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Extracts from the
Irish Labour History Society
Constitution

1. NAME
   This Society shall be known as the Irish Labour History Society. The interest and work of the Society shall embrace the whole of Ireland, and the Society shall be non-sectarian and independent of all political parties.

2. OBJECTS
   (a) To promote among the community generally, (1) knowledge of Irish Labour History and of Irish people in labour history abroad and (2) appreciation of the importance of Labour History in programmes of education; (b) to locate and ensure the preservation of all records relating to the current and past experience of Irish working people and their organisations; (c) to build up collection of all records and reminicences, oral and written of or by persons involved in the experience or history referred to above; (d) to further above objects by promotion lectures and discussions and other means available, including the publication of printed matter, on subjects relevant to the purposes of the Society.

3. MEMBERSHIP
   (a) application for membership shall be open to all interested in the Society's objects, membership providing for individual members and corporate affiliation; (b) corporate bodies eligible to make application for membership shall be (1) trade unions, local trade union councils and Trade Union Congress; (2) libraries and appropriate institutions of record-keeping and research; (c) application for membership both in the case of individual and corporate shall be made to the Society’s Committee which shall have power to accept or reject any application. (d) in the case of individual applicants being admitted to membership they shall pay forthwith annual membership fee of £1, and in the case of bona fide students of recognised institutions 35p; (e) in the case of corporate bodies the affiliation fee shall be such as may be negotiated between the Committee of the Society and the body concerned.
The years 1836/7 were characterised by the sudden growth in Dublin and its environs, of illegal associations among the labouring classes whose tendency towards violent combination was increased by distress and commercial depression. The large number of combination assaults in 1837, greater than in any other county, was ascribed by Drummond to the rivalry of two Ribbon societies, The Northerners or Widgeons and the Billy Welters or Dublin men. These societies were said to be connected with Ribbon lodges in other parts of the country, notably the Midlands and North West. Their aims, fanciful and not precisely known even to their members, included the replacing of Victoria by O’Connell as ruler of Ireland, the overthrow of the established church and the restoration of forfeited estates to the descendants of their original owners — all this to be accomplished by a rising led by the Liberator and his sons. In some cases the lodges had no clearly defined objects beyond the protection of members at fairs. They were said to be connected with similar bodies in Britain which organised a benefit system for Irish immigrants, but in this respect they may have been confused with the trade unions’ arrangements for helping tradesmen who travelled in search of work. Dublin was the seat of central government for the Ribbonmen, according to information received by the authorities, and Drummond believed that publicans encouraged the system so as to create trade. Members of the Dublin societies attacked persons who refused to join them or were liable to give the correct password when challenged. The reasons for these attacks were obscure and sometimes the victims could give no reasons at all for them.

Apart from the Ribbon outrages, which seem to have been a recrudescence of the 1820’s disturbances, violence also arose from trade disputes. Many assaults and outrages were committed during 1836/7 in attempts to impose the regulations of organised labour on employers and workers.

In March 1837, O’Connell called on the Trades’ Political Union to help the authorities put down violence by giving him information on illegal associations.

The August 1837 General Election, during which he had the support of his ‘brother operatives’ of the T.P.U. and received subscriptions from the bricklayers (£10) and coachmakers (£11), resulted in O’Connell’s return for Dublin. The city returned another Liberal, Robert Hutton, a master coachmaker who had given hostile evidence on combination to the 1825 Committee, and who had been active from time to time in the employers’ interest in Dublin. On this occasion those exertions were forgotten; the T.P.U. was thanked for its work, and Hutton assured it that but for its members and the extraordinary efforts which they had made, the new M.P.s. could never have succeeded.

From this election there sprang a third form of violent combination which aimed at enforcing a boycott against Guinness’s brewery. Casks were destroyed and carmen and canal crews conveying the brew to the country were attacked. To a member of the firm it appeared that
business rivals were agitating the people against them. In fact, the boycott originated in Mr. Guinness's support for the Conservative candidates, though he had never voted against O'Connell before. This combination continued until November; the Government supplemented the rewards offered by Mr. Guinness for information, and the brewery had no difficulty in recovering its losses from the public purse.

The wave of lawlessness culminated in the murder, towards the end of September, of Andrew Ganley, an English Protestant egg-factor. O'Connell made many references to this man's death in his anti-trade union campaign, alleging that it was the result of Ganley's infringement of the rules of the egg market.

It was in this situation of depression, unemployment, widespread distress and secret violent organisations, that O'Connell launched his vigorous attack on the Dublin trade unions, an attack which developments consequent on the Glasgow cotton spinners' strike enabled him to continue in Westminster. His close association with Hutton must have influenced him in his decision to risk his popularity with the workers, always his most devoted followers. He regarded combination in the same way as did the ruling classes in general, that is, an evil which had to be put down, if only for the sake of the workers themselves. This was the view expressed by Baron Foster at the Autumn Assizes when dealing with combination crimes. According to Foster much of the poverty in Dublin was 'directly owing to the practices of the working population themselves whose combinations, if unchecked, would in the end destroy all trade and manufacture.' O'Connell followed the same line at the General Association a few days later, saying that Ribbonism was but the offspring of hated Orangeism and that attempts to raise wages by its violent means not only drove away capital but were powerless in the face of economic forces to achieve their object.

O'Connell raised the entire question of combination, Ribbon and otherwise, at the T.P.U. on 6 November. Urging the trades to follow the good example of the people of Great Britain who were availing themselves of the honest and praiseworthy system of trades' unions, he proceeded to denounce the regulations of the Dublin bodies which limited the intake of apprentices and which insisted on a uniform wage rate irrespective of the quality of the employee's work. These regulations, he said, had driven away business from the printing, book-binding and ship-building trades in the city, and unjustly prevented the youth of the country from equipping itself for employment. Notwithstanding his declaration that 'he should not confound the arrangements of bodies of trades with secret societies ... of the very poorest of the workings orders' he insinuated that a connection existed between them. Had not Chambers been murdered because he advocated that each man be paid according to his work and not according to the union rate? Were not those misguided individuals who had participated in secret organisations thirteen or fifteen years previously not likely to commit murder again? Employers would not be induced to lay out their capital for the improvement of trade if a system of intimidation were practised against them. He called on the T.P.U. to send abroad to the world their unqualified condemnation of that system 'which would plunder Mr. Guinness's property.'

He concluded by moving a resolution denouncing all secret and illegal combinations of every description, particularly the system which had 'manifested itself among the labouring classes' of the metropolis; it assured the combinators that the vengeance of an outraged God and the severe but just punishment of the laws would not fail to overtake their abominable crimes.
Mr. J. Martin, seconding the resolution, hastened to dissociate the T.P.U. from the system outlined by O'Connell — the Union had actually expelled a man who had been acquitted of a charge of 'that species of combination'. In defence of the regular trades, he pointed out that the shoemakers and tailors had pledged themselves to work for the lowest possible rates to keep the police clothing contract in the city, and that the decline in ship-building was not caused by combination, but by the owners' preference to get their ships repaired at any expense rather than commission replacements.

O'Connell rounded off the meeting by expounding the merits of the ballot box and reminded the T.P.U. that it was now its duty to take over the functions of the General Association in the matter of the Registry. This speech serves as a type of the many he made during the next four months. The attack was directed against three targets — Ribbonism, the anti-Guinness conspiracy, and trade combination. Of the last he distinguished between two kinds, those bodies which enforced their regulations violently and those which confined themselves to combining peacefully and legally to fix the rate of wages. All these kinds of combination certainly discouraged the investment of capital in Dublin, either by threatening its security or by restricting the capitalist's freedom of action, but O'Connell is open to the charge that he blurred the distinctions between them while professing not to. In fact, his speech, like the others which followed, tended to create the impression that the trade unions formed an integral part of a system of violence and intimidation. Soon after this meeting he left for London in connection with his parliamentary duties, and during his absence employer and employee interests took up the question.

A great deal of indignation was caused by an attack on 5 November upon a Mr. Armstrong, a ship-builder, allegedly because he employed some men who were proscribed by the body. The inhabitants of St. Bride's Parish met and called on the Lord Mayor to convene a meeting of merchants and tradesmen to seek means of destroying illegal combination. For their part, the trades prepared to defend themselves and several deputations requested the T.P.U. to bring the whole question before the general body of the members. There was as yet no animosity towards O'Connell and at the next T.P.U. meeting his observations were put down to a misapprehension arising from false information communicated by interested parties to whom he too easily gave credence. Mr. O'Brien (described as 'Father of the T.P.U.') pointed out that tradesmen would hardly be fools enough to combine to ruin trade and that it was only common sense to limit the number of apprentices in accordance with the opportunities for their employment. The employers 'consulted their own selfish purposes to the total disregard of the interests of the working men' and their cupidity in buying English manufactures contributed to the decay of the city. He gave notice of a motion calling on the trades of Dublin to meet and disabuse the public mind of the notion that combination had driven trade and manufacture out of the country. This motion was duly passed, but before the projected meeting was held, the stonemasons published their own resolutions denying O'Connell's allegations; they had felt the same depression as other trades, the cause of which had 'been traced formerly by him to its proper source . . . namely absenteeism.

On 18 December, shortly after his return from London, where his activities included a demand for a parliamentary inquiry into combination, the Liberator addressed a 'numerous' meeting of the T.P.U. His listeners were not as docile as those of November, and, for what was probably the first time in his career, he got a hostile reception from an Irish working class
audience. The bitterly critical mood of this meeting must have been heightened by the reading, before his arrival, of an Address of the undersigned trades to the Citizens of Dublin, which explained that the trades, hitherto silent, felt obliged to speak out, now that O'Connell had thrown his weight behind the accusations of interested parties, without hearing the other side. The Address claimed that loss of business was not due to combination (a word scarcely heard of before 1816) but to the removal of protection; those who lived on the ruin of Irish manufactures screened their own delinquencies by accusing the tradesmen whose 'indiscretions' had generally been the result of tyranny. O'Connell's speech in reply, followed a pattern that was to become increasingly familiar. He had not meant, as reported, to confound the two species of combination, he declared, but an interjection gave him the opportunity of crying out that they had no assurance that it was not part of the Wel ter's system to punish transgressions of the unions' regulations. Libertarian arguments were used by him for the first time — e.g., there was no freedom in a country where it was dictated to a man what wages he might pay and how many apprentices he might take on. His references to the illegality of apprentice limitation were repeatedly interrupted and a Mr. M'Anaspie, apparently one of the class of small masters being displaced by building contractors, reminded him that restrictive practices existed in the legal profession.

One constructive suggestion was made by O'Connell, that a meeting be held between masters and men to hear complaints and terminate disputes. His sole concern was the good of the tradesmen; he was their friend and sought only to rescue the city from the consequences of the proceedings of bad and mistaken men. He offered to meet the trades privately and promised to admit his error if they convinced him he was wrong. Though the city was anonymously placarded with notices that the trades would not meet him, 44 deputations discussed combination with him at the Corn Exchange on 22 December.45 It does not appear, however, from newspaper accounts of the 'Aggregate Meeting of the Tradesmen of Dublin' on St. Stephen's Day that these private discussions improved the temper of the workers.46 This was one of the rare public meetings of the general body of trades and while members of the T.P.U. were no doubt present, its composition had a stronger working class bias than had the more sedate political body. O’Connell’s absence did not prevent uncompromisingly hostile speeches and the letter explaining that he was indisposed was received with disbelief. Mr. O’Brien, from the Chair, declared that the people placed implicit confidence in O’Connell’s policies but how did they know that their rights and privileges were not going to be bartered like the children of Manchester?47 Journeymen present bitterly reproached their leader's ingratitude towards his most faithful followers to whose efforts in the General Election he and Hutton owed so much. Were those who had rescued Dublin from the tyranny and despotism of a faction now to be branded as assassins? He had accused the coachmakers of destroying their trade even though as their fee’d counsel, he had advised the men during Hutton’s turn out in 1824 that peaceful combination to raise wages was perfectly legal. (The actual opinion, dated 24 December, 1824, was read out). Mr. McDonagh complained that the coachmaking trade was flooded with apprentices and declared that coachbuilders would starve if apprentice regulation were suspended. O'Connell was attacked for buying a coach in London and for having the notes of the National Bank of which he was Governor, printed in England. There was some disenchantment with his record as Repealer and Radical. Nine years of agitation had done nothing for Ireland, said one man, and another asked why O’Connell, a Radical, did not support Radical principles?48
In all, nine resolutions were passed. Some referred to particular trades; others denied that any connection existed between the trades and systems of terror 'as attributed generally to us by Mr. O'Connell' and lamented that he should be deceived into such general denunciations. The reasons for industrial decay were listed, and included, unkind cut, 'continual agitation'.

The respectable O'Connellites, impelled by political and economic motives, hastened to defend the champion of capital. The whole affair was put down to the machinations of Orangemen, and an extraordinary meeting of the Liberal Club of St. Anne's Parish expressed its approval of the course adopted by Mr. O'Connell and by Mr. Staunton of the Morning Register. Conservatives viewed the battle with great satisfaction. The Times, which had been conducting a feud with him since 1833, observed that O'Connell himself had been the real cause of Ireland's economic difficulties but did not doubt that he would repair the breach and celebrate his triumph with a new procession. A Dublin Conservative paper reported that counsel for the defence in a trade combination trial denounced the attempt to attach the guilt of murder to 'respectable machinists' as a vile calumny on the part of a man who had more to answer for the murders and outrages in Ireland than all the trades' combinations in the Empire put together.

O'Connell met deputies from the trades at the Corn Exchange on 8 January, 1838 and in a calmer meeting than that of St. Stephen's Day, secured the passage of resolutions which condemned illegal and violent combinations but disclaimed all connection of the trades with them. Other resolutions pledged efforts to obtain adequate remuneration for Dublin operatives and called for a parliamentary inquiry into the causes which affected the state of trade in that city. On this occasion O'Connell began moderately enough, and conceded that combination was not the sole cause nor even the principal cause of industrial decay. He defended himself from the allegations made about carriages and bank notes. Having disarmed his critics, he began a formidable catalogue of the injurious effects of trade unions, particularly those of the printers, tailors, stone cutters, ship carpenters and sawyers, and recommended to his listeners the liberal arrangements of the Glasgow trades regarding apprentices and wage rates.

The speech contained the usual references to combination murders including Hanlon's in 1829 but O'Connell denied that he ever said that Chamber's murder grew out of the carpenters' combination, giving the lame explanation that the reporter attributed to him a remark shouted from the audience. He did not impute to the tradesmen, he said, unchristian and base outrages but the existence of illegal societies created a degree of terror of which the trades did not perhaps avail themselves, but which certainly made people fearful of breaking through their regulations. Despite attempts to prevent them, the Welters would interfere. (This modification of O'Connell's charge of Welter trades cooperation did not make it clear why Ribbonmen should try to enforce trade union regulations.) Inquiry was necessary to discover the causes of industrial decline and of outrage, and he declared that he was determined to save the tradesmen from the pernicious effects of combination.

The deputies refused to accept that their regulations were either unlawful or unjust, and reminded O'Connell that he had affirmed the legality of their combinations in 1834 and encouraged them to continue their activities. They reminded him that his own career furnished several examples of a certain reluctance to abide wholeheartedly by the law. It was recalled that he had advised the people of Kerry to place a death's head on the doors of those
who would not combine with him, and that he had once declared that he would never make himself the willing subject of the Algerine Act. (This was how he had described the Whigs' Irish Coercion Act).

A speech, far more suitable for the Liberator's purpose came from Connary, a master painter, whose assertion that a slating rent (i.e. a fund for paying assassins) existed when he was a journeyman, was repeated again and again by O'Connell during the rest of his campaign. The fact that the slating rent existed in 1820 and 1826 and that there had been no slating in the painting trade since then makes O'Connell's subsequent horror at representing a city where men subscribed to an assassination fund rather unconvincing.

This meeting was only a prelude to the grand confrontations of late January, and both sides busied themselves in the interval. O'Connell and Hutton invited signatures to a requisition for a public meeting to discuss matters in dispute between masters and men. As well as denouncing the trades, the Liberator was conducting a vigorous agitation for the Ballot, Triennial Parliaments, Municipal Reform and, reflecting Irish preoccupations, Tithe Abolition. It is a measure of his extraordinary vitality that, between 13 January and his departure for London on 2 February, he addressed upwards of eight Reform meetings, several others on the Poor Law and faced two unruly mass meetings. These Liberal meetings gave him the opportunity of sustaining public excitement, and invariably passed resolutions condemning combination and complimenting him in the most laudatory terms for putting principle before popularity. Each speech contained a selection from his calendar of combination evils, references to murders, one of which he admitted had occurred nineteen years before, allegations that the Aggregate Meeting had been got up by an Orange mob, and the usual equivocal hinting at an association between the trade bodies and the Weltsers. To this jaded litany was added the material provided by the Glasgow trials though its relevance to industrial relations in Dublin in 1838, is as obscure as that of the 1819 murder.

First the printers, then the trades in general, laid their grievances before the public. The printers, in a letter to the Freeman's declared that apprentice regulation was forced on them by the overstocking of the trade. The Address from the Regular Trades of Dublin, signed on behalf of sixteen trades, did not confine itself to the question of combination, but eloquently expressed disillusionment with O'Connell and the purely political solutions he offered. According to the Address the trades were anxious to refute, privately and without commotion, the charges made in November, but the Liberator had refused to meet them. A deputation was subsequently led by him to believe that he merely intended to rectify some misapprehensions on the part of the trades. Instead of this, he had, at the meeting of 8 January poured out the most violent torrent of abuse and quoted the records of past crimes for the further excitement of an audience already prejudiced by false reports. In particular, the carpenters, the traditional vanguard of O'Connell's processions, resented the charge, much publicised by the press of the United Kingdom, that Chambers had been murdered for taking a ratio of wages, i.e., less than the union rate. Having reviewed the history of the dispute with O'Connell, the Address asked what advantage it was to the tradesmen of Ireland that thirteen thousand situations had been thrown open by emancipation, since no tradesman had ever obtained one of them. For nine years they had been taught in the school of the learned member that only Repeal could revive trade and give employment to the starving poor. Now they were told that their wretched pittance was too large and that the operative must give up part of his inadequate means to relieve a portion of the misery of a starving popula-
tion, while the wealthy could riot in luxury and the absentee draw his rent to add to the misery of the unfortunate country which had given him his wealth. In conclusion, the trades were exhorted to avoid the idle pageantry of processions and devote themselves to their own interests and those of their employers and of society in general.

O'Connell replied, after a fashion, to the Address but ignored those fundamental points which showed an ominous disenchantment with his policies and a Radical dissatisfaction with the existing social structure. Throughout this time O'Connell exerted pressure on the administration to move against the combinators. Several persons told him they could give information concerning outrages. He urged Morpeth and Drummond to use these informers but although money was given and the Undersecretary met one of them daily, nothing useful was forthcoming. Contact with these unreliable persons probably explains the assurance made by O'Connell during his campaign that the leaders were known to the Government — this seems to have been true — and would shortly be arrested.

The employers’ Requisition for a meeting ‘to consider the best means of putting a stop to Illegal Combination, and preventing a repetition of the numerous outrages and murders’ recently committed in Dublin, named 20 January as the day and the Royal Exchange as the place. O'Connell headed the list of those who signed. The admission fee of one shilling, (the equivalent of a day’s wage for a labourer in the city or two days labour in the South and West), did not deter the tradesmen, who, according to one report, comprised four-fifths of the attendance. The Lord Mayor took the chair at noon, Sheriffs Quinton and Jones were there as were Robert Hutton, M.P. and leading employers, notably J. Carolin a building contractor and Fagan, a shipbuilder.

Classon, a retired iron master, proposed the first resolution. He said that twenty years before, he had built a foundry to make articles formerly imported but since the body would allow him to employ only men at twenty or thirty shillings a week for work done by boys in Scotland at four shillings a week, he had given up his scheme, at a loss to Dublin of at least £10,000 per annum. Sheriff Jones seconded this Resolution which connected several trades with illegal combination detrimental to labour and capital alike.

The second resolution condemned apprentice limitation, uniform wages and the practice of requiring employers to take on men nominated by the body. Since these were the three principles on which the security of labour rested, and the very grounds of the capital/labour conflict it is not surprising that the meeting foundered at this point. Carolin, the arch-enemy of the carpenters, was the proposer and he was received by what were described as the most vehement and emphatic marks of disapprobation. For the employers, Mr. Dixon argued that apprentice limitation was contrary to the very ordinances of God, and those who complained of overstocking ought to remember that Providence had so arranged the social system that everything would right itself. He, an Englishman who had laid out many thousands of pounds in Ireland, complained that combination deterred him from laying out many thousands more.

Workers advanced the usual arguments in favour of apprentice limitation and claimed that in any event the dispute was a matter solely for the masters and men, whom interested individuals, were endeavouring to separate for their own ends. (This obscure reference was applauded by the tradesmen; the interested individuals may have been O’Connell’s political opponents).
O'Connell delivered the customary list of legal prohibitions and punishments, dwelt on the horrors of transportation for crimes of conspiracy, the injury done to trade, and held out the prospect of amnesty except for those guilty of crimes of violence. He was frequently barracked and challenged on his interpretation of the law, and had no answer for the heckler who asked why a man who now demanded obedience to an Act of Parliament had continued the tithe agitation. Mentioning Curran, Yelverton and himself as men who had risen from the ranks, O'Connell declared that the tradesmen should not come with their monopoly of skills between the intellect of Ireland and its fair and full development.

At this point an employer who had been well received when seconding Carolin's motion, intervened and implored the meeting to pass the resolution, but a carpenter asked the help of the Chair in framing a Resolution advocating the regulation of apprentice taking — 'Mr. Dixon, will you instruct me, or will Mr. O'Connell instruct me how to drive a coach-and-six through the law?' The instruction was not forthcoming, and an amendment was proposed that it was the opinion of the trades that a limitation of apprentices was proper in the eyes of the citizens of Dublin.

There was now no hope that the original resolutions would be passed and on O'Connell's motion, the Lord Mayor, amid great uproar, adjourned the meeting. Saunder's Newsletter printed a graphic report of the scene which followed. Imprecations and insults were hurled at O'Connell — 'ha ha, tyrant — ha, ha, beggarman big beggarman — betrayer of his country' and when he was about to leave the room a fearful rush took place towards him as if the tradesmen meant to assault him. His friends surrounded him, and as he went down the stairs, a number of persons was waiting to see how the proceedings would terminate. Mr. J. D. Mullen cried out to them to clear the way, asking if they wanted to see Mr. O'Connell assassinated. The High Sheriffs and his friends saw O'Connell safely into his carriage, cheered by his supporters and groaned by such of the trades as were near the spot.

This unprecedented rejection of the Liberator was received with delight by the Conservative press. One paper described him as the greatest promoter of combination that Ireland had ever produced and dismissed his new found love for law and order as a pretext to allow of his absence from Parliament and the avoidance of his pledge that he would vote against the Government's Canadian policy. The Cork Constitution advised that the great patron of combination and his quondam friends be left to fight it out. (His willingness to face the unruly tradesmen evoked, and still evokes, a measure of admiration best expressed perhaps, by Whateley, who wrote that O'Connell had been in no small danger and had displayed a courage which he had never displayed before.)

These proceedings were followed with great interest throughout the United Kingdom and provoked the issue of an Address to the Trades' Union of Dublin from the Trades' Union of Manchester. This declaration of solidarity expressed the deep hatred of the British working classes for current Government policy. The 'O'Connell delusion' it declared had passed away, and the Liberator's efforts to destroy the few remaining organisations of labouring men were the prelude to the indiscriminate slaughter contemplated by the new poor law.

The Address concluded with a stirring passage:

Fellow workmen — Until you rid yourselves of that insidious foe, you will never obtain possession of your social rights. With him we are not safe. Without him we could fight the battle of our freedom more effectively, and speedily achieve a triumph for our cause, and real justice for Ireland.
O'Connell probably welcomed this intrusion from Manchester as another stick with which to beat the trade unions — "it called upon the tradesmen of Dublin in the most unequivocal terms to assassinate me." Far more disturbing than this exhortation was the thesis that the real line of battle was not drawn vertically between Ireland and England but horizontally between the workers and the ruling classes of both islands. Some consolation could be derived by O'Connell from the communications of the stonemasons and bricklayers dissociating themselves from the unruly proceedings in the Royal Exchange.

The interval before the final confrontation with the tradesmen was occupied by the stock anti-combination speeches. There was, however, the addition of an appeal to economic nationalism embodied in O'Connell's statement that the English workers were most anxious that combination should continue in Ireland, and that the Manchester hatters, to improve their own trade had sent funds to strikers in Dublin. The threat of assassination would not deter him from doing his duty to his country and his God, he declared, and he intended to obtain a most minute parliamentary investigation.

A letter from Joseph Hume, read at the adjourned meeting in the Royal Exchange on 30 January, was intended to counter the effect of the Manchester Address. Hume deplored the failure to impress on the working classes the principles of freedom of labour essential to the full prosperity of industry, and regretted the existence, in Dublin, of erroneous opinions on these very vital subjects. This communication from the man principally responsible, after Place, for the repeal of the Combination Laws, did nothing to placate the throng of tradesmen, and in view of the prevailing disorder, much greater than that of the previous meeting, the Lord Mayor threatened to have the disturbers removed. Classon's allegation that British unions had made the Dublin trades the victims of selfish designs, provoked an uproar, during which O'Connell threatened the intervention of the police. The resolution condemning apprentice limitation was read, and Williams, a carpenter, in the course of proposing an amendment, pointed out that the prime mover of the proceedings would be better employed in redeeming his pledge on the Canadian question than in interfering between masters and men.

The Liberator agreed with Williams that the meeting should be dissolved, and making much of his position as the leading member of the Irish bar, began a long, frequently interrupted, exposition of trade union law. As his campaign developed during December and January, O'Connell tended to concentrate his fire less on Ribbon combination than on the regulations of the clubs, especially those of the carpenters. His speech on this occasion was distinguished from all the others by the want of references to ancient murders but this might have been the result of the untimely dissolution of the meeting. He held up the 1836 Rule Book of the Carpenters and read out those rules concerning apprentice limitation, the admission of colts and men from the provinces, and the stipulated daily rate for those working in Dublin or within ten miles of the city. He especially condemned the rule which allowed an inefficient or infirm carpenter to work for less than the standard 4/8 a day, subject to the approval of the body, only after he had been discharged from three different employments. This rule, according to O'Connell, was enough to destroy the employers, and the system in general prevented any capitalist from embarking his funds in Dublin. If they only listened to him, he could prove that combination was driving trade out of the country, robbing the good workman and perpetrating an injustice on youth.

Marshalling the arguments of economic orthodoxy, he reminded his audience that Ireland
had no capital in money, but an inexhaustible capital in labour. If employers were permitted
to take whom they pleased and pay their men according to their worth, capital would be­
come more disseminated amongst the working population, and the cheapness of labour
would attract more business.

When, at this point, O'Connell asked for the meeting to be dissolved because of disorder,
the tradesmen protested vigorously, and a journeyman carpenter called for a meeting without
O'Connell, between the trades and the masters, none of whom had that day complained of
combination. Despite protests, the Lord Mayor ended the proceedings and the Liberator and
his friends rose to retire. The Pilot did not describe what followed and the Freeman's con­
tented itself with relating that O'Connell left the meeting amidst the most bitter expressions
of vituperation. Saunderson's reported that he was taunted with avoiding the Canadian debate,
and were it not for the arrival of a large body of the new police, he would have found great
difficulty in forcing a passage to the door. A crowd hooting and groaning, followed him
down Dame Street and he was obliged to retire into the Chamber of Commerce to escape
further insult. The tradesmen remaining in the Exchange elected a chairman and proceeded
to pass resolutions until the High Sheriff cleared the room. This 'most boisterous' meeting
separated at half-past two.

O'Connell addressed his final political meeting on the last day of January and two days
later set off for Parliament. Replying to a congratulatory address from the T.P.U. which had
affirmed its loyalty on the very night of the abandoned meeting, he declared that he had the
proud consolation of knowing that the misguided persons, who had so forgotten that they
were Irishmen as to link themselves with Orangemen, were but a small fraction of the trades­
men of Dublin.

The parliamentary petition of bankers, merchants, manufacturers, traders, house builders
and other inhabitants of the city of Dublin was already available for signature at the Cham­
er of Commerce. It had been prepared by the Committee of the Royal Exchange meeting,
and, making no distinction between Welters and trade clubs, complained of a widely ex­
tended system of secret illegal organisation. All: O'Connell's charges were repeated; the
tradesmen's regulations were formed for the express purpose of restraining the rights of indus­
try, the free circulation of labour, and the unshackled investment of capital. These regula­
tions, according to the petition, were enforced by violence, destruction of property and by
cruel and deliberate assassination in the open streets and in the noon-day. To this system
the decline of trade in Dublin was 'mainly attributable'. The petitioners desired earnestly to
impress upon the House of Commons their conviction that a very large proportion of workers
were unwilling members of the combination and wanted to be freed from its dominion. De­
claring that they were less influenced by personal considerations than by the belief that Ire­
land could never prosper until combinations were put down, they prayed for an inquiry into
the Dublin 'system of illegal combination sustained by force and violence'.

Support for O'Connell's activities was not confined to Dublin. In Kilkenny, the Citizens' Club
unanimously adopted a resolution of confidence in him for his exertions, and similar
motions were passed in Enniscorthy and Ross in which town however, the meeting resol­
ed that the working classes, the most useful and meritorious portion of the community,
were entitled to combine peacefully to sell their labour to the best advantage.

The struggle between the Dublin trades on the one side and O'Connell and the employers
on the other had some effect on the relations between the Catholic Church and its working
class members. O'Connell's anonymous informant reported that it was believed that the information given at the T.P.U. could have come only through the clergy and that the performance of religious duties had therefore been proscribed, by whom he did not say. In a letter to the 'Catholic portion of the Working Tradesmen' of the city, Dr. Murray, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, reminded the trades that evil should not be done so that good might follow and condemned the use of violence to enforce a minimum wage. Part of the subscriptions to trade clubs, he said, had been used to hire monsters in human shape to assail, even to death, unoffending individuals who would not submit to the despotic regulations of men to whom no law human or divine, had made them subject. God forbid that he should accuse the tradesmen of being involved in murder, but the public voice had proclaimed that they walked in a pestilential atmosphere and he was obliged to guard them against the remotest danger of contagion. Lawful, benevolent combination was praiseworthy, but they must not dictate the rate of wages to the workers. Their immortal souls were at stake and he begged them not to be led astray.

* * * * *

O'Connell's view on trade unionism and on working class organisations in general were determined by social and political convictions to which he adhered since early manhood. He had been made 'a confirmed aristocrat' by the 'sanguinary horrors of the French Revolution' and his fears of the social reorganisation which would attend a repetition of them modified the radical principles he adopted when living in London as a young man. These fears were strengthened by the events of 1798. From the experiences and reading of his early life sprang his abhorrence of violence, his insistence that political action not social revolution improves the condition of mankind, his hostility to trade unionism as an infringement of individual liberty, his opposition to aristocratic power and privilege, and his determination (usually successful in Ireland) to bring popular movements under his control. His position might be summed up as that of a middle class moderate anxious to resist any threat, from oligarchy or democracy, to his concept of liberty. He hailed Emancipation as one of the greatest triumphs recorded in history, the greatest of political changes as opposed to social changes which might break to pieces the framework of society.

In view of the lawlessness which was endemic in many parts of rural Ireland in his day, O'Connell's fear of popular uprising were not altogether unreasonable. He opposed illegal agrarian societies as vigorously as he later denounced trade unions and took credit for having helped to divert the people from 'nocturnal rebellions to determined but sober politics'.

At his State Trial in 1844 O'Connell reviewed the history of his relations with the working class; stressing that he was the first public man to proclaim that freedom was not to be achieved by bloodshed, he recalled that he had imperilled his life by opposing a 'frightful combination' in Dublin, with such success that not a single outrage had occurred in that city since. He had kept the Irish in Britain from joining the Chartists whose doctrines, had he not intervened, would have spread from one end of Ireland to the other. He pointed to his impeccably conservative poor law policy; his influence, he claimed, could have raised the poverty of Ireland against its property to insist that the poor be fed by the rich, but he saw that the danger of such a proceeding lay in the great burthen which the machinery of public relief would place on the upper classes.

On his own showing O'Connell's social philosophy was indistinguishable from that of his Tory opponents, and where trade unionism was concerned social conservatism was rein-
forced by the prejudices of a man of business and by the elaborate dogma of the classical economists. Until late in the 1870’s the prevailing thesis was that trade union activity could not increase the total amount of money available for the payment of wages, though one section of workers might gain temporarily at the expense of another. It was believed that wages were determined by the operations of a self-regulating economic system which neither employers nor employees could influence with lasting effect. O’Connell was a man of his time and cannot be faulted for accepting, without reservation, widely held doctrines which had secured the confidence of working class leaders like Place himself. Orthodoxy predominated in his Dublin speeches; he argued that in the face of the self regulating mechanism combinations were powerless to help the workers, that the rights of capital were paramount and that any attempt to restrict the freedom of the capitalist was supreme folly. These arguments applied a fortiori to Ireland, whose greatest misfortune, economists were agreed, was that investment was deterred by the belief among British capitalists that property was not secure in that island.

Hostility to trade unionism was implicit in O’Connell’s social and political ideas but it was not released until the deterioration of his relations with the Radicals and his accession to power made it no longer expedient for him to court working class opinion. Their losses in the 1837 General Election reduced the Radicals’ importance as allies and made O’Connell’s adherence to the Whig Administration more necessary than ever to its survival. In December of that year at a meeting held to protest against Russell’s ‘finality’ speech, O’Connell promised to support the Radicals in their parliamentary efforts on behalf of the ‘oppressed’ people of Canada. Carrying out this pledge would, of course, oblige him to vote against the Government, the very action which the necessity of maintaining the Whigs’ Irish Administration forbade. Already conscious of the dilemma posed by his words, he went on to declare that turning out the Whigs for the purpose of putting in the Tories would be indeed an egregious blunder.

Acutely aware of the Irish implications of the rebellion in Canada and of the conflict between the pledge and his commitment to the Administration, O’Connell set about disengaging himself from his embarrassing allies. He warned his Dublin followers that to the Grote and Roebucks, Ireland was merely a footstool to power. He complained that the Radicals had of late been cold and insincere towards Ireland and declared that their policies were of less importance to him than the interest of his country. Thus, the shortcomings, real or otherwise, of the Radicals provided O’Connell with an excuse for avoiding the consequences of his pledge.

He had already resolved his dilemma by deciding to absent himself from Westminster for the first days of the new Session. Mulgrave was able to report to Russell that while O’Connell disliked the suspension of the Canadian constitution he strongly disapproved of the attempted rebellion and would do no mischief.

The line he proposes to take is not to discuss the Question at all in public before the meeting of Parliament, (and) to abstain from attending the House during the first few days of its sittings.

O’Connell spent January making anti-combination speeches in Dublin. By the end of the month the Canada Bill had passed all its stages in the Commons and 2 February O’Connell left for London.
It is tempting to claim that he agitated the combination question solely to allow of an unprecedented absence from Parliament. While it was extremely advantageous for him to be occupied in Dublin during January, he could always have justified his abandonment of the Radicals by his much advertised abhorrence of bloodshed, and this is what he did later on in the year. The Canadians, he said, violated those principles of which he was the untiring advocate and the moment they shed one drop of blood they lost his advocacy, no matter what the 'Rads' might say.

It is unlikely that the difficult position he found himself in vis-a-vis the Radicals was alone responsible for his attack on the trades. However, coinciding with the promptings of Hutton and Staunton, with O'Connell's horror at the lawlessness prevailing in Dublin and with the alarmed state of public opinion consequent on the proceedings in Glasgow, it was certainly responsible for the timing of the campaign. These considerations, together with the fact that he had on several occasions supported the Dublin workers even though their activities had aroused the indignation of employers, must qualify the uncritical assessment that his opinion on trade unionism were the result of 'masterly independent thinking' based upon wide experience and a powerful grasp of realities; neither does the evidence support the assertion that O'Connell was not a slave to economic fashions.

To some extent the destruction of O'Connell's good relations with the Dublin trades was the result of the conflict between his twin roles of British Radical and Member for Ireland. After the events of 1837/8 the workers lost confidence in him, and except for the duration of the Repeal campaign, the breach was never repaired. The more active among them became involved in movements of a more extreme socialistic or nationalistic nature, while O'Connell, his fear of working class organisations confirmed by the excitements of that hectic winter, exerted himself to combat the spread of Chartism to Ireland, to diminish its attraction for the Irish in Britain and to keep his following untainted by revolutionary doctrines.

NOTES

1 Accounts of O'Connell's conflict with the Dublin trades range from the loyal O'Connellite, Fagan, William, The Life and Times of Daniel O'Connell (Cork 1848) ii pp 660-7 to the more critical Ryan, W.P., The Irish Labour Movement from the Twenties to our own day (Dublin 1919) pp 88-90, Connolly, James, Labour in Irish History (Dublin 1934) I.T.G.W.U. edition p 156, and Clarkson, J.D., Labour and Nationalism in Ireland (New York 1925) pp 137-40. The most recent treatment is D'Arcy, F.A., 'The Artisans of Dublin and Daniel O'Connell 1830-1847: an unquiet liaison' IHS XVII No 66 (1970) pp 221-43 where the episode forms part of a wider survey. The affair itself has never been the subject of a full-scale investigation. This study aims at supplying that lack while also examining O'Connell's motivation and relating the conflict to his activities as a Parliamentary Radical.

2 Minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland since the year 1835, in respect of crime and outrage, which have rendered life and property insecure in that part of the Empire p 1002, HL 1839 (486) XII, 432. Reports of widespread distress, exceeding that of 1826 may be found in Freeman's Journal 9 Jan, 29 Apr, 11 May 1837; Cork Constitution 18 Mar 1837. See also D'Arcy, op cit pp 231, 2.

3 Parliamentary Papers 1839 XII pp 1116; 1131, 2; XI 1839 pp 1190. See also Minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland since the year 1835, in respect of crime and outrage, which have rendered life and property insecure in that part of the Empire, p 239 HL 1839 (486) XI, I. Other names for these associations were Dublin Unionists, Defenders, Northern Unionists, Billy Welters, Billy Smiths.

4 PP 1839 XI pp 56, 7; PP 1839 XII pp 1144, 5, 8
5 Ibid p 1121
6 Ibid p 1126
7 PP 1839 XI pp 140, 160; 203, 5, 6, 8; 292; 332; 423
8 Ibid p 337
9 Ibid p 413; PP 1839 XII pp 1126, 1190
10 Ibid p 1190; F.J. 28, 30 June; 18 July; 24, 29 Aug; 26, 29 Sept; 18, 20, 24 Oct; 10 Nov 1837; 8 Jan 1838; PP 1839 XI pp 168, 204.
14 The TPU was not a trade union in the modern sense but a political association of tradesmen, small shopkeepers and the like. Its origins in 1831 were radical enough but in time it became a docile cog in O'Connell's political machine. See O'Higgins, Rachel; 'Irish Trade Unions and Politics 1830-50' The Historical Journal IV No 2 (1961) pp 212 et seq., D'Arcy op cit p 224. Repeal policies had an obvious appeal for Dublin tradesmen.

15 FJ 5, 11, 22 July 1837

16 FJ 2 Aug 1837

17 FJ 7 Aug 1837

18 Minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee on Combination Laws, particularly as to Act 5 Geo IV, c. 95 pp 8-19, HC 1825 (417) IV, 565. According to Chief Constable Farrell's evidence in 1824, 'the spirited prosecution of Mr. Hutton entirely put down combination in the coach business.' Report from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the operation of the Act 6 Geo IV, c. 129, and generally into the constitution, proceedings, and extent of any trades' union or combination of workmen, or employers of workmen, in the United Kingdom. p 170 HC 1837/8 (646) VIII, 315.

19 The TPU was not a trade union in the modern sense but a political association of tradesmen, small shopkeepers and the like. Its origins in 1831 were radical enough but in time it became a docile cog in O'Connell's political machine. See O'Higgins, Rachel; 'Irish Trade Unions and Politics 1830-50' The Historical Journal IV No 2 (1961) pp 212 et seq., D'Arcy op cit p 224. Repeal policies had an obvious appeal for Dublin tradesmen.

20 FJ 9 Aug 1837

21 FJ 22 Aug; 3 Nov 1837 (report of a court application for compensation under the Whiteboy Act); 7 Nov 1837 (O'Connell's speech at the TPU); Lynch, P, and Vaizey, J, Guinness's Brewery in the Irish Economy 1759-1876 (CUP 1960) pp 105-7.

22 FJ 12, 16 Sept; 13, 27 Oct 1837, CC 31 August; 7 Sept 1837

23 FJ 26 Aug; 9 Sept; 21 Oct 1837

24 FJ 3 Nov 1837; CC 16 Nov 1837

25 Examples of O'Connell's allegations may be found in FJ 13 Jan; 1 Feb 1838. Some Dublin Conservatives believed that Ganley had been murdered because he was English and a Protestant. (See letter from Ganley's brother to Dublin Evening Post printed in CC 22 Feb 1838). On the other hand, workers in the various Dublin markets were said to be connected with the Weltermans and to be encouraged in this by the factors as a means of obtaining custom. Report on the Present System of Combination p 9 (O'Connell Papers) NLI (uncatalogued). The murder may have arisen from a mixture of commercial, religious and political motives. See reports in FJ 29 June, 3 Oct 1837.

26 During the 1837 depression Glasgow cotton spinners went on strike to resist a reduction in wages. Members of the strike committee were tried in connection with the murder of a blackleg and were sentenced to seven years transportation. The trial was reported at length in Times 16 Jan, FJ, 16 Jan, Pilot 17 Jan, CC 18 Jan 1838; Annual Register 1838 pp 6-12

27 FJ 28 Oct 1837

28 Pilot, FJ 1 Nov 1837

29 FJ 7 Nov, Pilot 8 Nov, CC 9 Nov 1837: Fagan, op cit ii pp 660-3; Clarkson, op cit pp 137, 8

30 Repeal of the Combination Laws in 1824 had been followed by an upsurge of trade union activity throughout the United Kingdom. Within the year there had been in Dublin 66 or 70 beatings and two murders, one of the victims being Chambers, a carpenter. PP 1825 IV pp 19, 20

31 It might be thought from Clarkson, op cit p 143 that the system 'which would plunder Mr. Guinness's property' was trade unionism. These attacks were political in origin.

32 See journeymen tailors' letter in FJ 25 Oct 1837

33 The Radicals had suffered severely in the General Election and were now pinning their hopes on the ballot box as an easily understood and generally acceptable reform objective to arouse the energies of their scattered forces. The ballot box was soon replaced as a rallying point with the anti-Corn Law campaign. McCord, Norman, The Anti-Corn Law League, 1838-1846 (London 1958) pp 19, 20

34 This emerges strongly from the report in Pilot 8 Nov 1837

35 FJ 17 Nov 1837 reported that he was in Stockport on 9 Nov.

36 CC 11 Nov 1837, quoting Dublin Evening Mail. See also FJ 6 Jan 1838 for the acquittal of three men charged with the assault, and D'Arcy, op cit p 231

37 FJ 10 Nov 1837
This was a reference to O'Connell's failure in 1836 to support in the Commons the extension of the 1833 Factory Act. This failure, caused by his desire to maintain the Whigs, drew fierce condemnation from Tories and Radicals. The most celebrated attack is in O'Connor, Feargus, A series of letters from Feargus O'Connor, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, to Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M.P. (London 1836) pp 85, 6; 95, 6


Pilot 3 Jan 1838. Staunton owned the Morning Register, the Weekly Register and printed the Pilot for O'Connell on contract. For Staunton's relations with the printers, see Report on the Present State of Combination p 5; PP 1837/8 VIII pp 47, 9; 51 and the 'Letter from the Dublin Letter Press Printers' in FJ 13 Jan 1838

Times 1 Jan 1838
Evening Post quoted in CC 13 Jan 1838. The report of the trial in FJ 12 Jan 1838 omitted the reference to O'Connell
FJ 9 Jan, Pilot 10 Jan 1838
This portion may be conveniently found in Clarkson, op cit pp 139, 40. Clarkson in his account, uses the expression 'the system of combination' in a way which might lead the reader to believe it was synonymous with 'trade unionism'. The trade unions or trade clubs as they were then called, were only one of the several forms of combination in Dublin at the time.

He quoted a letter from the Glasgow trades assuring him that a graduated scale of wages was in operation in that city. The letter was by no means complimentary of O'Connell. FJ 30 Jan 1838

Hanlon's murder arose from trade combination. FJ 6, 7 Nov; CC 7, 10, 14 Nov 1829; FJ Jan; CC 12 14 Jan 1830. O'Connell appeared for the accused who were found guilty and hanged.

This seems to be a reference to a meeting requisitioned by employers in late 1833. FJ 11 Dec; CC 10, 12, 14 Dec 1833; D'Arcy, op cit pp 226, 7

PP 1837/8 VIII pp 154, 5; 163, 6. This was Connary's own evidence to the committee.

O'Connell's speech at a charity dinner. FJ 10 Jan 1838
FJ 16 Jan 1838
FJ 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25, 30 Jan, 1 Feb 1838
FJ 16 Jan 1838
FJ 13 Jan 1838
FJ 18 Jan 1838
FJ 20 Jan 1838
PP 1839 XI pp 400-2. (Evidence of J. L. O’Ferrall, Commissioner of Dublin Police) and PP 1839 XII p 1116 (Evidence of Drummond)
FJ 20 Jan 1838
FJ Pilot, 22 Jan 1838, CC 25 Jan 1838 carried a long report extracted from Saunders Newsletter.
Fagan, op cit ii pp 684-6 has a pro-O’Connell account
He subscribed £20 to the Anti-Combination Fund in 1825. FJ 5 May 1825
Evening Mail quoted in CC 25 Jan 1838
CC 25 Jan 1838
FJ, Pilot 24 Jan 1838
Whatever about the long term ameliorative effects of O'Connell's arguments on Dublin labour relations (D'Arcy, op cit pp 241, 2), the newspaper reports other than the Freeman's indicate that this meeting was hardly an 'unqualified triumph' for him. (Ibid, p 238)

For the views nor encouraged the mistakes of the people. Fagan, op cit ii p 485.

This passage occurs in a letter, O'Connell to Sugrue 14 April 1829, headed 'First Day of Freedom'. Fitzpatrick, W. J. (ed), Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell, The Liberator (London 1888) i p 180

O'Connell's admiration for Arthur O'Connor did not survive the discovery that his hero advocated a socialist division of land. Daunt, op cit p 50

For the effects of these developments on British politics, see R.D.C., pp 154, 50

O'Connell to Bentham, 2 Nov 1828 Bentham, J., The Works of Jeremy Bentham (ed John Bowring), Edinburgh (1848-59) x p 605; for O'Connell's exertions against Ribbonism in Co. Tipperary see his evidence in Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland, more particularly with reference to the circumstances which may have led to disturbances in that part of the United Kingdom p148, HL 1825 (181) IX 1. Examples of his warnings against the dangers of secret societies may be found in CC 22 Ap, 19, 23 Oct, 4 Nov 1830; 9 June 1831, 10 Jan 1832. See also O Muireadhaigh, op cit pp 24, 31. On one occasion O'Connell claimed that the government distributed 36,000 copies of his Address on rural societies in 1822. Pilot 10 Jan 1838. For his fears of Whiteboyism see O'Connell to Duncannon, 28 May 1831 and 14 Jan 1833. Correspondence i pp 265, 317

Shaw's Authenticated Report of the Irish State Trials (Dublin 1844) pp 479-88

The Wages Fund theory as it affected trade unions, is analysed in Webb, S. & B., Industrial Democracy (London 1902) pp 603-7

Wallas, Graham, The Life of Francis Place, 1771-1854 (London 1918) p 360n

Russell's speech is in Hansard 3rd Series XXXIX, 69, 70 (20 Nov 1837) and FJ 23 Nov 1837

FJ 7 Dec 1837. In 1837/8 Canadian unrest boiled over into rebellion. The radicals advocated full colonial self-government for Lower Canada. For the effects of these developments on British politics, see Macconehy, op cit pp 354-7 and Clarke, G. Kitson, Peel and the Conservative Party: A Study in Party Politics 1832-41 (London 1964) 2nd ed. pp 370-5; 387, 8.
Ribbon passwords of the time show that Canadian affairs were followed with interest by the disaffected in Ireland. The Ribbonmen’s notion of contemporary politics was rather naive as the following password shows.

Q. What do you think of the times?
A. The Corporation is busily engaged.
Q. What did this proceed from?
A. A weak Ministry.
Q. I hope O'Connell will obtain his desire?
A. Yes; for the Queen will sanction it.
Q. You look green?
A. Not without reason.
Q. I hope your Irish sons will gain their freedom?
A. Yes, when the Canadas conquer.

FJ 19 Dec 1837
FJ 12 Jan 1838
FJ 16 Jan 1838
Mulgrave to Russell, 6 Jan 1838, PRO 30/22/3A, quoted in Macintyre, op cit p 164; see also McDowell op cit p 168
Times 30 Jan 1838
FJ 3 Feb 1838

This was the accusation made by his critics, Conservative and Radical. The London Working Men’s Association charged him with acquiescing in the most despotic act that ever disgraced an English House of Commons. Lovett, W., *The Life and Struggles of William Lovett in his Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge and Freedom* (London 1920) p 201. A letter in FJ 16 Aug 1838 complained that the absence of several Irish M.P.s had the effect of giving Peel the power to dictate to the Ministry the measures to be taken.

FJ 16 Aug 1838, which printed 'rats' for 'rads'

This assessment is made in Tierney, Michael, 'Repeal of the Union', Daniel O'Connell; Nine Centenary Essays ed. Tierney, M. (Dublin 1949) p 154

For the conflicting aims of British radicalism and O'Connell's concept of Irish nationalism, see Lovett, op cit pp 186-201. As early as 1830 the Birmingham Political Union urged the people of Ireland to desist from Repeal and to unite with England for the more important aims of Reform. CC 4 Dec 1830

O'Higgins, Rachel, 'Irish Trade Unions and Politics, 1830-50' The Historical Journal IV No 2 (1961) pp 214-7; Connolly, op cit pp 99-103. For the long term effects of O'Connell’s campaign on Dublin labour relations see D'Arcy, op cit pp 241, 2
Between the demise of the journeymen guilds and the rise of the modern trade unions there is a dark transitional period much in need of the light of research. The problems of the period are numerous; this paper undertakes to examine but one aspect of trade organization in Dublin on a single day mid-way in that time of transition, namely the part played by the trades in a public demonstration in 1864. The contemporary accounts of that demonstration provide the materials for a picture in which, it is hoped, the participating trades may be seen as they appeared on the city streets, some four years before the British and thirty years before the Irish Trades Union Congresses came into being. In the following pages the occasion is outlined and an analysis is made of the trade participation in it, of the reports used, the banners and flags carried, and the comments made at the end of the day. A suggestion is added about one of the many practical steps which should be taken to safeguard the surviving records of the country’s trade unions.

I THE PROCESSION

On Monday, 8 August 1864, the foundation stone was laid for the present monument to Daniel O’Connell in the centre of Dublin. It was the occasion of a procession remarkable for its size, orderliness, splendour and, what is more to the point in this paper, for the extent to which the trades of the city were represented in it.

The Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) estimated that about 500,000 people were present at the monument site and that the processionists numbered about 45,000. Mustering for the procession began between 9 and 10 a.m. and an hour later the procession moved off from St. Stephen’s Green, passing O’Connell’s former residence in Merrion Square and then by Nassau and Dame streets.

The DMP reported that the carriages bearing the lord mayor and corporation passed the Castle Gate at two minutes past two and that, as the crowds near the monument site were ‘excessive’, reserves of police were to be forwarded there immediately from points already passed. An hour earlier the coal porters who headed the procession had reached the site and had begun to discharge their task of ensuring good order in the monument precincts. The lord mayor arrived at 4.20 p.m. and mounted the platform with Dr Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin. After an address by Sir John Gray, the DMP reported that the lord mayor’s ‘proceeded to lay The Stone which was done at 5 p.m. precisely . . . after which he handed the trowel to Sir John Gray and left immediately, the ceremony having concluded. The vast multitude assembled then began gradually to disperse and the trades to file off to the different quarters of the City to which they belonged and by 8 o’clock p.m. Sackville street (O’Connell street) presented its usual appearance’.

II THE PARTICIPANTS

More than sixty distinct groups can be recognized among the processionists. They comprised the members and representatives of the following: 39 trade groups, 10 tontine societies, 2 societies for labourers and artizans, 3 other societies (including the Ancient
Order of Foresters), 4 groups of boys from schools and institutions, 8 religious confraternities, bishops and priests, the lord mayor and corporation of Dublin and representatives of corporations and trades from Drogheda, Limerick, Waterford and other towns. This study is confined to the Dublin trades who in the procession 'surpassed all their previous efforts at display'.

The city trades in procession can be divided into four main groups (given in marching order):

1. The coal porters, numberings, 'next to 2,000 men'.
2. The Amalgamated Building Trades of Dublin (builders' labourers, painters, plasterers, carpenters and bricklayers), 2,350 men.
3. Commercial bodies (grocers' and ironmongers' and, possibly, purveyors' assistants), 700 or possibly 850 men.
4. The Associated Trades headed by the coachmakers, in all 4,920 men, including the stonecutters who came immediately before the carriage containing the foundation stone, 200 men.

A complete list of the city trades in the procession is given at the end of this article.

By comparison with police reports of the procession in 1862 on the occasion of laying a foundation stone for a proposed Catholic University building, and also with the 1861 Census report on occupations, it is clear that there were many trades whose members for one reason or another (possibly through lack of organization or sympathy) did not take part in the proceedings of 8 August. Among these could be mentioned: the woollen drapers (of whom there were 2,125 males according to the Census report, 1861), the chandlers and soap boilers (303), the tin workers (257) and the pawnbrokers and their assistants (158); all of these trades had paraded in 1862. To quote two further examples, no processionists represented the railway workers (469) or the law clerks (801). Notwithstanding the absence of these men, those who did walk with their trades were estimated by the press to number eight to ten thousand 'sons of toil'. The contingents from the trades vary considerably in number. Most numerous were the coal porters, quay and city porters ('next to 2,000') and, in descending order of size, the builders' labourers (800), the carpenters (750), boot and shoemakers (600), bakers (560), bricklayers (500), and tailors (500). The smallest were the hatters (40), the smiths (50) and chimney cleaners (60).

The numbers of participants for each trade have been compared with the numbers in the corresponding occupations in the 1861 Census and expressed in terms of percentage turnout. The result varies considerably from trade to trade. It was, of course, the stonecutters' day and their turn-out was 82.6% of all stonecutters in the city. The lowest turn-out was 12.4% of the regular house painters. Overall, where both trade titles in the procession and Census occupations are identical (19 cases), the turn-out was 31.8%. This percentage can be interpreted as showing, prima facie, that about one third of the trades in the procession were prepared to show publicly their loyalty to O'Connell's memory seventeen years after his death; it can also be interpreted as an indication that about a third of workers in these trades were acknowledging their affiliations on what would be later accepted as trade-union lines, particularly when the bands, banners and stewarding are taken into account.

The question arises whether the trades following the banners on that day were or were not, in fact or in name, trade unions. The evidence provided by the wording on the arms and banners of the participating trades suggests that the title or term trade union was not on dis-
play on 8 August 1864. The word union is used only in the banners and flags as part of a motto, e.g. 'Union is strength'. Other words were in use to give a trade its title as an organization. The stucco plasterers, the butchers and the Temple Bar carpenters had not fully abandoned their title to be regarded as guilds. Five groups of the trade processionists had adopted the word Society for their organizations. Of these one was a united society embracing three district trades (skinner, parchment makers and leather dressers) while another, St. Malachy's Labourers' Society, was either unique or one of very few organizations in the procession which catered for non-skilled workers. For the remaining trades, the reports do not provide any evidence one way or another, except in two cases — the grocers' assistants and the Bridge street bakers (the latter being unique in that they were not merely a Dublin but an all-Ireland organization). These two groups carried new banners and it is significant that both used the word association on them to describe their organization. It appears then that the title or term trade union was not to be seen in the procession banners or flags and its public use in Ireland may be of much later date.

Qualifying status words are prefixed to the titles of eight trades. In the procession there were regular painters, carpenters and coopers. There were operative butchers who also in their banner incorporated the title 'Guild of the Blessed Virgin'. In Bridge street there were operative bakers while their brethren in Little Britain street and also the slaters described themselves as being original operatives. There were also regular operative smiths of the City of Dublin who claimed to have been incorporated in 1537.

The names of eighty one officials connected with the trades are to be published separately. The posts of president and secretary are distinguished. Discounting one probable and four possible identifications in Thom's Official Directory, 1864, it appears that these officials were employees rather than owners of trade establishments.

III REPORTS

The approaching procession was the subject of concern in Dublin Castle. On 4 August orders were given that soldiers were to be confined to barracks during the procession and two troops of cavalry were to be 'at the ready'. On the day, the DMP had all available men on duty as directed by the Commissioners' orders. Written reports were despatched at intervals during the day to police headquarters. That night a full report of 21 pages was prepared for transmission through the Commissioners of Police to the Chief Secretary's Office. It was a workmanlike document, carefully and economically written, for the information of the heads of the police and the executive in Dublin Castle. As well as giving a general account of the day's proceedings, the police report laid emphasis on the order of participants in the procession, the bands accompanying the various groups, the carriages and the number of horses drawing them, the numbers of men on horseback and of green flags carried, the banners displayed and particularly the inscriptions on them.

The press reported on the procession to the extent that they were or were not in sympathy with it. The account in the Freeman's Journal of 9 August is remarkable for the wealth of detail about the numbers representing each trade, the names of their presidents and secretaries, and especially the description of the designs and inscriptions on the banners carried. The Nation of 13 August carried a report similar in content to that cited but with some additions and some differences, both of which are noted in the inventory. By modern standards, the press accounts are lengthy and detailed. Unlike the pithy police
report, the press spared no words in showing what a grand spectacle the populace had enjoyed. If, for example, they did not exaggerate the numbers participating in the trade contingencies, they certainly gave no less than an optimistic estimate of the total that would please a patriotic readership. The reporters would undoubtedly have been out to make the most of the occasion. On the other hand, the police were more experienced in the business of estimation and were in duty bound to concentrate on the salient points which were surely those connected with present and future law and order. Brevity, accuracy and consistency were what their superiors would value and reward. Though comparatively few in both, the inaccuracies and inconsistencies are much fewer in the police than in the lengthier press accounts.

Differing though they do in length and in purpose, the press and the police accounts tally and in general corroborate one another. As there are elements of disagreement in them, especially in regard to the representations and the wording on the banners, comment is called for. Bearing in mind the abundance of minute detail (particularly in the page of small print in the Freeman’s Journal, it would be surprising if there were no differences or discrepancies; all the more so as the two main accounts (the one cited and the D.M.P. report) were completed within a few hours of the conclusion of the procession. The most significant difference lies in the fact that the press name and give details (some at least) of four trade groups in the march which are not noticed by the police. Two of these are in the Freeman’s Journal account (purveyors’ assistants and City of Dublin Carpenters, Temple Bar) and two are in the Nation account (ironmongers’ assistants and decorative painters). There are also many differences in regard to the banners carried. In some cases disagreement in description or in wording may be more apparent than real. It may arise where only one side of a banner is reported on, with the police and press describing opposite sides.26 It can also come from the fact that, whereas the press tended to report separately on each side, the police sometimes coalesced their notes on the obverse and reverse sides into one single short description. As an example of this, the differing accounts of the carpenters’ banner may be cited. In this case, the press man saw on the banner the emblematic devices of the trade, the trade title, the figure of St. Joseph and the Latin motto; the police saw the arms of the guild and a yellowish centre trimmed with green (probably the same obverse side seen by the press man) and also (probably the reverse side not reported by the press) the mottoes concerned with unity such as ‘Who shall divide us?’. In general, the police were not as alert in reporting on the trade side as they were in recording the details on the patriotic side of the banners. It is not surprising in those Fenian times that the potentially subversive side demanded their attention. Without fail they reported on the ‘political’ or ‘military’ aspects (men on horseback, green flags, bands and patriotic banner slogans) whereas the press did not do so consistently.

The different information at the disposal of the police and the press also tended to produce differences. From an examination of reports on similar processions, it is clear that the police had relevant files to consult for guidance and background. Nevertheless, it is clear that their report on the proceedings of 8 August 1864 was derived solely from submissions received that day; in a word they were ‘fresh’. On the other hand, the press had on their newspaper files detailed accounts of similar processions and from examination of these it is clear that they borrowed much detail from them rather than attempt the impossibility of noting all the details on the day itself. For example, the minutiae of the banners were clearly
beyond the capacity of the staff and naturally they 'cogged' word for word from earlier accounts on the files. While this is incontrovertible it in no way invalidates the evidential value of their accounts as there were on view that day in Aug. 1864 many 'constant' elements which would not have changed since last seen. To take the most obvious example, the banners described in 1862 would be the same as those carried in 1864, except where new ones had been designed since then and the press did not fail to notice them. In seven cases, however, they not only took down the details of the banners from their files but they also brought in to the 1864 accounts the very same numbers of trade processionists (e.g. over 100 horseshoers in 1862 became more than 100 in 1864). It goes almost without saying that it would be wrong to accept unilaterally either the press or the police account as a trustworthy source for the day's events; but to overstate the disagreements would disguise the overwhelming proportion of indisputable evidence common to both. The details in one source added to or modified by those in the other provide as complete a picture as possible of the O'Connell monument procession of 1864.

Police and press reactions to the proceedings were similar in that both devoted a lesser proportion by far to the other processionists than to trade members and their banners. The consensus in their reports shows that there were at least twenty three bands, accompanying the trades and that their members carried forty two banners, six bannerets and about forty three flags. They had thirty eight horses; and there were also one hundred and ten or so men on horseback and thirty two stewards, some of whom were mounted.

Taken together, the police and press reports provide a view of organized trades in Dublin City in the mid-nineteenth century which deserves to be recorded in the labour annals. They are valuable in that they give the names of the officials in the various trades, particularly so close to the founding of the Dublin United Trades Association. They also provide information on the size and the relative strength of the participating trades. They afford evidence of the degree to which organization was developed within the various trades or trade societies, particularly all of whom had bands, banners, carriages with horses and stewards.

IV BANNERS AND FLAGS

Within each trade group, the general order was:
1. Band, in some cases preceded by men on horseback.
2. Banner in a carriage, drawn by four horses and, in a few cases, mentioning postilions.
3. Main body of members wearing trade insignia and national colours, headed by trade officials and accompanied by stewards.

In all, forty two banners (and six bannerets) were displayed by the trades in the procession. Measurements are given for ten of these. The largest, fifteen by nine feet, was carried by the regular coopers and the second largest, ten by nine feet, by the shoemakers. The two smallest were the banners preceding the horseshoers (seven by six feet) and the regular stucco plasterers (six by eight feet).

References to guilds do not necessarily indicate age, as such references are found on two banners painted in 1862. The letterpress printers’ banner carried in the procession was painted in 1844 and three others were painted in 1862. Banners carried by the grocers assistants, the Bridge st. bakers, the naval artificers, the coalporters and possibly by the silk trade were described in the press as new in 1864. No indications of age is given for the remainder. The names of the 1864 designers are given in three cases.
decorator, 3 Bedford row, Dublin, designed the coalporters’ banner and Robert Mitchell, 10 Parliament st., Dublin, that of the silk weavers. The banner of the Bridge st. bakers was painted by Robert Mannix, house and church decorator, 14 Merrion row, and upholstered by Patrick Beakey, 38-41 Stafford st., who was among other things a cabinet maker and upholsterer.

The banners had two sides which derived from different inspirations. One side was closely (but not always exclusively) concerned with the trade and its general design, arms, tools, symbols and mottoes were connected with the crafts and work of their members. The other side (though again not exclusively) was used as a means to portray national or patriotic sentiments through suitable symbols and inscriptions. In some there was an intermix on the obverse or reverse side of both trade and patriotic themes.

To illustrate the details which are given in the reports, the description of a two-sided banner is quoted at this point. The saddlers’ banner had a trade side and a patriotic side. The trade design is on a buff ground in the centre of which is a shield in blue divided by a gold ‘bend’, with two imitative saddles in the upper and one, supported by a horse, in the lower compartment. Above the shield there is a crest showing a small horse saddled and the whole is surmounted by a forcibly painted and gracefully disposed crimson drapery with gold fringe. At the bottom there is a gold ribbon with the words ‘Our trust is in God’ and, under the ribbon, a medallion with the society’s arms and also a shamrock, rose and thistle entwined. On the patriotic side of the saddlers’ banner there is a full size figure of Erin, with harp, wolfhound, and in the distance a landscape showing a round tower; the whole is surrounded by a scroll in pink with the word ‘Resurgam’.

With only verbal descriptions available, it is difficult to classify the designs with certainty but the distribution of subjects may be expressed broadly in a table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Side of Banner</th>
<th>Trade Subjects</th>
<th>Patriotic Subjects</th>
<th>Mixture of both</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obverse</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2 *</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11+</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No details given
+ No details given for 10; other may be religious or trade.

The trade subjects predominated on the obverse side of the banner (55 per cent, of those described in detail). On the reverse side, patriotic subjects were more pronounced (64.5 per cent), though it must be noted that details are not available for a surprisingly large proportion of the total, given the police interest in such matters. Of the total of both sides described, 42.3 per cent of the designs were trade inspired, 35.2 per cent were of patriotic inspiration and 22.5 per cent had both intermixed.

Six banners were confined to trade subjects but, if those with descriptions for one side only are included, the total would be ten and possibly as many as twelve. One significant conclusion can be drawn from these figures: they show that the trade members wished not only to give prominence to their own immediate trade concerns but also felt compelled to give public expression to their views on wider national, patriotic or political matters. This can be clearly seen in the inscriptions on the banners.

23
The inscriptions may be classified broadly as those with themes wholly or predominantly devoted to: trade, patriotic sentiments, piety, brotherhood and unity or union. Seven banners had inscriptions confined to trade matters and with two exceptions the mottoes were in Latin, attesting to their claim to antiquity and, possibly, to their origins in the guild era. One exception was the banner of the City of Dublin Carpenters which carried the title 'Guild of St. Joseph'. The other exception was the tobaccoconists' banner which is, in modern parlance, consumer-orientated; it referred to what Raleigh introduced into Europe as 'This wholesome plant, through nations spread, is loved by the living and used oe'r the dead'.

Of the patriotic sentiments expressed on the banners, the most frequently used were: 'Gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked' shown with the figure of an Irish wolfdog (4 times), the words 'Erin go Bragh' (3 times) and three expressions of loyalty to the memory of O'Connell, 'the ever-to-be-lamented Liberator', 'Ireland's greatest son' and 'Ireland remembers O'Connell'. The only other patriotic inscriptions to appear more than once were: 'Ireland for (or/and) the Irish' (favoured by the corkcutters and tanners), and 'Our country, (our cause) and our commerce' (the coalporters and tanners). Ten others appeared only once and of these a few examples are given: 'The harp that once through Tara's halls, I'm newly strung and must be heard' (Little Britain st. bakers) and 'Erin's rights will raise her mansions high' (stonecutters). By far the fiercest sentiment, which must have raised police eyebrows, was on banner of the grocers' assistants: 'Oh, for the swords of former times'. The hatters used the Irish phrase 'Céad Mile Fáilte'.

Of the inscriptions six may be purely expressions of piety (as for example 'Duty, fear and love, we owe to God above' on the patriotic side of the chimney cleaners' banner) or they may be part of the trade arms or general trade motto (the bakers, for example, all had 'Praise God for all'). The butchers' banner had two angels supporting a scroll with 'In hoc signo vinces' and above a lamb and cross together with a representation of the 'Book of Seven Seals'. The corkcutters linked patriotic and pious with 'God and Our Country'.

The concept of brotherhood is expressed directly in four banners (e.g. 'Love of Brotherhood' on the regular carpenters' banner) and indirectly in two more at least. The grocers' assistants, on the patriotic side, displayed the advice 'Stand together, brothers all'. As the other references appear to be on the trade side, the brotherhood intended may be within the trade (though the stucco plasterers, advocate not only 'love of brotherhood' but also carry the message 'love the world'). The butchers had, on the trade side, the same sentiment: 'Let brotherly love continue'. Brotherhood by implication is expressed by the hatters, horseshoers and smiths (e.g. 'By hammer in hand, all hearts do stand') but these may also be part of the trade design. The poulterers sounded a restrictive note with their inscription 'In love and friendship we support our trade and keep out those that would our rights invade'.

In all, the patriotic inscriptions are the most numerous (about twenty four examples) but second place for frequency goes to the theme allied to that of brotherhood, namely union or unity. The need for the advantages of union is proclaimed in fourteen and possibly seventeen examples. Five times the spectators read 'United we stand, divided (or disunited) we fall' on the Dublin banners. The smiths and cabinet makers proclaimed that unity or union was strength and the shoemakers reinforced the message with 'Beware of division, union is strength'. The motto United to support, not combined to injure was used by the corkcutters, the sawyers and the bakers of Bridge street. It was reminiscent of the early period
in trade union history when it was necessary to convince society at large that such combination for the benefit of members would not result in injury to others.

The symbols used on the trade side of the banners are specific to the occupation. On the patriotic side they are more or less conventional. In order of frequency the representations displayed are; the harp (22), ‘Irish Wolf dog’ (15), Erin or Hibernia (12), shamrocks (10), Irish landscape (8), crown (7) and also round towers sunburst, Irish cross, church in ruins; Daniel O’Connell, St. Patrick and Brian Boromie. About one third of these patriotic symbols are on the side portraying trade or intermixed subjects.

The reports of the procession point to a total of about forty three flags being carried and the police noted the green ones, thirty one in all. Six of the flags had trade inscriptions with the words ‘Amalgamated (Building) Trades (of Dublin)’. The silk trade and weavers and the cooperers had their craft names on their flags. The coachmakers had four flags dealing with the ‘union’ theme already described. The grocers’ assistants were forward looking in that their flag called for a home artist for the O’Connell statue which was in time to be executed by John Henry Foley and Thomas Brock. The banners and flags were not the only colourful items in the procession. Postillions are mentioned in the reports three times. Those with the house painters wore blue jackets and their counterparts with the tailors wore green velvet jackets and white caps with a green border. The postillions preceding the butchers were even more colourful; they wore similar jackets trimmed with white and gold, and white breeches and top boots. Stewards are described in the accounts of ten trades, the most numerous accompanying the grocers’ assistants — twenty six men carrying wands tipped with green ribbon. Some of the stewards were mounted — those with the house painters (carrying green-covered truncheons) and the tobacconists. The stoncutters’ stewards wore ‘richly ornamented scarfs and aprons of green tabinet embossed with golden shamrocks’. The shoemakers were accompanied by heralds bearing trade escutcheons on horses with trappings of green and gold while their stewards wore ‘white and green rosettes, some gilt truncheons and others small green flags’ with the title ‘Sons of Crispin’ on them. According to the D.M.P., ‘the majority of the trades wore green sashes but all who took part in the procession wore rosettes of green or green and white ribbon, some of which had a harp in the centre, others medallions with a likeness of O’Connell, others Repeal buttons’. Still others wore ‘the insignia of the order or trade they belonged to’. For example, the horseshoers wore white leather aprons trimmed with green and a horseshoe in green in the centre. The skinners and tanners also wore aprons. The members of the silk trade from Pim and Co. wore poplin scarves of their own manufacture and those from Fry and Company wore rosettes of poplin brocatelle. The reporter for the Freeman’s Journal was justified in writing that the ‘really magnificent appearance of the trades ... created universal admiration’; the colourful display of 1864 would be well worth visual recording if it could but grace the capital’s streets in our own comparatively drab days.

* * * * *

The capacity of the trade representatives to organize, on a grand scale, a colourful display can be seen in the variety of designs, colours and trappings of the banners, in the costumes worn and the favours carried. The trade arms, inscriptions, mottoes and other wording attest to their pride in their origins and titles; they merit further examination.

An inventory of the participating trades and of the details in the press accounts and the police report has been compiled and will be published later.
V AFTER THE PROCESSION

On the evening of the procession a grand banquet attended by civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries was held in the round room of the Rotunda. The gallery was filled with ladies and about 500 gentlemen sat to dinner under a painting by James Haverty representing a monster O'Connell meeting. 'The wines . . . included a variety of champagne of the highest character — moselle, hock, claret and really superior sherry and port'. The lord mayor who presided called the first toast, The Health of the Queen. Tis fifth toast was The People of Ireland. Replying to the toast Professor Kavanagh, who had been one of those charged with marshalling the trades during the day, said:

They were told some days since that Dublin would be in the hands of a mob; but the experience of that day proved to them all that the people who had taken part in the magnificent demonstration . . . were worthy of the highest privileges of citizenship. Although the people had not shared in the results of O'Connell's triumphs (the benefits of which were confined to the upper and middle classes), they had proved themselves worthy of the highest benefits of citizenship which he hoped would soon be conferred on them.

In the Mechanics' Institute (on the site of the Abbey Theatre) the city trades were having a déjeuner for the deputations from the provincial trades. Behind the President of the Associated Trades, P. J. Shanley, was a portrait of O'Connell and the inscription Céad Mile Fáilte. There were several ladies in the gallery. The first toast of the evening Ireland Our Country was called by the President and P. J. Smyth of the Irishman replied:

He thanked the trades of Dublin for affording him the opportunity of being where he knew and felt he ought to be — among the democracy of this country. . . . Those who made the demonstration were the tradesmen who gained nothing from Emancipation . . . The peaceful, manly dignity that characterised that great assemblage — the glory of it all — belonged to the trades . . . This day should not be lost; it should not end in idle display . . . It should be the foundation of some monument for the salvation of Ireland. Let something be done to make them united and they should know that they had a common country to be won for themselves and their children.

Before the entertainment concluded, the chairman gave the toast Native Manufacture and its speedy uprise.

In Dublin Castle, John Mallon was writing the official DMP report on the day's proceedings. Towards the end he expressed the apparent relief felt in police quarters:

All passed off very quietly and orderly and the police have not heard nor are they aware that even a pane of glass had been broken along the line of procession, neither has it come to their knowledge that any accident occurred throughout the entire proceedings.

Despite the late hour, there was a prevailing air of elation and exultation in the offices of the Freeman's Journal near the G.P.O. The proprietor, Sir John Gray, had played a prominent part next to the lord mayor in the ceremony at the site. There had not been the slightest sign of the mob riots predicted by the prophets of doom; the unflagging labours of the Monument Committee had culminated in a day of unblemished success and triumph. With a joyful sense of duty, the leader-writer began to write:

We have seen many demonstrations but none, within our memory, at all approached
in grandeur the sublime spectacle of yesterday. It was worthy of O'Connell and of the people he loved and who still remember him with all the enthusiasm he inspired when he lived. Rome kept holiday when her consuls triumphed. Dublin kept holiday when the block of granite that typified the solid qualities and immortal services of O'Connell was to be deposited in one of the finest sites in Europe.

V TRADE UNION RECORDS

Interest in the records of Dublin trades and guilds is of long standing in the Public Record Office of Ireland. As evidence of continuing concern for them, it should be noted that the later records of some of the trades whose members walked in the 1864 procession are now in the safe-keeping of that office, viz.

National Union of Painters and Interior Decorators
(accession no. 1017)

Ancient Guild of Incorporated Stone and Bricklayers
(accession no. 1034).

National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers
(accession no. 1036), and

Irish National Plasterers Union
(accession no. 1039).

Everyone will agree that the preservation of the records of trade unions and their antecedent associations and societies should be placed beyond hazard. Experience shows that the records kept, often of necessity, by officials in their homes (sometimes beyond the period of office) or records relating to unions no longer in existence are those which are in the greatest danger of damage, dispersal or destruction. In such circumstances the present holders of the records should consult their unions and consider, where difficulties arise, the advantages of deposit in the Public Record Office, so that the maximum amount of documentary evidence will be made accessible for the study of Irish labour history.

DUBLIN TRADES IN 1864 PROCESSION
Reference Numbers and Letters Used In Notes

A 3 Coalporters
A 4 St. Malachy's Labourers' Society
A 6 Regular House Painters
D.P. Decorative Painters
A 7 Regular Stucco Plasterers
A 8 Regular Carpenters
A 9 Bricklayers
A 10 Grocers' Assistants
I.A. Ironmongers' Assistants
P.A. Purveyors' Assistants
A 19 Coachmakers
A 20 Regular Coopers
A 21 Butchers
A 22 Barbers
A 23 Hatters
A 24 Bakers, Little Britain st. and Werburgh st.
A 25 Tailors
A 26 Chimney Cleaners
Carp. City of Dublin. Carpenters, Temple Bar
A 27 Poulterers
A 28 Bakers, Bridge st.
A 29 Silk Weavers
A 30 Saddlers
A 31 Letterpress Printers

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2 1868 and 1894, respectively.

3 The foundation stone was a large square block of granite weighing nearly 2 tons, supplied by John Cunningham from the Dalkey quarries. The arrangements for the placing were made by Michael Meade, 'the eminent builder, assisted by the regular masons and stonecutters in his employment', Freeman's Journal, 9 Aug. 1864.

4 See note 21. The reference to the different quarters of the city to which they (?) the trades) belonged may be a facet of socio-economic history worth investigating.

5 DMP recorded the order of carriages as: the City Marshall followed by the Lord Mayor's private carriage (with Charles Bianconi and Sir J. Gray), his state carriage, the municipal state carriage (with the L.M., his 2 sons and chaplain), 35 carriages (members of Dublin Corporation and representatives of the corporations of Limerick, Cork, Waterford, Drogheda and other provincial towns) . . . and 15 other carriages (members of corporations and others).

6 As the gross total includes (a) two trades walking in 2 or 3 groups and (b) three are mentioned in one source only, the net total of individual trades may be only 33. The difference of 6 can be accounted for as: (a) there are 2 distinct groups of carpenters and 3 of bakers (see note 28); and (b) D.P., I.A. and P.A. are in one newspaper only and not in DMP report.

7 Processionists other than the trades mentioned in Freeman's Journal, 9 Aug. 1864 are: Young Men's Societies, United Confraternities of Dublin, drapers (not subsequently mentioned), grocers' and vintners' assistants, temperance societies, schools, academies, colleges, the University (Catholic), charitable committees, professional men, magistrates, M.Ps, municipal bodies, hierarchy and clergy, and the Monument Committee.

8 Ibid

9 Known in the old days of agitation as 'O'Connell's Body Guard' (Ibid.), they were traditional leaders of processions in his honour.

10 Title taken from account for no. A 8 and from the Nation, 13 Aug. 1864. If D.P. are distinct from no. A 6, D.P. should be 2,350, not 2,450.

11 The associated trades are probably to be equated with the United Trades Association of Dublin (see note 29). If so, the list of trades in Swift (see note 28), p.240, and those in the 1864 procession, agree on 14 and disagree on the remainder of the 30 who formed the association. The following trades were in the procession but are not in his list: nos. A 22, 25-27, 29-30, 33, 38, 40, 43 and 41 (possibly = curriers in Swift's list). He includes nos. A 4, 6 and 9 (in 1864 with the Amalgamated Building Trades), A 10 (mentioned in the Nation as a commercial body), and the following not in procession: brassfounders, brushmakers, cutters, marble masons, pawnbrokers' assistants, shop warehouse men and pipe-makers (possibly = tobacconists in procession). More research is needed to establish the number and names of the participating trades. The Associated Trades of Dublin had their rooms in Bridge st.

12 Census of Ireland for the year 1861, past V, general report, pp.135-55. For 1862 procession (see note 21).

13 The total of the 'round' numbers in the Freemans Journal and the Nation accounts is 10,420 (i.e. 10,120 in the former and, in the latter, I.A. 200 men, and D.P. 100).

14 If 8 other trades which have wider appellations in the Census report, 1861 (e.g. horseshoers and farmers) and included, the turn-out rises to 32.3%. If D.P. are added to A 6, the painters' turn out would be 18.5% and consequently A 44 would become the lowest with 13.3%.

15 The five are: nos A 4, 22, 30, 39 (sometimes called Halifax Society), and A 40. No. A 24 may possibly be added to these. There was also 3 societies from Drogheda and Kilkenny in the procession.

16 There are a few other 'trades' about whom the question of whether they were skilled or unskilled might be posed e.g. the coalporters.

17 The comments here relate strictly to nomenclature and may not be relevant to the fact of being an organized trade union. Nevertheless, it appears that research will be required to discover the earliest authentic examples of the fact and of the use of the name.

A 32 Sawyers
A 33 Basketmakers
A 34 Shoemakers
A 35 Tobacconists
A 36 Slaters
A 37 Horseshoers
A 38 Ship Carpenters or Naval Artificers
A 39 Corkcutters
A 40 Skinners
A 41 Tanners
A 42 Ropemakers
A 43 Smiths
A 44 Cabinetmakers
A 45 Stonecutters
The probable identification is Henry Hutchinson, 17 Coburg place (A 38, secretary). The ‘possibles’ are: Thomas M'Cue, 1 Castle market (A 27, president); John Coles, 46 Molesworth st. (A 25, president and secretary); Geo. Delahunt, 55 King st. N. (A 22, president); and Patrick Farrell, 2 Anglesea market (A 21, president).

In the Royal (Collins) and Portobello (Cathal Brugha) Barracks.

7 superintendents, 14 inspectors, 44 sergeants, 500 constables, 14 mounted men and 28 men of the Detective Department, source as in next note.

It is now in the State Paper Office, Dublin Castle reference no. CSO R.P. 1864/18377 on 1877/3591, which also contains the report on the 1862 procession (see note 12) and documents on McManus funeral, 1861.

Bands mentioned in Freeman's Journal total 26, in DMP report 31 and, common to both, 23. Not reported as having bands are: I.A., P.A., D.P., Carp. and bakers (Werburgh st.). The bands of nos. A 28-29 were at the dejeuner (page 19).

See section on Banners and Flags.

Annual Register ... 1864, after the observation that the Belfast riots were a reaction to the O'Connell Monument ceremony (p118), states: 'The procession was ... made up principally of the trades, the corporations, the schools and religious fraternities. There was not much enthusiasm manifested anywhere ... but the fact that so much trouble had been taken, and so much money spent to make the demonstration respectable and successful, showed that there was a deep feeling connected with the memory of O'Connell among the lower classes and to a great extent among the middle class'. (See also note 4). The Irish People in its editorial on 13 August 1864, thought it was a great spectacle 'but we would pronounce it a most melancholy one if it all meant what its chief promoters would have us believe. But we confidently hold it did not. We cannot for one moment believe that the working men of Dublin, three years ago, and now, followed the lead of M.P.s and T.C.s, not even to the moral force repealer were the honours of last Monday paid, but to the large-brained Irishman whom the people know to have loved his country well, if he went the wrong way about serving her'.

One banner per trade was the norm but no. A 9 carried 3; nos. A 3, A 26 and A 35 had 2.

The accounts were compared and it appears that (1) the police reported on one side only of 7 banners where the press covered both sides; (2) in 4 cases the police reported on one side not reported on by the press; (3) in one case police and press reported on opposite sides; and (4) in 23 cases they both reported on both sides.

Though less than a quarter of the processionists, the trade members are given three times more space in the DMP report than all other participants. In Freeman's Journal the others are only briefly mentioned.

For a view of the trades in procession in 1875, see John Swift, History of the Dublin Bakers and Others, Dublin, (1948), pp.263-67. This pioneering study, which must be consulted for details of the 3 groups of bakers, reproduces representations of 31 trade arms. Page references to these and to additional information on banners are given in the inventory. Trades in the 1875 and not in the 1864 procession are: brassfounders, curriers, fishermen (Ringsend), Independent Carmen's Association, iron founders, machine sawyers, mariners, nailmakers, stationary engine drivers, trunk and case makers, and the United Machine Workers.

Set up in 1863 with 30 'unions', Andrew Boyd, Rise of the Irish Trade Unions, 1729-1970, Tralee 1972, p.50. Also in the procession were representatives of the Waterford Trades Association and the Confederated Trades of Limerick. (See also note II).

Five carried only 1 carriage and two horses — nos. A 10, 27, 31-32 and 40. No details about horses and carriages are given for I.A., P.A. or D.P.

The other banners with measurements but not named here were carried by nos. A 9, 27-28, 39 and 43-44.

Banners for no. A 7 and Carp. were painted by Mr Farmer and for no. A 43 by Mr Weir in time for the 1862 procession. The banner for no. A 31 was painted in 1844 by J. Tracy (Freeman's Journal, 21 July 1862).

The Dublin trades with Latin mottoes are: nos. A 8, 19, 25, 29 and 40. Those with Latin and English mottoes are: nos. A 9, 21 and 44. One of the banners carried by A 9 had the inscription 'Our old house at home' which may be an intermixture of trade and patriotic.

Other banners displaying the world guild were: nos. A 7 (G. of St Bartholomew) and no. A 21 (G. of the Blessed Virgin). Measurements for nos. A 33, A 45 and Carp. are given in accounts of the 1862 procession cited and are included in the inventory, which will be the subject of a later study.

The relative paucity of banner designs and inscriptions and relating directly to O'Connell emphasized the fact that the banners were, for the most part, not designed for the day; loyalty to his memory was expressed in the day's ephemera e.g. the medallions or Repeal buttons worn by individual processionists.

As they walked immediately before the foundation stone carriage, one might have expected the stone-cutters to pay ostensible homage to O'Connell but apparently they chose an earlier hero with their call 'Let Erin remember the glories of Brian the Brave'. This choice reinforces the point in note 34.

As their association had only recently been established and as the grocers' assistants played an active role in the Fenian movement, it may be no coincidence that their banner had so militant a theme.
Other banners referring to union, unity and unanimity were carried by nos: A 4, 32-33, 38 and 36, with 'By love and unity — or harmony — we support'.

The other trades not mentioned here are: nos. A 7, 20-21, 41 and 44.

In their banners two trades claimed continuity from the 15th century (A 45 from 1410 and A 21 from 1483, two from the 16th century (A 20 from 1501 and A 43 from 1537), three from 1670 (A 6-7 and 9) and two from the 18th century (A 28 from 1752, and A 30 from 1781). The parchmentmakers carrying a skin dated BC 1039 were easy winners among those claiming antiquity.

Since writing the above, Dr. Timothy P. O'Neill has kindly allowed me to read his paper entitled Irish Trade Banners written for inclusion in a forthcoming publication. It will include a detailed professional examination, with figures and reproductions, of the style and form of surviving trade banners of the following Dublin trades: nos. A 8-9, 25-26, 29 and 32.

About 450, according to the DMP who reported that perfect order and harmony prevailed at the banquet 'save some slight stir made by a gentleman in the printing interest who complained of the monopoly in the printing of placards etc. in connection with the monument'. He was removed from the building after an altercation with and an assault on another guest.

Freeman's Journal, 9 Aug. 1864.

Later in the evening the Lord Mayor, Peter Paul McSwiney, expressed repeal sentiments. The Annual Register (see note 24) noted that 'the Pope was not in the list of toasts (but) 'The Queen', 'The Prince and The Princess of Wales etc. were received with a warm demonstration of loyalty'. The other two toasts were to 'The Lord Lieutenant' and 'The Hierarchy and Priests of Ireland'. With the hindsight of rioting in Belfast from 10 Aug., the Irish People (20 Aug.) declared that O'Connell's great service was 'not a national but a sectarian one'. The banquet was 'a disgrace to all concerned in it. There was no manhood there ... the heart of Ireland as embodied in the working men of Ireland ... still holds fast to the old faith that Irish freedom is not to be won by petitions from the mouths of slaves ... Ibid. 13 Aug. 1864.

Freeman's Journal 9 Aug. 1864. Prof. James M. Kavanagh was one of 3 secretaries to the Ceremonial Committee for the occasion.

Though in Mallon's handwriting and style, the report was signed by Daniel Ryan, Acting Chief Superintendent, DMP, 8 Aug. 1864.

cf. articles on the Dublin guilds (published in JRSAI by Dr. Henry Berry, Public Record Office of Ireland, 1868-1913.
FENIANISM and SOCIALISM:  
The Career of Joseph Patrick McDonnell

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Radical political and social movements often have inauspicious beginnings, in Ireland like everywhere else. When an attempt was made in the Spring of 1872 at extending the International Workingmen’s Association there, the hostility of the powerful Roman Catholic clergy and the popular press ensured that its existence would be a brief one. The struggle was one-sided, and the Irish Section of the International left its only traces in contemporary newsprint. While the move failed to have a permanent impact, the story is a rather interesting one and, not surprisingly, much of it has been told before. However, there are still serious gaps in the narrative. Many of these will emerge below. We will be primarily concerned, though, with only one of them, the career of J. P. McDonnell, important Fenian and original Irish Internationalist. This was the man selected by Marx and Engels to be first secretary of the Irish Section of the I.W.A. First, though, a little background information for the uninitiated may be helpful.

Early in September 1871, the Irishman, most widely-read Irish nationalist newspaper of the day, carried the following mysterious report:²

Karl Marx is dead. He was president of the society of workmen all over the world. A German, he loved liberty; a stranger, he served Ireland. We differ with many of the views he held, but we cannot forget that he acted as a true friend of Ireland in exposing abroad the infamous treatment of Irish state prisoners. We tender his afflicted family the expression of our condolence.

Why such a misleading report appeared is unclear. It may have been just a journalist’s slip, or it may have been editor Pigott, who (as we shall see) had his own reasons for not trusting Marx, attempting to sow some confusion about him. There is also the possibility that it is based on some inaccurate report appearing elsewhere. Whatever the motive, the insertion — and another which appeared somewhat earlier on — would seem to suggest that Marx was far from unknown in some Irish circles at the time. This is only natural, since others besides the Irishman must have appreciated his role in the release of ‘Irish State prisoners’ in 1869.³ Moreover, Marx’s activities did not stop there. His speeches on the Irish question to German workers in London, and different motions brought before the I.W.A. by him and Engels, are on record.⁴

As readers of their recently-published collection of writings on Ireland will have realized, Marx and Engels immediate interest on the Irish question was at a peak between 1865 and 1872. During these years, the Fenian Brotherhood, a revolutionary nationalist organisation was making the headlines throughout Britain, and it is quite understandable that their curiosity would be aroused. Marx studied the Fenians, and gave their movement his rather guarded approval. He strongly disapproved of incidents such as Clerkenwell, but he liked them very much for their substantial working-class base and for their anti-clericalism.⁵ Most significantly,
they forced him to change his mind on the Irish national question; he told Engels in late 1867
that he had always thought "Ireland's separation from England impossible," but that he had
now come round to seeing it as "inevitable".\(^6\) Prior to the mid sixties, it seems, neither Marx
nor Engels knew too much about Ireland, despite the latter's close personal ties with the coun-
try. But from then on, both developed a keen academic interest in Irish affairs. The case study
in Chapter 25 of Capital's first volume, largely based on a perusal of the Irish agricultural
statistics in November 1867, is Marx's best-known piece.\(^7\) Most important, also, Engels spent
much of 1869 and 1870 at work on a projected History of Ireland. As Marx jokingly told his
daughter Jenny at the time, the History cost Engels "a little more time than he had at first
supposed".\(^8\) It never really got off the ground, though, and with the beginning of the Paris
Commune, he could not persevere any longer. The notes and drafts were shelved for almost
twenty years; Engels consulted them briefly once more while preparing The Origin of the
Family, but that was all.

The Fenian attempts at rebellion in 1865 and 1867 were abortive. Though it would appear
that the movement's membership had reached several thousand by then, all its conspira-
cies were well known to the police force, and its elaborate organisational structure was of no
avail. The gap between the promise and performance, at least in the short run, was enor-
mous. Hundreds of Fenians were arrested and detained. During 1869 and 1870 the call for
the release of those still in jail became extremely vocal. In Ireland, the meetings of the Am-
nesty Association rivalled in size anything since the time of Daniel O'Connell himself, while in
London and elsewhere in Britain mass meetings of Irish emigrants also took place. In spite of
widespread anti-Fenian feeling, there was some British working-class participation in the
British demonstrations, and Marx and Engels also attended some of them. It was these meet-
ings, as well as press reports from Ireland, which prompted Jenny Marx, with some help from
her father, to publicise the issue on the Continent. They must have convinced Marx and
Engels, too, of the desirability of Irish participation in the International.

One of the leading lights in the Amnesty Association was Joseph Patrick McDonnell, a
former Fenian prisoner who had moved to London. It seems likely that Engels met McDon-
nell through the London demonstrations, and eventually decided that he would make a useful
Irish representative on the General Council. In any case, McDonnell attended his first meet-
ing of the Council in July 1871, and he was elected General Secretary for Ireland some months later.

Irish branches of the association were soon established in several cities in Britain, before
the 'invasion' of Ireland in March 1872.

II

Information on Joseph McDonnell has been so scarce that, until very recently, researchers
at the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow were ignorant of even his first name. Basing
themselves on the Marx-Engels archives, they were able to gather that he had been involved
in Fenian conspiracies, and that he emigrated to the United States late in 1872. But they
could not add to this.\(^9\) I have been able to piece together some further particulars, which I
now present, but my picture, too, is necessarily incomplete.

The McDonnell in question was probably in his late twenties when he first met Marx and
Engels, though this is merely guesswork. Samuel Gompers of whom more below, states
without elaboration that he spent some time in a seminary. There is an admittedly curious
letter dated November 1862 in the State Papers office in Dublin which touches on this topic:

"I have known Mr Pat Joseph McDonnell a great many years, almost since his childhood. He has always been a very good lad, most attentive to his religious duties and very diligent about the Altar — I think he has a strong vocation for the priesthood, and I beg to recommend him to the Revd. Mr Lavelle".

However, one may well suspect the genuineness of McDonnell's vocation. In spite of the successful efforts of Lavelle to have him admitted to St Jarlath's College at Tuam, he seems to have enrolled at the recently-founded Catholic University in Dublin around this time instead. But he did not remain there long; he was apparently expelled in 1863 for his part in pulling down illuminations marking the Prince of Wales' wedding. In the early 'sixties McDonnell was a prominent member of the National Brotherhood of Saint Patrick, a pro-Fenian group; the State Papers Office contains scores of letters addressed to him as organizer, the texts of four of his speeches, and a number of rather worthless poems and ballads in his own hand. These were found in a small box in Stafford Street (now Wolfe Tone Street) in Dublin in 1866. Since McDonnell's early Fenian activities were confined to Dublin, and he married a Dublin woman, he may well have been Dublin-born — but we have no firm evidence for this. There is no doubt, however, but that he was a senior Fenian. Like many others, he was arrested in 1866, and he spent several months in Mountjoy prison in Dublin; judging by police reports, he was considered a top security risk. The assessment of Superintendent Ryan of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, a man who knew all about Fenian plots and personalities, makes interesting reading:

"So recently as last evening I was assured that for a time before his arrest he was an acting head centre for all Ireland. This seems very probable because some of the strangers who were here from England and who gave me most useful and correct information stated to me that they were frequently paraded and were inspected by McDonnell and they believed that it was he who gave the money to the paymasters because they found it was only after a parade before him that money was plentiful.

With regard to the information he has given since his imprisonment I have to state that it is all either known before, too general to be of use, or inaccurate, and I should think, given to mislead . . . I believe McDonnell is by no means sincere in his professions about a desire to disclose what he knows. He merely desires to get out of prison on pretence of being useful to the Government, and under all the circumstances, I would not consider it safe to set him at liberty."

The claim that McDonnell was head centre is probably fanciful, though surely significant in itself. He was not the only Fenian to offer information, a ploy, moreover, which never worked. McDonnell also tried in vain to get the Mountjoy medical doctor on his side. Meanwhile, prisoner morale remained tolerable and some contact was maintained with the outside world. Devoy tells us in his Recollections that a report of a particular police atrocity "was smuggled into Mountjoy Prison to P. J. McDonnell in a boiled potato and as he was in the cell next to me, he passed me the clipping". A further passage from the police files, this time from the Chief Commissioner, tell us more of McDonnell's Fenian activities:

"The Chief Commissioner begs to submit copy of a letter from a Fenian informant received per post yesterday and in reference to it begs to submit that McDonnell alluded to was arrested under Lord Lieutenant's warrant in 1866 and confined in Mountjoy convict prison for some time. He was a prominent member of the National Brotherhood of Catholics in Dublin, and he spent several months in Mountjoy prison."

33
Saint Patrick before Fenianism established itself in this country. He was part proprietor of a rope and twine establishment at New Row West and arms consigned to his establishment as hemp were intercepted in 1865, and he declined to claim them. At one of the first Fenian demonstrations held at Clontarf on a Sunday in 1864 or 1865 he was leader. He was married to a daughter of a man named McEvatt of 27 Parkgate Street who earned some notoriety for himself as a Fenian. While McDonnell was in prison he made overtures to P. J. Murray Esq., to supply information on condition of being released.

With the risk of a Fenian rebellion subsiding, at least for the present, many suspects, including Joseph McDonnell, were released in late 1866. He set out for Mullingar, and opened another shop there, this time a newsagent’s and tobacconist’s. The venture lasted till mid-1868; McDonnell then left the Irish midlands for London and the Amnesty movement. There are two alternative interpretations of his activities in Mullingar. Since both tend to confirm that he was quite an important man politically, some further quotation is worthwhile. The following is taken from an editorial of the Irishman of 27 June 1868:

One case worth relating as an example to all; and it is the case of Mr. J. P. McDonnell, of Dublin, who was arrested about two years ago. He was a respectable young man in business — a man of education, talent and national principles. Well, after some months imprisonment in Mountjoy — no evidence being brought against him to show connection with Fenianism — he was liberated.

His imprisonment left him almost to begin the world again. There was no stain on his character — he came forth unsullied, and immediately set to work to remedy the loss sustained by his arrests, and for this purpose, in connection with a partner, opened a bookshop and newsagency in Mullingar. After some time he intended to print a local paper, for which he got the promised support of the clergy and the people of the neighbourhood. Mr McDonnell’s shop was thriving, and he began to congratulate himself on the commencement of brighter days. But he lived under the shadow of English law, he was a Fenian suspect, and so Mr McDonnell was rumoured to be a “great Fenian”, and the consequences were as in other cases. The old game was played. Mr McDonnell’s house was watched and searched — and his customers got warned, timid and fell off, and the end of all was that he had either to leave Mullingar, or become a bankrupt, and thus cast a stain on an honest name.

But the police force in Mullingar took quite a less melodramatic line on McDonnell. Superintendent Inspector Pepper, the local man in charge, ordered repeated searches of the store, and finds of photographs of Fenian leaders, Fenian broadsheets, and communications with Fenians only heightened his suspicions. Pepper did not welcome McDonnell’s presence in Mullingar at all. He grew quite worried, and wrote to Dublin:

A number of private letters were found sympathising with “our unfortunate country” and “hoping things would be better next year” . . . As they are doing I may say no business (the shop often not open till 11 a.m.) we believe he is an active Fenian agent and doing much harm. His few customers are all seditious persons . . . His shop appears to be a perfect blind to cover other designs, there being nothing in it but some trifling stationery, a few books, prints, pipes, etc. . . . It would appear from another letter that McDonnell and Co. were established here or aided in setting up here by Revd. Mr Mullen, C.C., lately removed from this district to County Meath near Navan, as in this letter Mr Mullen said that he had “no more funds for Mr McDonnell, having but 2/6d left”.

34
Fr Kit Mullen, a friend of O’Donovan Rossa’s, was a visitor to the offices of the Irish People in Parliament Street, an active Fenian organiser, and an old contact of McDonnell’s.

III

In all probability, McDonnell spent his twenty months in Mullingar working as an under-cover Fenian agent, but we cannot judge whether his move to England was voluntary or not. Obviously, though, the Amnesty movement, which got off the ground in 1869, would find the service of an old hand like McDonnell useful, and soon would have the resources to employ him on a more regular basis. McDonnell seems to have looked after the finances of the organisation in Britain: this was probably a full-time task for a time, though he probably worked elsewhere in London before then and was definitely not a man of means at this stage.

I have suggested that Marx or Engels approached McDonnell at one of the mass Amnesty meetings. On June 27 1871 they proposed that he be made a member of the General Council: at the next meeting of the Council, Marx dealt with allegations that had been made against McDonnell, and when the proposal was finally voted on, McDonnell was elected unanimously. The allegations, for which the same Irishman which praised him in 1868 was chiefly responsible, were far from trifling. He was accused of sharp practice with the Amnesty funds, of selling the Irish vote at a recent by-election at Southwark, of dishonesty in connexion with money raised to support the French Commune, and of a suspicious personal connexion. Marx argued that, in fact, the Irish at Southwark wanted McDonnell to stand as a candidate himself, but that he refused and asked them to vote for Odger, the Liberal, whom he thought the best working man’s candidate. With regard to the Commune money, Marx suggested that McDonnell’s support of the Republican forces was entirely ‘praiseworthy’; indeed, the latter’s activities in that connexion cost him two and a half months in jail for “breach of the neutrality law”. The rumours did not persist after his selection, at least in Britain, and may well have been without foundation. But they irked McDonnell, as he was quick to tell Marx. Marx’s own defence of the new Irish delegate was largely based on a letter from him, in which he described the Irishman as having passed into the control of “new men with whom I am not on friendly terms,” and whom he harshly criticized.

The new Irish member attended his first meeting on July 11 1871, and was to attend thirty-one in all. On October 2 1871, he was appointed Secretary for Ireland. Judging by the minutes of the different meetings, McDonnell was one of the least talkative members. When his turn came to report on the progress of the Irish Section, he did so in a business-like manner, but had nothing to contribute on more general policy issues. The strength of his socialist conviction at this stage is difficult to gauge.

We know little about the extent or composition of membership, at least directly. In late 1871, the Soho (London) branch had over thirty members, and the Dublin branch seems to have had sixty: no figures are available for other places. It seems safe to assume that most members in Britain, if not in Ireland itself, were Fenians or ‘former Fenians. To start with, McDonnell’s own contacts in Britain would have been with Fenians and their sympathizers. Then, the rather nationalist ring of the Irish section’s declaration of principles, which stated the membership’s ‘first duty’ was ‘to advocate the right of Ireland to make her own laws’, smacks of Fenianism also. The nationalist element was bound to cause some resentment. And when some members of the General Council admitted that if the word ‘Irish’ were omitted from branch names, the Irish would not join, this was bound to cause suspicion too. John
Hales, one of Marx's rivals on the Council, "believed the majority of the members of the Irish branches did not understand the principles of the Association ... they were Fenians under another name, and they became members of the International Because they saw that it would be a convenient cloak under which to prosecute their special designs."22 McDonnell himself wrote:

I cannot do much ... until I have a free supply of newly printed rules and cards of membership — on the latter of course Ireland will be printed for my name. This is an important matter as the whole thing will look foreign and strange to the new branches if I send the old cards on which all the other countries except Ireland are mentioned ... 

However, neither Marx nor Engels agreed with Hales, and would probably have welcomed even stronger Fenian participation. In reply to his claim that the Irish would find that "nationalism was no remedy for the ills of society", Engels made a long speech in favour of the right of each nation to its own working-class organisation.24 As we have already seen, McDonnell's most important contact in Dublin was his own father-in-law, McEvatt, an active Fenian, while De Morgan, who led the campaign in Cork, was also probably a Fenian connection. Nevertheless, the concessions in organisational methods to Irish national aspirations, and the undoubtedly important Fenian influence, do not necessarily mean that the Irish Section was merely a Fenian 'front' organisation. A possible drawback of the strong identification with the Fenians might be that it ruled out possibilities of expanding to Belfast. But perhaps Belfast was never seriously contemplated in any case.

IV

During his time on the General Council, McDonnell was a frequent caller to Engel's house, and he became quite friendly with Engels, Marx, and Hermann Jung. Years later, he was to write to Engels, "Is it true that Mrs Engels is dead. How well my wife and I remember her pet canary ..."25 Marx could always rely on McDonnell's vote on the General Council, and at the final congress at the Hague, where the showdown between Marxist and Bakuninite wings took place, he consistently voted Marx's line.

But what of his own hopes for the International? He wrote to Marx:26

Now as to the International and the Irish. I think it quite possible to bring within the folds of the Association the majority of the working men in Ireland. This would be found a difficult task a few years ago but Fenianism has, thank goodness, destroyed clerical power in Ireland. I am acquainted and have great influence with the working classes and their representatives in Ireland. My influence is as great if not greater with the intelligent Irish throughout England. I know that by some trouble and energy the intelligent Irish in both countries can be enrolled under the banner of the International. In my friend O'Donovan Rossa's hands in the U.S. great things can be accomplished among my countrymen. On these matters I must have a long conversation with you as they are of great importance ... I have been thinking very much of the great ends which may be accomplished by the International. Taught by sad experience and schooled by adversity I can fully understand its principles which are quite in accordance with my own ... 

And there is no doubt but that McDonnell worked hard and attracted a sizeable number of Irish people into the International, if only for a short time. Engels was grateful: in a letter to his close friend Sorge in New York, dated 7 December 1872, he said: "McDonnell left for New
York on Wednesday. If the Fenians over there are still somewhat suspicious of him, you would do well to allay their suspicions. He has helped us here in a most commendable, unselfish way.” Another indication of McDonnell’s diligence in London is that the secret police kept an eye on him. However, he made two misjudgements in that letter to Marx. First, he crucially underestimated the strength of clerical power. It was enough for Canon Maguire of Cork and other clergy (including Lavelle) to accuse the Internationalists of being associates of the Communards or Garibaldi, to frighten a devout people. Though the International arrived in Cork at a time of substantial industrial unrest, and offered to make a contribution to at least one strike fund, the employers were able to take a back seat throughout the proceedings, and let the Roman Catholic priests do their work for them. A short passage from one of Maguire’s sermons will help convey the level of the struggle:

In SS Peter and Paul's... Canon Maguire commented at some length and in very impressive manner upon the disgrace and humiliation of Sunday’s proceedings at the Athenaeum and referred to the fact that young girls were being employed to distribute the rules and doctrines of the International in the city. He was overpowered with shame and grief at finding that Irishwomen whose virtue and purity had ever been the theme of the poet and bard could be seduced to so base an employment. The reverend gentleman next pointed to the drunkenness that was to be witnessed yesterday in the streets, resorted to by certain portions of the working classes, as evidence of the demoralisation attending the distribution of the money of the International in Cork. He adjured his hearers to appeal to the glorious Virgin who was that day called to be a mother (the sermon was delivered on 25 March: COG) for her protection and guidance in the face of the danger with which they were beset, and concluded by expressing a fervent hope that these misguided men would not be called to their account without an opportunity of making their peace with God.

McDonnell was also wrong about his friend O'Donovan Rossa. While the latter was grateful to the Internationalists for their part in his release, he showed no active interest in their association at any time. Even the forces of the law realised this. In fact, of the Fenian leadership in America, only John Devoy is known to have participated in the International for any length of time, and it would be difficult to maintain that he was a socialist. Letters from Sorge to Devoy suggest that the latter was on the Central Committee of the North American I.W.A., for a while, and attended their meetings at the Tenth Ward Hotel in New York City. We also know that McDonnell contacted Devoy about the association as early as September 1871, to get him to form Irish sections in the United States. O'Donovan Rossa’s own views, and his better appreciation of clerical power, are clear from part of one of his weekly columns in the Irishman:

I don’t believe anyone can get up any society in Ireland hostile to the priests or hostile to the Catholic Church, and I think in political and labour movements, the safest thing for extremely religious persons to do would be to leave the people’s combinations to the people... The Internationalists are the weaker party and there my sympathies always go... When Flourens, who was shot as belonging to the Commune, was in London, did he not expose the barbarous treatment we were receiving in the English prisons? Did he not do more for us than many of the Irish pressmen did? I believe so, and I am not going to be ungrateful... Here I’ll drop the subject, reminding you of the fight two old maids in Skibereen had about whether an egg they were going to put under a hen
would bring forth a cock or a hen: if you think the International in Ireland is going to bring forth a cock, you may as well break it as they did the egg. But I'd wait and see the egg hatched.

McDonnell was preceded to the United States by his father-in-law. It is tempting to conclude that it was the transplantation of the International which prompted him to emigrate, but this is not the case. As can readily be seen from a letter to Engels dated 16 September 1872, McDonnell had been planning the move for some time, and discussed a replacement with members of the General Council in London. In the event, John De Morgan, about whom very little is known, was selected.

McDonnell was not long in New York when Engels wrote to Sorge, "what has happened to McDonnell? He must be there long since. I neither hear nor see anything about him." But it was to be some years before their Irish friend again contacted either Engels or Marx. In mid-1875 he explained to Engels: "My struggles for existence have been so numerous and so great that I have had little inclination to correspond with my esteemed and old friends in Europe." This is not to say that he completely cut himself off from his Irish and London connexions. On the contrary, he maintained his dual allegiance to Irish nationalism and labour, at least for a while. Samuel Gompers, the American labour leader, who had quite a lot to say about McDonnell in his autobiography, first met him in the office of *The Irish World*, the most extreme of the Irish-American papers, while McDonnell also attended the meetings at the Tenth Ward Hotel. With some of his old colleagues on the International, he then set about forming a trade union:

I have organised the best workingmen in this city on our own principles and have brought amongst them our most sensible Germans. In a word I have lit a fire that cannot be quenched. The United Workers of America is the name of our body. I would have failed if I had used the name "International". The preamble, rules, etc., are precisely the same as those of the International.

We know, from another source, the U.W.A.'s statement of principles:

The emancipation of the working class can be achieved through their own efforts and that emancipation will not bring class rule and class privileges for them, but equal rights and equal duties for all members of society. Economic betterment is the first step toward the desired end: to its achievement all political effort must be subordinated. Political acting can be effective only by constituting the labour class a separate political party. The emancipation of labour is not merely local or national, it is international.

This organisation was short-lived, but McDonnell continued his trade union work, and became quite influential in New-York labour circles. It was around this time, however, that a split occurred in the American working-class movement. There were, on the one hand, those who remained faithful to the Marxist *credo*; on the other, an increasing number who, adopting a 'laborist' attitude, argued that all effort should be concentrated on trade union activity. This split was institutionalized in 1877 with the formation of the Socialist *Labour* Party. McDonnell does not seem to have had any trouble in choosing sides. With Samuel Gompers, F. A. Sorge, and others, he followed the trade unionists, and quickly became one of their most extreme spokesmen. McDonnell was particularly influenced by Gompers, to whom Marxism and political agitation were anathema from the outset. With him, he engineered the take-over of the radical New York *Socialist*. The new management promptly chan-
ged the name to *The Labour Standard*; for a short time, they continued publication in New York, but soon moved across the Hudson to Paterson, New Jersey. McDonnell was managing editor and he also moved to Paterson. Gompers called him "the Nestor of labour editors," and McDonnell himself was extremely proud of his work.39 From the beginning, the paper's line was uncompromisingly 'laborist': McDonnell declared that "as long as there are working people starving, it is utterly wrong to spend money on objects which bring no immediate relief to the toiler," and, again, that "political action must be of a practical character. To convince the masses that we are in earnest, we must always act for the material interests of the whole working class, never indulge in mere speculations. A mere canvass for some members of our own party will fail to attract the support that legislative action on our part for some great measure such as the reduction of the hours of labor would bring . . ." Earlier still, McDonnell was railing (in a letter to Engels) against "a lot of crazy and visionary 'social democrats', . . . enthusiasts without brains or common sense."40 The latter were, of course, the New York Marxists! And again on the same subject:

Most of the German Social Democrats here are simply enthusiasts and have got nothing in their heads except a vague idea that they should control the government. No more. They rush to elections and half of them not knowing what for, get badly defeated or become involved in the Greenback or some other political swindle. Nearly all the English sections of the Workingmen's Part of the U.S. are now dead or have become part of the Greenback political party swindle. Politics here is different from what they are in any other country. Whenever an unknown political movement shows an increase in numbers, it instantly falls under the control of middle-class rascals who have smooth tongues and sometimes long pockets. This class of people now predominate in the so-called socialistic Workingmen's Party of the U.S. They are free lovers, spiritualists, and all other kinds of ists.

Neither Marx nor Engels ever contributed anything to the papers, despite repeated requests from McDonnell, and one strongly suspects that this was because they were unhappy with its editorial line.41

VI

McDonnell certainly did not lack courage. He spent yet another term in jail in 1881 for allegedly libelling a strike-breaker. But as he and his colleagues "grow ever more deeply absorbed in the practical problems of the everyday struggle of the wage-earners for better conditions of employment, the socialist portion of their original philosophy kept receding farther and farther into the background until they arrived at pure trade unionism."42 Their increasingly revisionist stance can be gauged from some of the later issues of the *Labour Standard*. For instance, referring to the American imperialist role in the South Pacific in the 1900s, part of one editorial ran:43

Secretary Taft has the President's ear on the Philippine question. He says it looks like injustice that the archipelago should be held by an American army as a colony of this country and yet that its products should be subject to a tariff in American ports. He thinks that everything grown or made by the Filipinos should be admitted to American ports duty-free, even including sugar, tobacco and CIGARS!

McDonnell's sole worry was the Paterson cigar factories. In another issue,44 there was a scathing, unprincipled attack on the newly-formed Industrial Workers of the World, whose outlook was quite close to Marxism. While there is no reason for doubting McDonnell's sin-
cerity in opting for the Gomperites, it seems inevitable that his socialist perspective should have suffered in the long run. In the end he reached the position of pure ‘trade-union consciousness’ which worried the Wobblies so much, and which Lenin warned against in *What is to be done?* He died in 1906. Gompers, who lived much longer, retreated further from the ideas of the 1870s, and ended by supporting the U.S. Government intervention in World War 1.

The foregoing is not the only possible interpretation. One might just as plausibly argue that McDonnell never fully understood what Marx and Engels meant but that, like several others on the General Council, he supported them more out of a sense of personal loyalty. Certainly, we have no evidence from his letters to Marx and to Engels or original thought or analysis from a socialist perspective; the most one can credit him with is a vague radicalism. The same is true of several other members of the General Council. If this reading is correct, then it is not difficult to see why a combination of weak theoretical basis and the concrete situation in America, would move him towards the position he took.

McDonnell became an important figure in his own right in Paterson; during the 1880s and 1890s he was chairman of the Federation of Trades and Labor Unions of the State of New Jersey, and ‘remained the foremost leader in the labor movement’ in that State. He also seems to have become more affluent. By the end we see him using personalised note-paper, and writing letters of introduction for tourist friends to Engels in London. His last letter, incidentally, contained what is, perhaps, the only available photograph of McDonnell. It shows a rather oval-faced man, with longish hair combed backwards. Gompers described him as ‘a very striking figure . . . with a rather small face and clean-cut small features, wonderful eyes and an abundance of red curly hair. He was brainy and very gentle, had a beautiful speaking voice and courage for any venture.’

In the end, Marxian socialism failed to leave a trace in nineteenth-century Ireland, and McDonnell, Marx’s most trusted follower, left the fold. Like many previous social experiments, the International came to nothing in Ireland. Perhaps the effort was premature. Still, McDonnell deserves to be at least as well known as, say, John Scott Vandaleur, the Owenite landlord of Ralahine, or William Thompson of Rosscarberry, utopian socialist follower of Bentham, about whom much has been written, but who also failed.

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1 See, for example, Desmond Ryan, ‘When a Spectre Haunted Cork’, *The Bell*, July 1946, pp.317-324.
3 *The Irishman*, September 9, 1871.
4 I have tried to clarify this role in ‘Note on a forgotten letter by Jenny Marx’, *Science and Society*, Fall-Winter 1969.
5 Much of the material has now been made available in English for the first time. See *Marx and Engels on Ireland* (London and Moscow, 1971) (referred to below as MEI) pp.120-142.
6 See, for instance, Marx’s speech on December 1867, reported in MEI, p.126. While Engels’ early reaction was to think that ‘the leaders of this sect are mostly asses and partly exploiters and we cannot in any way make ourselves responsible for the stupidities which occur in every conspiracy,’ Marx seems to have been more enthusiastic. He saw Fenianism as a mass lower-class movement rather than a sect. See MEI, pp.124, 145-6, 149. The recent spate of biographies of Fenian leaders has yet to be followed by a definitive work on Fenianism. Meanwhile F. S. L. Lyons, *Ireland since the Famine* (London, 1973), pp.122-140, is a useful source.
7 S. O’Luing, *O Donnabhain Rosa* (Dublin, 1969) promises to be the most ambitious of the biographies.
8 Marx to Engels, November 2, 1867. MEI, p.143.
10 Marx to Jenny Marx, May 31, 1870 MEI, p.298.
11 See the biographical sketch of McDonnell in Marx-Engels Werke (East Berlin, 1970) XXXIII, pp.883-4.
12 Gompers, S., *Seventy Years of Life and Labor* (New York, 1925), I, p.103. S. P. O. Fenian Briefs, Part 6, 22 (72) and 23; J. Devoy, *Recollection of an Irish Rebel* (New York, 1929), pp.15-16. There are grounds for believing that McDonnell’s origins were middle-class, like those of most Irish third-level
students of the time. Years later, Marx was to write of him that "he is a proletarian, by his circumstances of life and by his ideas," but Marx was defending McDonnell from accusations to the contrary (Marx to F. A. Sorge, November 29, 1871, MEI, p.298).

11 All this material may be consulted at the State Papers Office, Dublin Castle. The author wishes here to express his thanks to Brendan MacGiolla Choille and his staff at the S.P.O. for their help and courtesy.

12 S.P.O. 18 May, 1866; 207R (CSORP 1866/1866).

13 Devoy, op. cit., p.149.

14 S.P.O. 22 September 1871, 7686.

15 S.P.O. 22 February 1868, 3083R (1371 R).


17 They did in the United States, however. See Marx’s letter to Friedrich A. Sorge of November 29, 1871, MEI, pp.298-9.

18 McDonnell to Marx, July 4, 1871.


20 The Soho figure is based on a letter from a certain C. J. O’Leary to Engels, February 1872.

21 Cork Daily Herald, March 15, 1872.

22 Documents . . . , V, p.199.

23 McDonnell to Engels, September 30, 1871.

24 Documents . . . , V, pp.197-8, 297-300.

25 McDonnell to Engels, May 29, 1888. Hermann Jung seems to have been the ‘foreigner’ among the delegates sent over by the General Council in March 1872. We learn from The Cork Daily Herald of March 20 that “Citizen H. F. Jung presided . . . at a meeting of the Cosmopolitan Committee, organised to promote a commemoration of the Communist insurrection in Paris . . .” But we are told that at the first meeting of the association in Dublin, “the chair was taken by a Frenchman who was sent over by the executive council in London.” (The Irishman, March 16). Elsewhere, the chairman of the inaugural meeting is reported to have been a Dane. (The Irishman, April 6, 1872). However, Herman Jung, who was German, is probably the mysterious ‘foreigner’.

26 McDonnell to Marx, July 4, 1871.


28 Cork Daily Herald, March, 26, 1872. Since Maguire’s family owned some of the Cork newspapers,verbatim reports of his windy sermons need not surprise us. His brother was also Member of Parliament of Cork at this time. The Church’s attacks so weakened the International that McDonnell was soon expressing “a hope that the journals of the Association would avoid any articles expressing atheistical opinions, or condemnation of Catholicism.” See Documents of the First International, V, p.194.

29 Marx to Sorge, September 12, 1871, Marx-Engels Werke, XXXIII, p.282. See also D. Ryan (ed.), Devoy’s Post Bag, (Dublin, 1948), I, pp.18-22, 42.

30 The Irishman, May 10, 1872.

31 McDonnell to Engels, September 16, 1872.

32 Evidently, though, Engels thought highly of De Morgan. Not only was he put in charge of the effort in Ireland, but when the International took on responsibility for a hundred refugees from the Commune in April 1872, those who could not be put up in London were sent on to De Morgan in Cork (Engels to Theodor Cuno, 23 April 1872, Marx-Engels Werke, XXXIII, p.446). Later, Engels spoke highly of him to Sorge (MEW, XXXIII, p.540), and kept in touch with him, at least till late 1873 (MEW, XXXIII, p.601).

33 Engels in Marx-Engels Werke, XVIII.

34 McDonnell to Engels, June 28, 1875.

35 Gompers, op. cit., I, p.103.

36 McDonnell to Engels, June 28, 1875.

37 Gompers, op. cit., I, p.102.


39 Gompers, op. cit., I, p.442; Commons et al, op. cit., II, p.222; McDonnell to Engels, August 11, 1876.

40 The Labor Standard, March 24, 1877 (quoted in Commons et al, op. cit. II pp.274-5); McDonnell to Engels, August 11, 1876.

41 Letters to Engels of March 3, 1876, August 11, 1876, and March 2, 1878. Letter to Marx, December 7, 1876.

42 Commons et al, op. cit., II, p.308.


44 The Paterson Labor Standard, October 28, 1905. It is interesting to note that, only a few years later, Ireland’s foremost socialist thinker, James Connolly, spent some time in America and worked for the I.W.W. A stimulating pamphlet by Manus O’Riordan, Connolly in America, (Dublin, 1971), provides some new information on this obscure phase of Connolly’s career.

45 McDonnell to Engels, June 4, 1892 (enclosure): In this letter, which warns Engels that “Mr Purcell will pay (him) a visit,” McDonnell says that he sometimes thinks he “will never see the other side again”. There is no evidence that he did.

46 Gompers, op. cit., I, p.88.
Before properly beginning, I would like to offer an important caution, a plea that will be the more obvious to you as this paper goes on. Irish-America cannot be approached as an extension of Ireland in any meaningful sense. To study it solely for its correctly “Irish” interests only is to lose sight of most of what it has to offer us; otherwise, like James Connolly, James Larkin, and even ... if I may mention him here ... Eamon de Valera, on their disastrous American sojourns, one loses one’s bearings hunting down the chimerically “Irish” amidst the rush of urban and industrial America. Throughout this paper, the American Irish or Irish Americans to whom we refer are not Irishmen temporarily loose amidst an alien world: they are themselves a product of that world, a people of distinct culture and traditions, forged of the mingling of Irish memories and traits and beliefs with the more dominant stresses and chances, of their new world. They are the first massively urban Irish; they are the first massively working class Irish. In a sense as Ireland changes swiftly, we now follow them.

Many of you will be familiar with the early history of Irish labor in America: the uprooted laborers and small farmers of Munster and Ulster (Connachtmen went to Britain), wasting their strength and blasting their hopes to build the vast and transportation network of canals and rails that, between 1820-1860 provided the foundation for the energising and capitalisation and ultimate industrialisation of the American economy. Two million Irish immigrants arrived in that period, half of them “famine refugees”. A third or so were illiterate; a quarter if not more were Irish-speaking; few had any means of arrival. Sixty to eighty per cent of the men (depending on locality) became casual manual laborers, workless in the cruel American winters and during construction downturns in summer, leaving their families in hovels and tenements to follow the jobs; almost all underpaid, miserably housed, utterly insecure, despised by native American “mechanics” and but profit-fodder to their unseen Yankee bosses, and possible suckers to their fellow-Irish gangers, foremen, and contractors. Yet Stephen Thernstrom and Clyde Griffin have demonstrated what many knew of them; that they subjected themselves to ruthless underconsumption, acquiring property at a considerably faster rate than their native American or German counterparts, remitting literally millions of dollars per year back to Longford or Cork, scattering churches and halls along the lines of their work-routes: God alone knows how. Insecurity, not Anglo-Saxonism, burnt into them the central precepts of Victorian folk-economics: thrift, calculation, industry, ruthlessness, ... and also combination.

This period, a time when over half their children died before five, when their own life expectancy averaged fifteen years after arrival in the States, seems horrible then, and is rightly remembered as “the long and dark Probation.” Within their experience, however, the Irish Americans were forming as a new people, a people with an eye to the main chance. Fate cast them in the role of pioneers: not the expansive optimistic pioneer of Western farm expansion, whose dream would collapse amidst the realities of over-production, mechanisation, and world grain competition in the new age beginning in the 1890s; but the pioneers of that age itself. At a time when fewer than 20% of native Americans were urbanised (in the 1850s).
over 75% of the Irish were. They were familiarising themselves with the ropes of city life, with the chances to be taken in an expanding and diversifying economy, with the advantages of being first comer to a host of fields. To native America, the city, the warehouse and the factory were puzzling even spectral challenges to its ideal of an egalitarian agricultural democracy, and remained somewhat so until the bitter culture clashes of the nineteen-twenties resolved the matter for good. For Irish America, there was no other reality, no other America, than the city: and that social status with which so many native American theorists so long struggled to reconcile to democratic notions of self-reliant individualism . . . the status of wage labor . . . the mass of Irish Americans had never known any other condition, unless in Ireland.

This alone makes sense of what happens next. In the forty years after the Civil War, more particularly the twenty years after 1880, the social structure of Irish America is totally transformed, and the structure of working class Irish America even more so. By 1900, Irish America had attained class-structure parity with native stock Protestant white America, a point with vital implications for Irish American labor. In the 1890s, there were thirty-six Irish American congressmen, four senators, the first Irish Catholics in the cabinet and on the Supreme Court, the first important Irish appointments to the diplomatic service. The community was mature enough to break up between progressive or reform politics, and traditional machines, in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere. The Catholic Church, its hierarchy three-quarters Irish, won public position and power, — even presidential recognition and friendship — even as it forced its attitudes and policies upon its increasingly diverse ethnic constituency. Over twenty thousand Irish American manufacturers were active by 1900: the community's famous millionaires did not stand in isolation; together they funded twenty Catholic universities in the period 1880-1920. Irish American labor cannot be understood outside of all this. Its real situation, however, must be gauged on its own terms, labor terms.

In 1900, there were approximately 1,200,000 Irish American wage earners (male) in industry and transportation, around 65% of all working Irish American males. However, only 270,000, or 15% of all working Irish Americans were now unskilled manual laborers most of them recent immigrants: in short, the post-famine, rail-building past was long gone. Only in consistently a-typical Massachusetts were most of the unskilled laborers still Irish, and unfortunately the Harvard image makers lived there. Instead, the Irish had invaded the skilled trades to a highly disproportionate degree. While the Irish Americans in 1900 were only 7.5% or one thirteenth of the total American work-force, yet they provided one sixth of the teamsters, of iron and steel workers, of other metal workers and of masons; one fifth of stone cutters, leather tanners, wireworkers, brassworkers, skilled textile workers, paper mill workers, roofers, and street rail workers; and, their industrial triumph, almost one third of plumbers, steam fitters and boiler makers; in addition, they exceeded their proportion in almost every other skilled and semi-skilled urban employment, if to less spectacular degree, e.g., around one tenth of electricians, miners, glass-blowers, blacksmiths, one eight of machinists, railroadmen, printers, and so on. Only the food and beverage industries all but excluded them, being dominated, to the extent of 75%, by German Americans: nonetheless this is surprising given the traditional industrial structure of Ireland. Among important skilled trades, carpenters and joiners, largely native American, had also managed to hold off the Irish.

This however is but part of the story. The trades in which they were firmly established were not only those with higher patterns of pay, and often better hours and conditions (quite apart from social status); they were the trades in which unionization was dominant in the
period 1880-1905. In 1900, in contrast to Britain or Germany, less than a tenth of the entire industrial and transportation workforce was unionized: 858,500 out of about 8,600,000, although thereafter unionization would rise greatly, to 2 million by 1904; it remained around the two million mark for the next decade. However, as several American labor historians have pointed out, these figures are deceptive, insofar as in times of industrial crisis, the foreign language worker fraternal associations would function as ancillary labor unions, bringing out or organising their workers at the behest of mainline union leaders. Nonetheless, this pattern left the Irish, especially, in an incredibly dominant position within the formal union movement, particularly in those organisations affiliated to the American Federation of Labour, founded in 1886, and accounting for over three-quarters of all trade unionists. Between 1890-1914, one counts no fewer than eighty union leaders (long terms), in over fifty unions, who were Irish Americans, almost all Catholics, (including union leaders in every one of the trades previously mentioned, as having significant Irish strength), but including also unions like the Carpenters and Joiners, Brewery Workers, and Meat Cutters, where Irish representation was only skeletal. Numerically, Irish Americans dominated few trades (except plumbers and steam fitters); politically they dominated a majority of the unions of organised trades.

How do we explain the Irish American labor situation in 1900? We have said that the Irish were first on the ground at the beginnings of American industrialization. Growth in the subsequent period was remarkable. The American wage-earning working class multiplied 5½ times from 1860-1914; the general population rose 3 times, greatly increasing consumer demand; the value of manufactured goods rose 12 times. From fourth industrial power in 1860, the United States rose to first in 1894; by 1914, her industrial production surpassed the combined production of the three nations which in 1860 each singly out-produced her: Britain, Germany, France. After 1880, the weight of American immigration shifted decisively South and East: to Poland, Russia, Italy and so on. This is not to say Irish immigration ceased. From the Civil War to 1924 two million five hundred thousand Irish immigrated to the United States, more than the so-called Famine Immigration. Because of the relatively established nature of the Irish American community, because of its declining death rate, because 90% of these new Irish were literate products of the national schools, almost all English speaking, because so many had relatives among the older immigration, these new immigrants did not start at the bottom as did the earlier ones: that was largely left to the immigrants from the ‘new’ areas. Instead American born and Irish born combined to extend their holds in a dynamic and expanding society. Indeed, especially advantaged were the second remove immigrant Irish; those whose parents had gone first to Lancashire or Yorkshire, or who themselves had done so, and who — according to John Donleavy — were a crucial element in raising trade and union consciousness among all Irish Americans after 1860: men such as John Siney, the great national labor leader of the 1860s and 1870s.

At the same time American attitudes had changed since the Know Nothing days of the forties. The Irish were conceived as being ideal lower class Americans after the Civil War: at least as long as they stayed there! Even neo-nativists like Henry Cabot Lodge and Henry Adams excluded them from their anti-foreign denunciations. There were simply not enough native Americans anyway to fill the proliferating skilled and semi-skilled trades opening up in the economy. The Irish, conservative, (usually) English-speaking, literate, ambitious family men, enthusiastically American in their attitudes, were a case of the devil the manager knew. Internally, however, the Irish were making of unionism a two-fold instrument: on the one hand, as the natural method of preserving and extending their living standards as against
the incredibly arbitrary, precarious and regionally vagariated policies of an exceptionally immature and unpredictable capitalism; on the other hand, as the perfect instrument whereby to transfer their instinct of county, kinship, and national solidarity into American industrial society in the face of rising competition from other nationalities. Unfortunately, such is the dogma of formal solidarity in American Trade Unionism as between nationalities, creeds etc., that little concrete evidence is to be found to illustrate this pattern. Indeed; no committed American-born historian of American labor will mention it! Yet, as anyone with any contacts at all among Irish American union families knows, these restrictive practices, in apprenticeships, union card granting, inter-card recognition, etc., are part of the folklore of these people. One does not need to turn to Conrad Arensberg, Fr. Humphrys, John Hickey or Daniel Moynihan (on Claremen, Dublin artisans, Cardiff steel and coal men, and New York Irishmen generally), to prove a point that is evident from the statistics of such unions as the plumbers, stone cutters, or glass blowers. Nor given the Social Darwinist realities of industrial America after the Civil War, given the privations and persecutions to which Patrick Ford’s Irish World furnishes such clear evidence, need we deride these practices out of a misplaced moral enthusiasm for the inter-ethnic brotherhood of man. In the 1890s, the only photogravure reproduction that the Irish World and American Industrial Liberator could afford to print was not a picture of Parnell or O’Connell, much less of Leo XIII: it was a print of a sculptured group recently exhibited at the St. Louis exposition: “The Struggle for Work” showing a husky young workman holding aloft a precious work-ticket above worn out fifty-year olds, two young boys, and a widow with children: his face is a study in the conflict to which he is subject, and the editor hopes he will sacrifice it to the young woman (24 Oct. 1896).

In the 1890s, the average industrial workweek was 60 hours; indeed it was Peter McGuire of the Carpenters Union, co-founded of the AFL with Gompers and others, that pressed May Day (changed to Labor Day when the Socialists captured the original) to campaign for the eight hour day. Most workers felt overworked, a Mass. committee reported in 1882; with good reason. Earnings, although higher than in Europe, were low when given the resources of the country, and the fact that America had to reinvest only 11% of its GNP per year in the initial decades of industrialization (cf. 13%-20% in Britain and Russia, at comparative periods). A third of workers earned usually more than was necessary for a quite comfortable life; on the other hand, 20-25% earned less than was necessary to survive, with family. Accident rates were worst in the world, as all acknowledged: twice those in Britain and Germany. One in three workers suffered severe industrial accident before the age of retirement; all workers suffered at least one accident. Unemployment compensation was non-existent; insurance was almost all privately controlled, and usually (as Louis Brandeis and Charles Evans Hughes later reported), scandalously corrupt, being but a mechanism to cream off capital for further industrial expansion, with no protection for the invested funds. If permanent hardship was the lot of only a minority of Irish American workers by 1890, exhaustion, anxiety, and precariousness were their normal lot. In the 1890s, America suffered the greatest depression before the nineteen thirties: in 1899-1900 for example, unemployment affected 40-55% in the building trades, 44% of miners, 15-30% in textiles, and over 22% of the workforce as a whole, at least temporarily.

Against this background we can touch on Irish Labor union policies. Given their strength, it is not too much to say that the Irish element set the characteristic tone of AFL policies
generally. In effect, these policies were those of a controlled cautious but nonetheless fortright type: economism or bread and butter unionism, overly craft-conscious, perhaps even corporately selfish, certainly unadventurous, but in the circumstances all but inevitable. Such leaders as James Lynch of the Typographers, James O’Connell of the Machinists, Peter McGuire of the Carpenters, and Frank Duffy of the Carpenters epitomised these policies: all were close to Gompers, the AFL President. Lynch converted many from doctrinaire views to his distinctively American conception of unionism: including Prof. John R. Commons of UWis., founded of American labor studies. O’Connell pioneered the “industrial government system of labor-management pacts, coupled with inter-union trades discipline, to observe them until young socialists ousted him in 1911. McGuire, once himself socialist, was Gompers closest associate in building up the distinctive and limited postures of American unionism, and in 1887 had been responsible for establishing the policy that AFL unions would play no active role in the world labor movement, then considered too radical, too separate in its problems, so that involvement with it would only jeopardise the AFL unions precarious position in American society. John Hynes of the Sheet Metal Workers and Dan Tobin of the Teamsters, who withdrew America, with Gompers, from the infant Internat. Fed. of Trade Unions in 1919, (to which, with Gompers they were delegates) for the same reasons. Frank Duffy, principal agent in the struggle against the IWW, from 1905, and the Canadian “One Big Union” idea in 1918. Indeed it has been argued by Marc Karson, David Saposs and Selig Perlman, that in the struggle to prevent the fall of the AFL into Socialist hands, at a time when socialist support at various conferences verged up to 15% of delegates (at its maximum, in 1912 and after) the cautious Irish Catholic union leaders were instrumental in preserving Gompers’ leadership, and hence (they would have defended themselves) the very survival of American unionism. Indeed these Catholic unionists, led by John Mitchell of the UMW, even formed a special group, the Militia of Christ for Social Service, to co-ordinate their anti-socialist policies, to get Church support for them (they didn’t need to ask!), and to canvass Catholics generally in the cause of democratic labor legislation: a less successful venture. Undoubtedly the national opposition to unions was strong: whether it justified such policies it is difficult to judge.

The Irish played roles outside such cautious struggles for survival, power, wages, hours, and special place. Indeed, in almost every celebrated case of labor insurgency from 1880-1920, Irish leaders were prominent. Nor is this inconsistent with the overall policy. Instinctively conservative and security conscious, yet where aggressive managements threatened the very basis of that security, their “Irish” as Americans call it, tended to flame up. “The Irish burn like chips, the English like logs” said Henry George in that regard. In 1892, Hugh O’Donnell, erstwhile comfortable conservative, Republican with Belgian tapestries in his parlor, and a piano for his daughters, led the bloody Homestead uprising against Carnegie-imposed reductions: he was subsequently tried for treason. Sylvester Kelliher joined Eugene Debs in forming the industrial non-craft union, Amer. R.R. Union, that precipitated the Pullman strike and boycott in 1894. The strike against D. C. Loewe of the Danbury Hat Co., which led to the most notorious court judgement against labor in its U.S. history, was undertaken by Frank Lawlor in 1910: Loewe was deliberately chosen since he was one of the leaders of the national movement against unions launched in 1908. The McNamara brothers, officers of the Int. Union of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, launched and ran the unions dynamite policy against the anti-labor U.S. Steel construction subsidiaries from 1905-1910, blowing up 87 buildings, culminating in the Los Angeles Times tragedy. Fr. Tom Haggerty
and assorted other Irish labor mavericks were instrumental in launching the IWW in 1905: Haggerty was its alternative chief theoretician; more constructively, John Mitchell and John Fahy, with the aid of Frs. Curran and O'Donnell launched the great unionization drives among East European miners that led to the great anthracite strikes of 1900 and 1902.

This brings us to a final detailed issue, before I attempt a summation. What were the relations between Irish unionists and the new immigrants and the American blacks? These subjects are clouded in myth and acrimony. In general, however, the Irish American record is not good; yet perhaps less from maliciousness, than from self-protectiveness. In 1900, restrictive practices against blacks in the unions reached their maturity. Despite formal A.F.L. policies discouraging them, most unions got away with relatively cast-iron refusal of black entries. Only when unions attempted to make such exclusions an explicit element in their constitutions did the A.F.L. demur, as in the case of the Machinists, and some other unions with similarly large Southern "locals" strength: as a result, formal bias was removed from the Machinists' constitution. This meant little, however. In 1900, according to W.E.B. DuBois

19 major unions with 400,000 members, had but 33,000 Negro members.
11 unions with 100,000 members had only trace Negro membership.
23 large and medium unions had no Negro members.
13 unions explicitly excluded Negroes.

Negroes themselves recognised the Irish element as being an important one in their exclusion. On August 6, 1903, the Western Negro Editors' Association, meeting at Colorado Springs, determined on memorializing Pope Pius X to have him use his influence to mitigate the growing racism prevalent among Irish-American Catholics, and (in the words of their telegram to the Vatican):

to break down that spirit of unfairness so prevalent among the labor unions, composed in large measure of Catholics, which in many instances deprive the negro of the opportunity to earn an honest living.

(quoted, Boston Pilot, 15 Aug., 1903).

The Irish were the relative newcomers to America, the blacks a colonial people whose decades of labor (forced and unforced) had contributed so much to the very "take-off" of America's industrial economy. Established free black communities in such cities as Chicago had been increasingly replaced by the incoming "flannel-mouths" or "green niggers" as city-wise blacks called these newcomers, in the competition for skilled and semi-skilled positions. However, the Booker T. Washington philosophy of black advancement through conquest of industrial crafts won the support of many, perhaps most, Catholic middle class spokesmen at this time (including Cardinal Gibbons and Bourke Cockran). Nevertheless only a small handful of Irish Americans were prepared to argue that Irish American union leadership should work against the bias of their members in these matters by reason of human brotherhood, justice for past services, the inconsistency of an oppressed people (the Irish) becoming oppressors, and the logic of the Washington policy. Among journalists, only James J. Roche of the Boston Pilot did so: he inherited the a-typical humanitarian antiracism of his mentor Boyle O'Reilly. Among churchmen, the equally a-typical Fr. Joseph Slattery of the Josephites (an order ministering to blacks) was almost alone in doing so.

On the other hand, however, there were exceptional circumstances. The Longshoremen's union, under T. V. O'Connor and others, recruited blacks increasingly after 1890: a policy re-
paid in union solidarity, but also in 1921, when New York’s black dockers voted to support the Irish-dominated union’s boycott of British ships (during the hunger strike of Mayor Terence McSwiney of Cork). Under Fahy and Mitchell, the UMW also increasingly recruited black members, including 20,000 by 1900. In both cases, a genuine anti-racial commitment on the part of these leaders mingled with more practical considerations to bring about acquiescence of members in these policies: blacks could be used in these fields (with comparatively little initiation) as strikebreakers, as for example had happened in the celebrated Virden, Illinois case, in the early nineties. Moreover, the numbers of Irish and native Americans dependent upon mining and dock-laboring was comparatively declining. That these were exceptions must be stressed again; even more peculiar, quite unique, in fact, was the Union of Stationary Firemen, its leadership Irish, its membership largely black (2,700 out of 3,600). In other areas, notably teamstering, the building trades, the railroad crafts, plumbing, and skilled textile jobs, and even maintenance and unskilled transportation jobs, the Irish were still in process of liquidating the remnants of once significant black representation in these trades and tasks. Nor would the tide turn, and then only slightly, until the influential John Fitzpatrick of the Chicago Trades Council decided, for that city at any rate, that such practices were damaging the cause of labor generally (after the meatpacking and steel strikes of 1919, 1921). For, generally speaking, allied to their own increasing race-consciousness Irish-American union members held a philosophy of unionism, as we have seen, that was perse semi-tribal: it was less a matter of formal anti-black prejudice, as that it would have required, from their own point of view, a group-denying, or self-denying policy to advance black in “their” trades, that constituted the chief bar to advancing workplace integration. In this respect, the collapse of ethnic solidarity since 1922 among the Irish prepared the way for later black gains.

Much the same factors operated with respect to the “new Immigrants”. On the one hand, insofar as the Irish shared the cultural and status aspirations of native America, they would incline to draw away from association with incoming Italians, Hungarians etc., against whom native middle-class and craft-class America displayed such animus. Just as fair-skinned north Italians in America set themselves apart from the compatriots from Calabria and Sicily, (quite unlike north Italian immigrants to the Latin culture of Argentina), in respect of labor tasks and organization, so much of the prejudice one comes across in Irish American papers against the newcomers, the restrictive practices adopted against them in labor areas, can be attributed to the fear that these newcomers threatened the precariously improved American standing... social more than economic... that the Irish had gained. As Isaac Hourwich pointed out fifty years ago, the Irish were, as often as not, the beneficiaries of the immigrant inflow, that elevated them in crafts, to foremanship positions etc. yet at the same time they could not see this, because subjective cultural insecurities caused them to view whole areas of economic life, residential areas, etc., as “socially inappropriate” now that Polacks, Hunkies, Eyeties and the like were taking up the slack. Despite Irish union arguments to the contrary the economy was then expanding so rapidly that such immigrants did not usually threaten established Irish positions: one exception, however, was the concurrence of continuing immigration with the unemployment of the nineties. There is evidence, too, that there was a residual class of Irish Americans, who failed to rise with their fellows, who earned for example, less in the mines than the Poles or Lithuanians; who continued on in the slum tenements long after most of their fellows had moved out: a resentful, poverty-stricken, often drunken sub-class (cf. Riis, Nelli, Hourwich, etc.)... violence against
newcomers was often the preserve of such types. Generally then, one has sub-areas of outright antagonism, general areas of social resentment, and economic fallacy, coupled with the general application to immigrants of the self-serving rather than explicitly prejudiced union policies that we have encountered in relation to blacks.

On the other hand, powerful forces made for inter-ethnic reconciliation and co-operation. Intelligent Irish American working-folk could perceive the justice or injustice, reality or fallacy, of anti-immigrant stereotypes in given situations, and the more generous of them responded accordingly. A majority of Irish American journalists and congressmen preached the inconsistency of Irish anti-immigrant feeling and practices at least before 1910. The Catholic Church generally threw its local weight in the direction of inter-ethnic peace, notably in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois, (despite an exaggerated historiography of intra-Catholic ethnic difference); priests, both Slavic and Irish, co-operated in these states to reconcile labor interests. Noted journals, such as Donahoes, the Boston Pilot, Chicago New World, Irish World, gave sympathy to such moves, despite often surprising unfamiliarity with the specifics of labor-ethnic situations.

Certainly gross cases of outright hostility to immigrants can be found among labor leaders: most notably the alliance between James Golden of the International Textile Workers (skilled), and the Massachusetts authorities and employers, in opposition to the general strike of unorganized Italian and other textile workers at Lawrence in 1911: one is glad that Golden is a sufficiently rare Irish name that few reading of his belligerent protective selfishness would realize the connection! Generally, it was in those states where the Irish's own social position and economic power was least well established, where prejudice against them was still strong, that such hostility to "outsiders" was at its worst: notably Mass., Conn., east Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Such a finding is consonant with prejudice-theory as it has been developed by Allport and others.

One can understand, without condoning, the story of the relations between the Irish and both black and new immigrants. One can again be proud of the very different climate that reigned in the mines under Fahy and Mitchell (after 1895, at any rate), in Chicago under Fitzpatrick and under others on the docks, and elsewhere. No Irish-dominated union, however can claim the honor of disinterested and consistent openness to all ethnicities, creeds and immigrants, as could the Int. Ladies' Garment Workers Union, and a few others. Such magnanimity was beyond a people whose reflexes, born of insularity, oppression, early impoverishment in America, and a drive toward security and advancement, were hardened in them by a self-righteous folk-interpretation of what should have been a universalising faith: their Catholicism. This, as we have seen, operated despite the work of a notable segment of their journalists, priests, politicians, and labor leaders. Because the Irish were the "first in the field", of ethnicities in the unions, their narrowness is particularly highlighted: whether other nationalities, in the same position, would have done much better, is difficult to say.

For ultimately the Irish workingfolk must be placed in the tri-fold context: American society as a whole, Irish American society as a whole, and the laboring section as a whole, to be properly understood.

I share the point of view of such scholars as S. Martin Lipset and Louis Hartz, which sees America as a disproportionately middle class society in its goals and structure and ideologies; as such it should be contrasted to other host-societies for mass Irish immigration such
as Britain. By 1900, half the population of Britain was functionally urban and industrial
and wage earning; in America, less than a third at the same time. A "labor culture" never
developed in the United States, for not only was the laboring element fragmented ethnically,
remuneratively and religiously: it was thus always a minority element, and even its aggregate
state was further fragmented due to geographic dispersion. As a result, the Irish could
scarcely develop the separate labor-conscious culture and politics typical of the Irish of the
Scottish lowlands, South Wales, or the north of England, co-ordinated with a counterpart
culture among the natives. Moreover, the middle-class component of American culture,
while increasing in occupational and organizational complexity, changing in goals and
status, and dividing in politics and group-identifications, was nonetheless increasing massi-
vely: and with increasing disproportion to the blue collar component. Yet this component
was less heterogenous (in language, conventional wisdom, etc.), than the immigration-
checquered blue collar element. Moreover, it set the patterns of thought in the society; it
was conceived of as being the bearer and trend-setter of the Transformation of America of
which Irish American workers themselves were so proud. And while there was perhaps (if
one follows Wiebe Mills, Hofstadter and others), a major division within it: a middle-class
of relatively independent functions (professionals, small and medium business, medium com-
munity leaders etc.) and a white collar class of functionaries of the new nationally or region-
ally organised corporations, both these groups shared the prejudice that, in a sense, the blue-
collar element ought to remain in the dependent, directed place in society to which W. G.
Sumner and others had appointed the "masses" (in Sumner's term). In 1903, the first style
of middle class had declared war on unions through the anti-union campaign of Citizens'
Alliances and the National Association of Manufacturers. In 1901, in a secret meeting, the
directors of the huge U.S. Steel had cast the organized might of the new middle class econ-
omy against independent unions. Subsequently (after 1906), the changing patterns of pro-
gressive thought and politics, coupled with a new humanitarianism, and the pinch to many
middle class people of rising costs, would induce larger segments of the dominant society
to listen with favor to labor claims. Not, however, until the 1930s, however, would the separate
right be granted the blue collar element as a whole to function co-ordinately as a base of
"countervailing power", as the "co-operative antagonists" allowed by even the conservative
Sumner in the 1880s. Generally, Irish Americans long since accommodated to this state of
affairs, basing their strategies upon the assumption of continuing weakness, and, of course,
in the process abandoning the unskilled and the new immigrants to the future. One could
argue, without empirical proof, that the Irish in Ireland (a few revolutionaries apart) follow-
ed the same policy throughout the nineteenth century of pragmatic exploitation of existing
possibilities, of cautious pressure-politics aimed at modest gains (Catholic Emancipation, Re-
peal, Home Rule, Tenant Right) in the face of existent power structures; and that this ex-
perience prepared them for adjustment to the style of labor organization and activity which
(as Commons would argue) they found ready-made in America.

To sustain this point, one must turn to Irish America itself as a community. Despite the
fact that the mass of Irish Americans, c.60%, were blue-collar in 1900, the leadership and
definition of the community was resolutely middle-class. 5 to 6% were of middle class pro-
per social and economic standing (European definition: wholesalers, bankers, manufacturers,
professionals, company officials, accountants, etc.); 16-17% were lower middle class (small
merchants, clerks, police, pub-owners, sales travellers etc.); together comparable to the rates
for native Protestant stock, and far advanced on the patterns of new immigrants (except the
Italians in lower middle class). Generally, most Irish American families were fluid in their kinship and communal status relationships: the railroad worker, switchman or maintenance worker, would have a cousin a grocer, a brother a small official, a son a teacher or a train-driver. He did not identify with a closed community based on occupational uniformity, and slight, marginal chances for improvement, whatever the facts of his personal prospects. He identified with a quasi-middle class sub-society; and if he were in a skilled trade, he could earn as much, live as high, and be as respected by priests and politicians, as any small shopkeeper, clerk or functionary; and the community institutionalised this recognition in several ways. For example, the Knights of Columbus, resolutely middle-class even arriviste, in ideology, actively recruited “suitable” members from the blue-collar segment of the parish, quite unlike its counterpart in Ireland. Bishops, politicians and businessmen could adopt “likely lads” from blue-collar segments of the community for favor, advancement, even education. More significantly, the community rallied to the support of moderate labor during its crises: most Catholic papers called for progressive legislation and relief works during the nineties depression; most churchmen defended the right to unionise; Irish American politicians and lawyers took up labor cases and causes: one thinks, for example, of Bourke Cockran, spending the last years of his life fighting for an exoneration of the alleged San Francisco bomber, Tom Mooney, explicitly, as he said, because otherwise Big Business would use the case as a continuing justification for its renewed anti-union drive (1917ff.); and Cockran was no liberal. As meat-packer General Ryan of Cincinnati put it facilely, “We are all workers”: the community had a trans-occupation, trans-class conception of the urban Irish public good, undogmatic, practical, premised upon common interest in the community’s image and future and rewarded (for its middle class) with votes, buying power, and religious orthodoxy from its workingmen. Indeed, the Democratic Party’s Irish wing, and the Irish middle class as a whole sometimes outstripped official labor circles in their drives for factory and tenement controls, parks, hours restriction for women and children, insurance reform and pension schemes at state level. The unions were often anti-statist in their prejudices to an extent that precluded their support for state activity in the social and economic sphere, since they mistrusted all non-union power as potentially anti-union. Perhaps because of the community’s influence, Irish labor leaders seem to have become less narrow upon this than Gompers would always remain.

Ultimately, however, one suspects that even if the American working class had been considerably bigger, the middle-classes less culturally influential, directly and through their Irish-American wing, the divisions of craft and ethnicities less pronounced, yet the individualism, conservatism and naively proudful Americanism of Irish American workers would have tended them to the paths we have seen them follow anyway. The fatalism that, I feel, was the base of their explicitly labor culture and politics in Britain, had little place in an America where every few generations, even every generation, saw their circumstances, as a group and as individuals transformed. Perhaps, as Ireland now transforms itself, they have something to teach us: a freedom from shibboleth, a readiness to comprehend management points-of-view, coupled with a vital determination to secure recognition for the modest and legitimate claims they put to their society: first a just share, then a constructive place in the continuous shaping and re-shaping of a society in which they and their children would live. If, on the other hand, they tended to define their place so self-protectingly as at times to demean themselves and harm the cause of labor, we can understand them, even as we try to avoid their excessive self-concern, union by union, region by region. At least, they prove to

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us that there is really no simple heroism, no straightforward ignominy, in the “adversary cooperation” of business and society, management and labor. For a closing example, one looks at James Lynch of the Typographers again. Generally conciliatory, perhaps to a fault, and yet constructively so, as we have seen, he was neither militant nor coward. Repeatedly, he advised against the A.F.L. taking on U.S. Steel, because of the certainty of labor’s defeat, as happened in 1909 and 1919: correct in estimate, but yet perhaps ignobly defeatist. In 1906, on the other hand, he co-ordinated a nationwide strike by the Typographers against the association of book and job printers (headed by two Irish-American concerns, ironically, those of Andrew McNally and R. R. Donnelly); the non-striking newspaper printers contributed over 4m. dollars to sustain the strike, which succeeded in gaining the 8-hr. day and other benefits after months of striking and subsequent litigation: a model of industrial action and solidarity.

We might finish here by asking again how “Irish” was Irish American labor. Little, except in a symbolic and hereditary sense: even as far as those who had themselves immigrated into industrial America. One point proves this beyond any doubt. In 1916, all the organs of official “Irishness” in Irish-America . . . Clan na Gael, the A.O.H., the Irish Freedom societies, the Pilot, Irish World, etc. called for the defeat of Woodrow Wilson for his abandonment of the 1916 leaders to British execution squads. Irish-America, following the lead of Irish American labor, voted overwhelmingly for Woodrow Wilson, who had shepherded the declaratory Pro-labor Provision of the Clayton Act, presided over the passage of labor acts for seamen and railroadmen and the (attempted) prohibition of child labor, and appointed the first Federal Secretary of Labor, the former UMW official, William Wilson. I venture the guess that had Wilson not abandoned his assertive pro-labor stance at the end of the War, had he not given in to the forces of militant Americanism, anti-radicalism and the drive for the open shop (of which the first two were at times but covers), had he not ordered the de-control of railroads by their war-time national chief, W. G. McAdoo; had he instead taken up the labor’s cause and helped to hold the gains achieved since 1913 Irish America would have stood by him in 1920, regardless of his international policies, and granted a modicum of interest (not even success) from him on the Irish question . . . but perhaps even without it. The interpretation that decides that the Irish abandoned Wilson because of his European policy alone forgets the principal element in the make-up of Irish-America: its character as a labor and moderately pro-labor community. The inner story of Irish America is a story of workplaces; the inner history of Irish America, a chronicle of the integrity, endurance, and weariness of Irish American workingfolk at their benches and tools.

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**WORKS ON AMERICAN HISTORY GENERALLY 1880-1920, AND THEORETICAL WORKS UPON LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY HAVE BEEN HERE OMITTED.**

**NOTE 1:** I refer to a forthcoming paper of mine on the social and economic structure of Irish-America, by state, comparatively with other groups: *Journal of American Studies*, 1976.

**NOTE 2:** Throughout this paper, Irish-American (or Irish, where used in American context) refers to Irish born and the children of Irish born. Census calculations do not include further generations. Most of the leaders cited, e.g., McGuire, Mitchell, etc., fall into the second category. “Native American” is a shorthand for those not of immigrant stocks of the immediate past (two generations or so, but more generally is a convenience for those of white Protestant descent and culture. This is not to deny that there was considerable cultural overlap between the two, varying with individual Irish Americans.
Report of Commission on Vocational Organisation (and it's Times, 1930-'40's).

BY JOHN SWIFT

On July 31st, 1938, a resolution passed by Seanad Eireann was accepted by the Government. It read: "That in the opinion of the Seanad a small commission should be appointed to examine and report on the possibility of extending vocational organisation by legislative or administrative action."

The Government appointed the Commission on January 10th 1939. By the terms of reference the Commission would report on (a) the practicability of developing functional or vocational organisation in the circumstances of this country; (b) the means best calculated to promote such development; (c) the rights and powers which should be conferred, and the duties which should be imposed on vocational bodies, and generally, the relations of such bodies to the Oireachtas and to the Government; and (d) the legislative and administrative measures that would be required. The Commission held its first meeting on March 2nd 1939. Over period up to its last session on November 4th 1943, it had 84 meetings, each meeting being usually of two full days. In those years, vocationalism, particularly in its political connotation of corporativism or the corporate state, was quite a live issue in public controversy in the Republic, as, indeed, in other countries.

When the Fianna Fáil Government began in 1932 there was much clamour for vocationalism. It was to be exploited by the main opposition. There were calls in the Dáil and Senate for legislation to establish a new social order that could make the economy more efficient and rid it of class conflicts.

Now, it has long been accepted parliamentary practice that when a Government wants to be rid of a bothersome proposal pressed on it by influential interests, it appoints a Commission, to investigate and report. All governments have vaults or burial places for the due interment of reports and recommendations urged on the legislature by government-appointed commissions. The more portentous and complicated the task assigned the commission, the more assured the report's fate of quiet and effective burial. For, in such case, the government is likely to calculate that the commission's work will take years and, by the time the report is ready, events will have discredited its recommendations or made them irrelevent.

Something of the kind was to be the fate of the report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation. The due burial of the report was not without benefit of clergy. Including two bishops, there were on the Commission five churchmen — six in fact if one is to include the lay theologian Professor O'Rahilly of Cork University, who was later to become a priest. This was a considerable number of clerics on a commission starting with 25 members and ending with 22 — a commission that was to survey the whole economic life of the community. The Bishop of Galway, Dr. Browne, was Chairman and the following were his clerical colleagues: the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cashel, Dr. Harvey; Father Coyne, the Jesuit sociologist, Father Hayes, founder of Muintir na Tíre; and the Methodist minister Dr. Irwin, Principal of Wesley College.

Four of the Commission's members were trade union officials, Miss Louie Bennett, General
Secretary of the Irish Women Workers’ Union; Senator Thomas Foran, General President of the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union; Senator Sean Campbell, Treasurer of the Dublin Typographical Society, and James Larkin, Sen., General Secretary of the Workers’ Union of Ireland. In April 1939 Senator Foran was replaced by Luke Duffy, General Secretary of the Labour Party. Miss Bennett and Senator Campbell weathered out the Commission’s meetings, with respectively 70 and 75 attendances. They signed the Commission’s report, but were at pains to disassociate themselves from any suspicion of fascist tendencies that might be read into the recommendations. Larkin put in only 20 attendances and did not sign the report. To my own knowledge, Larkin regarded the Commission and its work with more or less silent contempt. Luke Duffy had 34 attendances; and also did not sign the report, but rather ridiculed the recommendations, in spoken and written comment.

The remaining members of the Commission were persons regarded as representative in industry, commerce and academic life. Perhaps the most prominent of these were W. J. Crampton, building contractor; W. A. Odium, miller; and Professor Michael Tierney of U.C.D.

When the Commission started, it sent out questionnaires to 333 vocational organisations; trade unions, employers’ associations and the like. They were requested to furnish information on their structure and functions. Their representatives were invited to give evidence before Commission. I was National Organiser of my union at the time and, with other officials, I attended a session at Government Buildings, Merrion Street, and answered questions about our organisation.

The report states that considerably less than half, 150, of the organisations sent the questionnaire responded and gave evidence.

From the start, the Commission was at pains to show its main inspiration was the Papal Encyclicals. In part I of the report it states: “The phrase ‘Vocational Organisation’ passed into general usage in this country . . . mainly as a result of the strong commendation of vocational organisation contained in the Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno (1931) of Pope Pius XI. This encyclical commemorated the fortieth anniversary of another famous Papal pronouncement, Rerum Novarum, issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891.

When the Commission was appointed in January 1939, certain Church influences here saw in it hopes of recommendations for an Irish corporative state. The Irish Catholic of February 2nd that year, in its leader, welcomed the Commission as “a definite step towards bringing the principles of the Papal Encyclicals to bear in Irish life . . . Among the many questions which the Commission will have to investigate will be the type of corporativism best suited for Ireland . . . The members of the Commission, in investigating and deliberating on this fundamental point, will have the experience of Portugal and Italy to guide them.”

Here, it may be well to consider some points about Quadragesimo Anno, some events in Italy at the same time, and certain reactions in Ireland to the events. The corporative state was established in Italy following the fascists’ seizure of power in 1922. When Mussolini’s fascist party consolidated its power, it suppressed the other political parties and the trade unions. In place of the unions, the fascist government created organisations called corporations, in which both employers and workers were joined, under the guidance of the fascist government officials. From 1870, when the Italian states federated to form the modern Italian nation, what became known as the Roman question, that is, the dissolution of the former Papal states, remained a strong point of conflict between the Vatican and the Italian Govern-
ment. The fascist authorities now thought it would strengthen their position at home and their image abroad if they settled the Roman question and made peace with the Vatican. The result was the Lateran Agreement, negotiated in 1929. This agreement created the new Papal State of Vatican City, an area in Rome, at St. Peter’s Basilica, of 108 acres, with certain constituents of sovereignty, including its own postal and railway services and the right to appoint and receive diplomatic missions. The pact brought the Italian Government’s recognition of the special position of the Roman Catholic Church, as being the religion of the Italian people. Divorce was prohibited, in Italy the status of church marriage as against civil marriages was raised, and blasphemy laws were enacted under which spoken or written statements in defamation of the Pope were punishable. These laws still operate. Under the Lateran Treaties large sums were paid to the Vatican by the fascist state in compensation for church property losses at the dissolution of the Papal States in 1870.

The agreement with the fascist government was negotiated by Pope Pius XI, who, two years later, issued the Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno. The Encyclical referred to some of the points made in Leo XIII’s Rerum Novarum, citing the plea made in that document for establishing corporations on the lines of the medieval guilds. Of this part of the 1931 Encyclical we may cite the brief summary of the Catholic Encyclopedia: To quote “Quadragesimo Anno recommends re-establishment of an order of mutual co-operation among occupational groups analogous to the medieval guilds.” The Catholic Encyclopedia continues “The Encyclical has a scathing indictment, not of the Capitalist system as such, but of trends towards concentration of economic power . . . Communism as an alternative system is condemned, and although the trend towards moderation in socialism is carefully noted, its essential doctrine is found incompatible with religion”.

The Lateran agreement of 1929 and Pius the Eleventh’s Encyclical of 1931 were interpreted in certain circles in Ireland as Papal approval of Italian, and, later, Portuguese fascism. This was clear in our politics of the time. Civil war conflicts were still active, when Fianna Fáil came to Government in 1932. The previous year Fianna Fáil’s opponents who had been in the National Army, formed themselves into the Army Comrades Association. A para-military organisation, it opened it ranks to the public, and by the following year, under its new title of the National Guard, it claimed a membership of 100,000. Earlier in the year, the new Government dismissed its police chief, General Eoin O’Duffy, Commissioner of the Civic Guards. O’Duffy became leader of the National Guard. It was a time when fascist organisations showed their political feelings, not just on their sleeve, but on their shirt. The Italian fascists strutted in black shirts, the German, some in brown, some in black, the Irish National Guard, in blue.

In September 1933 the main opposition party, known then as Cumann na nGaedheal; the National Farmers’ and Ratepayers’ League and the National Guard held conventions and agreed to merge in a new party to be known as Fine Gael. The Party held its first Ard Fheis on February 10, 1934 under the presidency of General O’Duffy. The presidential address was published as a pamphlet by Fine Gael later that year. O’Duffy declared: “After our victory at the polls, it will be essential for the country to turn its back on party politics and to organise with the utmost efficiency its social and economic life. The present Pope has proclaimed it as the primary duty of the State and of all good citizens to abolish conflict between classes with divergent interests . . . He, the Pope, has declared that the aim of social legislation must be the re-establishment of vocational groups.” The General went on: “This
is the aim which United Ireland, Fine Gael, has put in the forefront of its social programme: the planning of our national economic life, with a view to increased industrial efficiency and harmony, by the organisation of agricultural and industrial corporations with statutory powers, assisted by industrial courts and functioning under the guidance of a National economic Council."

This, it may be observed here, was on the lines of the Italian corporate state — a model which, we shall see, was later to be recommended for adoption here. O'Duffy went on "in every industry (including agriculture) the men's union and the employers' association will be closely combined in a federation of which the two bodies will be merely two wings or branches. This federation of employers and employees, acting through its permanent joint-council, and under the supervision of the national economic council, and of the appropriate minister of State, will be given statutory powers to make agreements in regard to the industry which it represents. These agreements will be binding on all workers and all employers."

The General continued "within the corporations thus advocated for agriculture and industry disputes (say, about wages or working conditions) will be determined by an industrial court. Strikes and lock-outs, which cause so much waste and suffering, will altogether cease. The corporative system is not merely a theory or a possibility."

The General emphasised "it is a practical proposition for Ireland, and is now a complete everyday reality in the life of the Italian people. It is transforming them, and is opening up ever new perspectives of a happier and better life . . . I expect that because I mention the word Italy — not to mention Mussolini — we shall have shrieks of fascism, dictatorship, sedition, rising in chorus from the Irish Press and Government Buildings, and the Attorney General will be sent for to know how many sections of the Public Safety Act are applicable for the banning of the corporate State to be". O'Duffy thus warned the Attorney General "let him not, however, be too hasty on the present occasion. It would be rather unfortunate from his point of view if it transpired before the Military Tribunal that the accused were simply following the great Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno promulgated two years ago (it was three, rather) by Pope Pius XI".

One result of the open and persistent advocacy of the corporative State at this time was to draw the Labour Party nearer the Fianna Fáil Government. Fascism, both in Italy and Germany, had suppressed the trade unions and other democratic organisations opposed to the corporate state. For Labour's support in the Dáil the Fianna Fáil Government undertook social legislation in accordance with the Labour Party's programme. Outside the Dáil the Labour Party took joint action with the Irish Trade Union Congress, in manifestos and public meetings, warning of the threat of fascism in Ireland.

Accompanying the Blueshirt campaign for the corporate state went hysterical condemnation of communism. In this side of their propaganda O'Duffy and his colleagues got must support from the pulpit. In 1933 and '34 the bishops' lenten pastorals were almost exclusively devoted to virulent attacks on communism, not only in its theoretical aspects but in its practical, or alleged practical, application in the Soviet Union. In March 1933 the Primate, Cardinal MacRory, in sermon from Armagh Cathedral, kindled the holy fervour and called for a united front against communism. Among Church congregations given more to piety than to any disposition to analyse political theory, this campaign from the pulpits had the effect of instilling intolerance of ideas but little understood. In this Lent of 1933, it was from such congregations the mobs gathered in Dublin streets to attack Connolly House in Great Strand
Street, the Labour College, Eccles Street and the headquarters of the Workers’ Union of Ireland in Marlboro Street. Connolly House was the headquarters of the Irish Revolutionary Workers’ Party, later to become the Irish Communist Party. The Eccles Street College was run by the Labour Party.

The mobs ran riot for three nights, with attempts at arson and assaults of persons suspected of communist sympathies. Several people, including Mrs. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, prominent as a republican and socialist at the time, were assaulted by the mob, the onslaughts being made to the strains of “Faith of our Fathers” and shouts of “Up the Pope!” and “Down with Russia!”

The pietistic smugness and intolerance of the times was exemplified in the bland comments on these events made in the Government organ The Irish Press. In an editorial on March 30th that year it commented “If they (those attacked) hold public meetings and offend the feelings of their audience so deeply as to stir up spontaneous anger against them, then they cannot expect to be listened to and are in grave danger or suffering from the irate crowd.” “But” it goes on “it’s an entirely different matter when organised groups go through the city attacking buildings and places which house those they dislike. It merely ends in the spectacle of one group of Catholic Irishmen (the police) being forced to disperse another group of Catholic Irishmen (the demonstrators).”

Surely a fine example of the bland sectarianism, not to say inhumanity, that concerns itself more with the inviolability of property than with the lives and persons of human beings considered politically undesirable! The Irish Press comment continues “Although our views are the very antithesis of communism, we think these organised attacks on property are wrong and inexcusable . . . we think, too, they do not help but hurt the Catholic cause, and do not injure but win a certain sympathy for the groups who are attacked.”

At this time, 1933, the rising threat of fascism rallied militant republican groups to resistance. A new republican organisation was formed and efforts made by its leaders to forge links with the Labour Party and trade unions for common action. Only a few of the Union leadership showed any interest in extending the Labour Party-T.U.C. anti-fascist front to embrace the new republican group. The story of the Republican Congress has been recorded by some of its leaders, including Peadar O’Donnell and George Gilmore, and need not detain us here.

However, another attempt at anti-fascist action at the time, heretofore but curiously recorded, may be referred to here. Some of us concerned with the threat of fascism felt strongly about the current pulpit and press exploitation of religion or piety in propagation of the corporate state. We thought that traditional republicanism, even in its more radical and socialist form in the Republican Congress, did not meet the deeper issues in the assertive role of Churchmen in the political and associated fields in Ireland.

So, towards the end of 1933 we started the Irish Secular Society. I became the Chairman and the late Owen Sheehy Skeffington the vice-chairman of the society. Among the committee was Captain Jack White, then as active and as military-looking as in the days of Croydon Park and the old Liberty Hall, when he trained the Irish Citizen Army. We had a few literary people, who are still following their craft, including Denis Johnston and Mary Manning. Our constitution stated “convinced that clerical domination in the community is harmful to advance, the Secular Society of Ireland seeks to establish in this country complete freedom of thought, speech and publication, liberty of the mind in the widest tolera-
tion compatible with orderly progress and rational conduct.” The programme called for (i) the ending of clerical management of schools and the introduction of secular education, (ii) the Churches to be no longer exempt from rates and taxes, (iii) removal of the ban on divorce, (iv) repeal of the censorship of publications Act, and (v) combating clerical influence in public and business life in promotion of sectarian interests.

The Society found it impossible to rent accommodation for meetings in hotels or public halls. An old-established society, the Contemporary Club, of which some of us, including Skeffington and myself were members, agreed to sub-let a room to our Secular Society for fortnightly meetings. The Contemporary Club’s rooms were in Lincoln Place. At our Society’s meeting on January 16th, 1934 a non-member, a journalist, managed to gain admission. The next morning the *Irish Press* had a lurid expose under big caption “Anti-Clericals Organise.” The report published the Society’s constitution and programme and some of the discussion at the meeting. A few days later, the *Irish Catholic* attacked us with irresponsible virulence and calumny. The editorial described us as “a nefarious anti-God Society that runs the full gamut of the Soviet No-Gods.” In the society, to quote again, “all the modern, hateful, inhuman and unnatural practices are enthusiastically endorsed . . . for that, we surmise, is where the screw is loose with them — the liberty of the debauche is to them the most sacred of all liberties.” The article went on to mention where our meetings were held and then asks ominously “Did the landlord of the premises know the kind of four birds to which he was giving a roosting place?” This was the standard intimidation at the time. It brought an abrupt end to our tenure of the meeting room, for the landlord knew well the risk to property, and even persons, of any further shelter to the Secular Society.

Later that year O’Duffy, whose more robust fascism had become an embarrassment to the old party hands, was eased out of Fine Gael. A few years later, the General saw fresh fields for propagation of the corporativist cause. The Republican Government of Spain was now under siege by Spanish fascist generals, who were able to call for aid in the form of military intervention from Mussolini’s Italy and Nazi Germany. O’Duffy joined the intervention with his Irish Brigade of Blueshirt colleagues. The success, in 1939, of Franco’s rebellion against the Spanish Government added another country to the conquests of fascism. Here, in Ireland, it breathed new life into local clamour for corporativism — a clamour made more virulent and intolerant by the religious overtones of the Spanish conflict.

It was at this time the Commission on Vocational Organisation was set up. With the number of clerics and others of its members partial to corporativism, the ardent vocationalists at the time must have entertained high hopes that far-reaching recommendations would be forthcoming from the Commission. Yet, when, in 1943, the recommendations came, they were seen as something like a monumental essay in fatuous research. The Commission was born at a time of high fervour for corporativism. Yet, when the recommendations were published, they were seen to be a disavowal of the doctrine. How is this to be explained? . . .

In the first couple of years or so of the Commission’s work it looked as though the fascist powers were winning the war begun in 1933. A few years before, in the Blueshirt days, one of the members of the Commission, Professor Tierney, had written: “It is a complete mistake to suppose that Italian fascism is merely a crude individual or party dictatorship. It is a product of peculiar Italian conditions, unknown elsewhere, but it has gradually evolved a scheme of social and political organisation which is quite certain as time goes on to be adapted to the needs of every civilised country. In that scheme, dictatorship has more and more
given way to a new and more intelligent, because more subtly organised, democracy. Mussolini, when his time comes to retire, will be succeeded, not by another dictator, but by a new entity suited to the needs of modern civilisation, the corporative state... The corporate state must come in the end in Ireland, as elsewhere." (United Ireland, organ of Fine Gael, December 16th, 1933). To the members of the Vocational Organisation Commission who shared Professor Tierney's views in the early years of the 1939-'45 war, with the victories of the fascist powers, it must have seemed that fascism was invincible. Then, in 1942, came what is accepted as the decisive turn of the war, in the battle of Stalingrad. The subsequent collapse of the fascist forces was not without its message for those who championed the corporate state, including its advocates on the Vocational Organisation Commission. Whilst the early part of the Commission's report more than suggests anti-socialist bias and partiality towards corporativism, the concluding recommendations disavow such.

Introducing the recommendations, the report, p.317, emphasises — "A last point of supreme importance in our eyes will close this introduction. On this point we wish to leave no possible excuse for misunderstanding or misrepresentation. We have not suggested any changes in the political system or structure of this country, or are any such changes either involved or implied in our recommendations. We have not even remotely suggested a 'vocationally organised State' or a "Corporate State". We have in actual fact studiously avoided any such proposal, and left the political structure untouched... We have, on the contrary, confined ourselves rigidly to sketching out a vocational organisation for the economic and social life of the country as distinct from its political life." The authors of the Commissioner's Report saw the impending collapse of the fascist powers.

I shall try to summarise the main recommendations. It was recommended that all vocational bodies, employers' associations, workers' unions and professional bodies, be registered and recognised by the State as competent organisations to deal with the problems of their trades or calling. The second stage would set up joint Industrial Boards "to express the unity of the industry... to promote its economy and efficiency of service to the community, to watch over its interests vis-a-vis other industries and the State, and," the recommendation continues "to act as a conciliating and harmonising influence between the interests of employers and workers."

The Joint Boards would have equal numbers of employers and workers. Specific functions of the Boards would be "To defend the particular industry against such things as dumping, unfair competition, misrepresentation, loss of markets, loss of raw materials and undue interference by the Government... to promote research for the purpose of improving industrial efficiency, to see that no persons or firms engage in business illicitly or fail to comply with the statutory regulations, to act as a negotiating body for provisional collective agreements, which would be subject to registration and review by a higher body, and to act as a court of appeal for adjudication of all internal disputes between firms or within firms, between employers and workers or between employers and workers organisations, to take over the administration of such laws, regulations and orders as the Government may desire, such as the inspection of factories, the distribution of quotas and licences and the formation of a consultative council to speak for the industry and to submit reports and advice to the Government on matters connected with the industry."

The report cites some 40 different industries from the Governments' 1938 Census of Industrial Production. Each of these presumably would have its primary vocational organisations (employers' associations and workers' unions) and in the second stage, its Joint In-
dustrial Board. Representatives of all the Joint Industrial Boards would come together annually for the National Industrial Conference, the third stage of the vocational structure recommended. On this the report, p.361, states: "We recommend that such an organ should possess a three-fold structure: (1) an annual National Industrial Conference . . . (ii) a Governing Body appointed by the Conference, (iii) a permanent National Industrial Office . . . controlled by the Governing Body." This structure is obviously modelled on the I.L.C., Geneva.

At the annual National Industrial Conference recommended representatives of other sectors of the economy, including agriculture, commerce, finance, transport and the professions, would have the right to speak but not to vote. The Minister for Industry and Commerce would be an ex-officio delegate and the Department's officers would have the right of audience but not of voting.

The Governing Body of the Industrial Office would consist of 15 members — seven employers, seven workers, with chairman, one year an employer, the next year a worker. Again in this section the State is warned to keep out. The report recommends: "The Government should not either in its political or administrative branches be represented in the Governing Body, and there should be a self-denying ordinance on the part of deputies and senators rendering them ineligible for membership of this body."

The chief functions of the Governing Body would be "to act as an industrial planning council and advisory body to the Government, to be a higher court of conciliation and arbitration, and to elect representatives to the fourth and highest organ of the structure, the National Vocational Assembly." Having reached this stage, the vocational structure, from the primary bodies up, reads like the machinery of the Italian fascist state.

So far, the greatly condensed account given here of the vocational pattern recommended by the Commission, refers only to the structure as covering industry. Similar machinery, in varying degrees, was recommended for agriculture, commerce, transport, personal services (catering and the like), finance and the professions. The appointment by the Governing Body of the representatives to this supreme organ, the National Vocational Assembly, would be on the following basis of representation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Agricultural Conference</th>
<th>40 members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Industrial Conference</td>
<td>20 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Commercial Conference</td>
<td>10 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Transport Conference</td>
<td>10 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Finance Conference</td>
<td>10 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Professional Conference</td>
<td>10 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members co-opted by elected members</td>
<td>20 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120 members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The co-opted members, who it will be noted, would have the same strength, 20 members, as industry, would, to quote the report make available "persons who are eminent in general social or economic theory and who have studied the working of the vocational system." Presumably these 20 co-opted members of the National Vocational Assembly would be drawn from clerical and lay academics known to favour vocationalism or corporativism.

The members of the Assembly should not according to the recommendations, be eligible
for membership of either the Dáil or the Senate. This provision is another example of the commission’s mistrust of parliament. Parliament was acceptable, and even sacred, when in the old days it shared oligarchic power with the Church and the feudal landlords and merchants, and when the ordinary working people had no say or vote in electing their parliament. But, with the extension in modern times of the suffrage to the adult populace generally, the very institution of popularly elected Government is seen as a danger by social theorists anxious to maintain or revive privileges that have favoured themselves and their institutions.

The recommendations prescribe that the National Vocational Assembly should be the supreme vocational authority. It would be the court of appeal in disputes between the lower vocational bodies. It should promote harmony between them. It would have the power to review collective agreements on wages and working conditions and prices. The Assembly, the Commission recommends, should have the function of planning the best use of resources. It is, perhaps, in this section of the report that the fatuousness of the recommendations is most marked. So far from suggesting powers which the Assembly would require for directing or marching the privately owned industrial and financial resources to secure their best use in the public interest, the report stresses the difficulties of planning in what the Commission would regard as a democratic state. The planning, the report asserts, should be done voluntarily by the vocational bodies. To quote "It should not be externally imposed"—meaning, of course, it should not be imposed by the Government.

The main fallacy in the vocationalism trumpeted here in the ‘30s was that the vocational bodies it was sought to establish and invest with something like legislative powers represented but specialised or professional interests. It is important, of course, that such interests should be represented in the machinery of state. But the Government of the state should have interests and responsibilities beyond the vocations or jobs of the persons making up the state. The member of the vocational body is not merely a tradesman, a shopkeeper, a bank employee, a teacher or a doctor. He or she is also a citizen, with all the manifold interests of being such. The old trade guilds that furnished urban government, including Irish urban government, for hundreds of years, were an example of vocationalism organised to monopolise not only professional profit and privilege but civic rights and office not attainable by masses in the community who were denied membership of the guilds. As in many other cities and towns in Europe where the guilds operated for hundreds of years, the guilds of Dublin exploited their municipal power in restricting admission to trades and professions to all but their own nominees. We know from the minutes of the City Assembly, in the Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin, how the guilds’ vocational power was abused in the most ruthless promotion of professional interests. Before the 1830s, when the vocational and political power of the guilds both in Ireland and Britain was shorn by the Municipal Reform Acts, the guilds were in decline. They were on the way out, doomed, not so much from the threats of central government as from the weight of their own corruption.

In the days of their opulence a strong feature of the guilds in Ireland, as elsewhere, was their dedication to religious observances. This was seen in their public functions, their endowments of Church activities, and of course, their ascription of holy patronage. Thus for the Dublin merchants it was the Guild of the Blessed Trinity, for the bakers, the Guild of St. Anne, with the other guilds similarly claiming saintly patronage. How these religious and medieval connotations of guild life may have influenced Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno in the please of their authors for a revival of guild vocationalism, is a question that could give us much debate. That the drafters of the report of the Commission on Vocational Or-
ganisation found inspiration in the old guild corporations is attested by the report’s many quotations from the Encyclicals — this notwithstanding the report’s final disavowal of any advocacy of corporatism or even vocationalism.

Galway in the First Famine Winter

BY GRÉAGÓIR Ó DŪGHAILL
Public Record Office of Ireland

The records of the Relief Commission in the Public Record Office of Ireland include papers forwarded from the offices of the inspector general of constabulary and of the Chief Secretary to aid the Commission in its work. One such record throws considerable light on the employment of working people in Galway and is evidence of unusual detail for the social and economic condition of the people in a period for which little such archival evidence of city life is extant.

Physically the record takes the form of a minute on blank foolscap with two statistical returns as enclosures: the citation is PROI, Relief Commission, Potato Crop Returns, Galway, 18 December 1845. The number Z 18060 at the top of magistrate Kernan’s minute is that given to it as a registered paper of the Chief Secretary’s Office. The Z classification signified a paper concerning popular distress, and the undersecretary to whom it was addressed initialled it and had both the letter and the enclosures forwarded to Captain William Kennedy, secretary of the Relief Commission, a normal practice with regard to papers registered under this classification. The papers are in excellent condition.

In the first return, the figure given as number of labourers employed during the year expresses man-days rather than men. To the second return a column has been added by this editor for the purpose of comparison with the employment situation in 1851 as given in the 1851 Census General Report, pp 536/7. Only when the occupation names are precisely the same in both the Census Report and the magistrate’s enclosure are the comparative figures shown.

The interpretation given by Kernan to the statistics he forwarded is strengthened by another record in the same archive, a tabular return in manuscript by the Poor Law Commission giving the position in the workhouses week ending 12 December 1846, and comparing with them the figures for the corresponding week in 1844 and in 1845. In the week ending 13 December 1845 only one-third of the places in Galway workhouse were occupied, which was considerably less than at the same time in the previous year or in the subsequent year. In 1844 there were 433 occupants in the workhouse, in 1845 only 344 and in the subsequent year 915. Moreover the condition of the people involved gave less grounds for concern in 1845 than in the previous or the following year: in 1844 over one-third of those in the workhouse were confined to its hospital suffering from fever, while in 1845 the hospital was empty of fever patients, but in 1846 it was again very busy. Again, the average cost of maintaining a pauper for a week in the workhouse, exclusive of clothing costs, was being held steady: in 1844 it was 1/6½d. in Galway, in 1845 it rose only to 1/7½d, but in 1846 it spiralled to 1/10½d. This figure probably under-represents the rise in the cost of living for families in the city, who would not have been able to buy in bulk and under contract. But an ominous sign suggestive of serious unemployment is the doubling of the number of able-bodied men
forced into the workhouse: this figure rose from forty in 1844 to eighty in 1845, a much steeper rise than that for women and children and the sick.

The statistics for Galway workhouse would seem to agree with those presented by the resident magistrate, and to suggest that the position in Galway city, although potentially grave, was not immediately one of extraordinary seriousness.

I am grateful to the Deputy Keeper of Public Records, Breandán Mac Giolla Choille, M.A., for permission to publish this public record, and to Fergus D’Arcy, M.A., of University College, Dublin, for his helpful suggestions.

* * * * * *

Z18060

Galway
18 December, 1845

I beg to state that it was my intention to have forwarded to the government the accompanying documents, along with the forms which I filled up relative to the potato crop, Labourers employed &c &c; but that they were not completed time enough. No. 1 is a list of the merchants and traders in the Town of Galway with the average number of labourers employed by each respectively during the year, with the amt. of wages, the number of days employed in each week, and the length of time such employment is likely to continue. No. 2 is a return, obtained by me from the Mechanics Institutes, which I have every reason to suppose is a correct one, of the Tradesmen of the town of Galway, their rates and wages, with or without diet, and how employed. In this return, the Labourers are calculated at 2,000, but that number includes the Labourers of the County of the Town of Galway. Those returns may enable the government to judge of the extent of distress to which this locality will be exposed should a famine prevail in the spring and summer of the next year. The Alarm Caused by the disease in the potato crop has quite subsided, and I understand that the potatoes in pits are keeping well.

J. B. Kernan,
R. M.

To Richard Pennefather
Undersecretary.

*In different hand on right hand margin: Transmit to Capt. Kennedy. R.P. Dec. 19/45.*
No. 1
List of the Merchants and Traders in the Town of Galway with the average number of Lab-
ourers employed by each respectively, etc., etc., etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Traders and Manufacturers</th>
<th>No. of Labourers employed during the year</th>
<th>No. of Labourers employed at present</th>
<th>How long such employment is likely to continue</th>
<th>Wages per day Without food</th>
<th>No. of Labourers out of employment of the usual number</th>
<th>How many days employed in each week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry Comerford</td>
<td>Corn Merchant</td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Flynn</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Somerville</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>2496</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Grealy</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubert Burke</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Costello</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thos. Costello</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Const. Burke</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Ireland</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Grealy</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Quirk</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>½ year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thos. Corr</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Murry</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>7488</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Connelly</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4688</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Fahy</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4688</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick Lynch</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Corry</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4992</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullens &amp; Coyne</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>15600</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Comyns</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>21840</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick Lynch</td>
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<td>1872</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ireland</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>½ year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Carney</td>
<td>Corn Factor</td>
<td>9360</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathw</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patr. Roonane</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Rabbit</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>6684</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Kerney</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>7488</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Burke</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4992</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dermot Duggan</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Costello</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edw. Burke</td>
<td>Millers</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Gunning</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4688</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francis Fitzgerald</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambrose Rush</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>6684</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Mr. Pelmar</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>7488</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
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<td>Patrick Regan</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4992</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Owens</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Manning</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>10d.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Hughes</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Morris</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Valentine</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward C. Burke</td>
<td>Distiller</td>
<td>9360</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thos. M. Perse</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>21840</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Brewer</td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Stephens</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>4056</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perse</td>
<td>Cloth Factory</td>
<td>15600</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John I. Gunning</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>9360</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Greaves</td>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td>24960</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michl. O'Bryan</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65
No. 2
A Return of the Tradesmen of the Town of Galway their rate of wages, with diet or without diet, and how Employed. Labourer also included &c.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Traders and Manufacturers</th>
<th>No. of Labourers employed during the year</th>
<th>No. of Labourers employed at present</th>
<th>How long employment is likely to continue</th>
<th>Wages per day Without food</th>
<th>No. of Labourers out of employment of the usual number</th>
<th>How many days employed in each week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W. Franklin</td>
<td>Marble Manufactr.</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Falon</td>
<td>Paper Manufactr.</td>
<td>9048</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Stephens</td>
<td>Iron Foundary</td>
<td>4992</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin O'Maley</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Townsend</td>
<td>Timberyard &amp; Coalyard</td>
<td>3120</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantine Sloper</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>2496</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robt. Perse</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>3120</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis Clark</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jno Gunning</td>
<td>Tan Yard</td>
<td>7880</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Duffy</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>4368</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domk. McDermott</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>1/-</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>201968</strong></td>
<td><strong>658</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

J B Kernan RM, December 18th 1845.

**Observations**

- Not more than 20 permanently employed.
- Half the year idle and not fully employed the other half.
- Mostly done by measurement.
- By so much per square.
- Generally done by the lb.
- They work no days work but are paid by the 100.
- Generally paid by measurement.
- A few of this Guild constantly employed.
- Contract work.
- All very well employed.
- Very well employed.
- Fully employed.
- Constantly at work.
- All idle except those employed at the 2 factories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Rate of wages per day</th>
<th>How Employed</th>
<th>Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Shoemakers</td>
<td>2/6 to 3/4</td>
<td>Badly</td>
<td>Piece work paid by the pair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Tinsmiths</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Victuallers</td>
<td>3/0</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Very few employed by the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Bakers</td>
<td>3/0 to 4/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Always well employed at good wages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Braziers</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ropemakers</td>
<td>3/0</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Badly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Brougemakers</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Most generally at work and seldom idle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>pretty well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Metal Founderers</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Tolerably</td>
<td>In good employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Tailors</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Badly</td>
<td>A few masters employs some 10 to 12 hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Saddlers</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>pretty well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chandlers</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>middling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nil</td>
<td>Skinners</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Curriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tanners</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brushmakers</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parers</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Watchmakers</td>
<td>3/0</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1344</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/5th of the entire body</td>
<td>Perhaps not 300 permanently employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>10d to 1/0</td>
<td>Badly</td>
<td>Not more than 500 permanently employed through the year round out of the aggregate number.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mechanics Institutes Galway 15th December 1845.

J B Kernan 15 Dec. 1845
ILHS OFFICERS ELECTED 1974 AGM

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