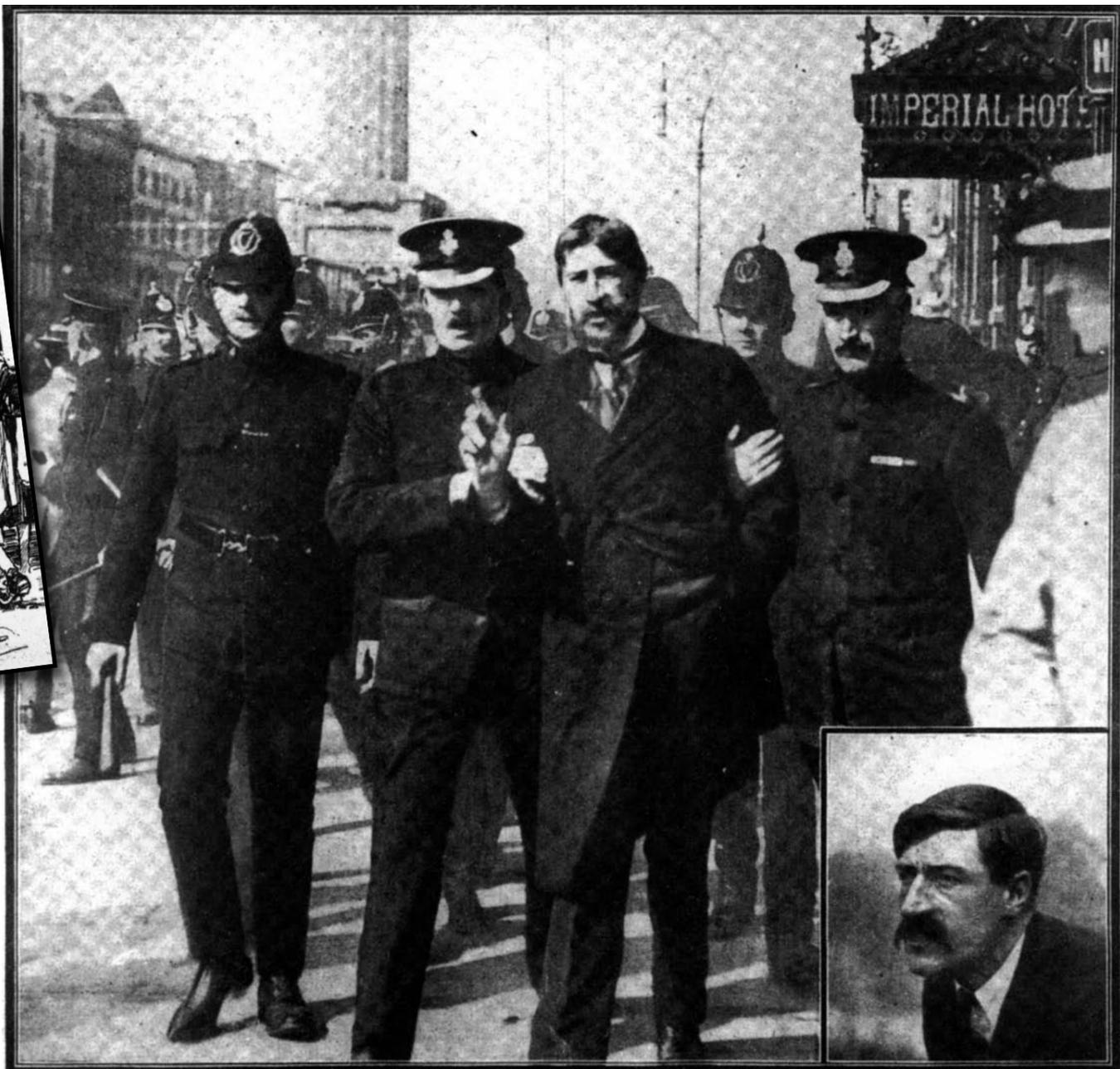
Today, one hundred years after the 1913 Dublin Lockout, we still have poverty, acute housing problems, attacks on our employment rights and on health, education and social services. The austerity policy in place today further increases economic inequality between women and men. Women in general earn less, own less and are more likely to live in poverty than men. Today, for every one pound sterling earned by a man a woman earns one euro. Access to employment has been the single greatest factor in securing economic autonomy for women and has hence been instrumental in reducing economic inequality between women and men.

The rise in women's unemployment will only increase owing to their concentration in the public sector. The class and gender divide is again widening due to privatisation, deregulation, public spending cuts and increasing appeals to individualism. Unions and collectivism are as necessary today as in 1913 if we are to win the struggle for equality and justice for all members of society. We as Unite members today must all become union activists and recognize the importance and power of the collective.



Above: Cartoon from the Sunday Independent, 21 September 1913 depicting the workers' blind faith in 'syndicalism'.

Right: Front page of The Daily Mirror, 2 September 1913, showing the arrest of Larkin (disguised) on Bloody Sunday at the Imperial Hotel, O'Connell Street (now Clery's Department Store).





Larkin prepares to board the first relief ship arriving at the North Quays, Dublin.

BRITISH TRADES UNION CONGRESS & DUBLIN TRADES COUNCIL.
BRITISH TRADE UNION FUND.
Give Bearer Parcel Bread, &c.
 Apply—South Wall. From 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday, 27th Sept., 1913.
 J. A. SEDDIN,
 T. MACPARTLIN.
 O'KEEFE, Trade Union Printer, 8 Malstou St., Dublin.

A very British strike

By Padraig Yeates

'The height of moral grandeur' was how **James Connolly** described the support of British trade unionists for workers in the Great Dublin Lockout of 1913. All the unions that would eventually combine to create **Unite**, from dock labourers and carters to draughtsmen and engineers, played a leading role in raising funds for the struggle. Connolly used the phrase in an article for the Scottish socialist paper *Forward* in February 1914. It was written in the aftermath of defeat. On January 18th the leader of the **Irish Transport and General Workers' Union**, **Jim Larkin**, had advised members to return to work on the best terms they could obtain, but not to sign the employers 'yellow' contract renouncing his union.

We have no way of knowing how many men were able to do so. We know that some companies did not require men to sign the form. These employers were relieved that the dispute was over. Some of them, such as the Dublin Port and Docks Board, reinstated men with no cut in pay, although it did not take back everyone. But then the Port and Docks Board was a public body and, while employers made up the majority of the board it also contained public representatives, including **William Partridge**, a city councillor and ITGWU official, and **William Field**, the most sympathetic of the city's nationalist MPs to labour. He had been a Fenian in his youth.

The Master Builders on the other hand not alone insisted that every employee sign the 'yellow contract' before they could return to work but forced unions to agree to expel any member who refused. A number of employers, such as Jacob's Biscuits, refused to take back 400 women who had been locked out after refusing to take off the Red Hand badge of the ITGWU. The company had not even waited for the formal declaration of war on Tuesday September 3rd, 1913, when the Dublin Chamber of Commerce adopted a proposal from its President, **William Martin Murphy**, agreeing to expel all employees who did not accepted the new terms of employment. The Jacob's women, many of them teenagers, had

found themselves locked out on the previous day.

Other workers, particularly carters and coal heavers, found there was no job to go back to. During the five month dispute Murphy had introduced a subsidy scheme that helped small companies buy motorised transport. They found that a truck could not alone do the work of nine horses and carts, but was cheaper to run, easier to drive through a picket line and did not need to be fed when it was not working.

The employers, led by Murphy, had turned Larkin's tactic of using the threat of sympathetic strike action against any company that refused to recognise his union on its head. They would not alone refuse to recognise the ITGWU but lock out any worker who was a member, as well as members of other unions who refused to sign the 'yellow contract'.

Backed by the police and military, the employers would undoubtedly have succeeded with their strategy much earlier if it had not been for the £93,000 in food, fuel and strike pay raised by the **British TUC**. In fact the employers might well have been defeated if it had not been for secret subsidies from the British Shipping Federation, the Engineering Federation and Lord Iveagh (the head of the Guinness dynasty) to keep some of the weaker firms afloat.

The Shipping Federation also supplied hundreds of strike breakers. As Justices of the Peace, many Dublin employers issued these strike breakers with firearms licences and revolvers. There were several shooting incidents in the city including one which led to the death of 16 year old **Alicia Brady**, a Jacob's factory worker. **James Byrne**, branch secretary of the ITGWU in Dun Laoghaire died as a result of a hunger and thirst strike he undertook in protest at being framed on an intimidation charge. **John Byrne**, no relation but also an ITGWU member, as was **James**

Nolan, were killed in rioting in the city on the eve of Bloody Sunday, August 31st, 1913. On that day the Dublin Metropolitan Police and Royal Irish Constabulary seriously injured up to 600 people in O'Connell Street. **John McDonagh**, a paralysed carter was beaten to death by policemen in his bed later that afternoon. The true figure for those who died as a direct result of the dispute will never be known. Many families could not afford to register deaths because they were too destitute to afford the registration fee. It is hardly surprising that the Irish Citizen Army sprang up in the city to protect union pickets.

At the height of the dispute some 15,000 workers, including 840 women were locked out. Not only were ITGWU members punished in this way but so were members of other unions who refused to sign the 'yellow contract' on principle. At least another 10,000 workers were laid off and other inhabitants of Dublin's tenements, the worst slums in Europe, were affected as money dried up. By September 27th, when the first food ship, the ss Hare, arrived a third of the city was living on the breadline.

And yet the Lockout, sparked by a demand for higher pay from ITGWU in Murphy's tramline company on August 26th, 1913, failed to break the union. Not only that but the outbreak of the Great War a few months later saw the pendulum of power begin to swing back towards organised labour. Men blacklisted in January 1914 found employers had to take them back as the War Office sucked reservists out of Dublin to serve at the front. By the war's end the ITGWU, which had 30,000 members when the Lockout began was approaching 120,000 and a union picket in Dublin was virtually inviolable.

While the Lockout is often seen as a curtain raiser for the Easter Rising and Irish War of Independence

it was also the last swansong of British labour in Ireland. The heroic stand of Dublin's workers was only possible because the city was still part of the United Kingdom. Class solidarity across national boundaries had saved the ITGWU from destruction at the hands of Irish capitalists.

Trade union activist, writer and historian Padraig Yeates is author of Lockout: Dublin 1913 and a member of the 1913 Commemoration Committee.

Member's Perspectives: Aisling Murray

I saw a televised version of Strumpet City as a young teenager and it made a huge impression on me. Nowadays, whenever I hear people question the existence or influence of unions in modern Ireland, especially complaints, I remind myself (and occasionally them) of the sacrifices made by our ancestors during events such as the 1913 Lockout.

If someone, somewhere had not taken a stand and inspired others to join them – workers in all sectors (and their families) would be still in the dark ages when it comes to what we now (rightly) assume to be basic rights like reasonable pay, holiday entitlements, and health and safety. Subsequent advances for women in the workplace owe a debt to early struggles to win fair play and recognition of the possibilities that come from working together to achieve a joint cause, even when not every member will benefit directly on every occasion.



Mass rally called by the British TUC in O'Connell Street in protest at events on 'Bloody Sunday' which passed off peacefully on 7 September 1913 (Freeman's Journal, 13 September 1913).