

Research Report

As a result of the bursary awarded to me from the Society for the Study of Labour History, I was able to successfully conduct my research into the labour solidarity between Britain and Ireland during the Dublin Lockout of 1913. My research centred on the material on offer in the National Library of Ireland. For example, the William O'Brien Papers provided me with invaluable insight into the relations of British and Irish labour during this period. My study focussed on the development of revolutionary syndicalism in the early twentieth century. The use of militant tactics for the purpose of trade union agitation caused a split in the trade union movement during this period. Consequently, this had significant consequences concerning the solidarity between Britain and Ireland during the Lockout as the Irish workers on strike relied on the industrial support from Britain. The trade union leadership in Britain opposed the use of such militancy as they feared this would disrupt bargaining agreements with their employers. However syndicalism was much more popular with the rank and file workers of Britain who set about conducting a wave of unofficial strike action in support of their Dublin comrades.

My time in the National Library of Ireland was spent documenting various sources from the William O'Brien Papers which provided an insight into the labour solidarity during the Lockout. For example, personal correspondence, telegrams and other statements by labour leaders, such as James Larkin and James Connolly, provided me with a plethora of evidence which greatly contributed to my assessment of the Lockout. In addition to the personal papers, I was also able to access vital newspaper archives, such as the *Irish Times* archive. Resources such as these proved instrumental to my research. Two chapters of my thesis assess the role of the British and Irish press during the Lockout. The *Irish Times* printed numerous articles during the Lockout highlighting the influence of James Larkin during his 'Fiery Cross Crusade' of Britain, this was highly significant in creating support amongst the workers of Britain and the reports in the newspapers reflect this.

Below are two images taken from the *Irish Times* Archive in the National Library of Ireland. The images show an article in the *Weekly Irish Times*, 28 February 1914, which heavily criticises the use of syndicalism in Ireland. The paper reflects Ireland's conservative rhetoric regarding industrial unionism and provides an excellent example of the source material on offer at the NLI. Evidence such as this was crucial to my assessment of the solidarity between British and Irish labour during the Lockout. The opposition to syndicalism emphasised in this article reveals the difficulties faced by the British and Irish workers in their attempts to unite their cause.

ra- in Ireland, about which they knew little. G
tter of methods of action which they soon found
that would not answer in their own country, for
at whose interests they were becomingly soli-
so is citous. The subsequent efforts of the leaders
uth. to make peace deserves all praise. But how
the came it to be their duty to cross over as peace
the missioners to settle a local dispute in a coun- d
that try on the eve of self-government where the w
and race of capable men is not supposed to be yet
one extinct? Well, be it said in answer, this
the wretched, long-drawn-out strife, like many
can- another on Irish soil, would never have taken
pital. place, or, once begun, would have been readily
good composed if Irishmen had their own strong o
con- and independent union, and did not invite e
s. outside intervention by leaning on outside
Holy support in their disputes. e
wing

THE MISCHIEF OF SYNDICALISM.

It was a different issue, however, that darkened the sky. Syndicalism wanted no employers in Dublin or anywhere else, and it prepared and took the field to use Irish workers and the English unions for its own purposes. If Syndicalists must have a theatre for their operations they should find some other place than Ireland to experiment upon. The Irishman has been long enough exploited against himself by force or craft from across the Channel. And certainly, in

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some other place than Ireland to exper-
 upon. The Irishman has been long con-
 exploited against himself by force or craft
 from across the Channel. And certainly, in
 our poor country, so badly needing employ-
 ment, it is folly little short of madness for any
 of our own people to join in a cry to destroy
 the one class that makes some use of its re-
 sources to give employment to the working-
 man when no other is ready to do so.
 Civilisation cannot afford to dissolve into
 chaos in Ireland or anywhere else. It will not
 do to overthrow human society, or reverse
 the wheels of progress. We have got to hold
 fast to Christian principles. If, therefore,
 associations of workers cannot acquire the
 means in a legitimate way, or if with the
 necessary capital they are incapable, from
 their circumstances, of conducting industrial
 concerns successfully, what is to be said is
 that a good man can thrive on fair wages if
 the housekeeping is what it ought to be, and
 there remains such plans as we have already
 indicated by which industrious workers in the
 course of their employment may share in the
 industry or become masters themselves. Cer-
 tainly, the wage system should be so improved
 as nowhere to deserve the name of sweating
 or wage slavery.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

Housing accommodation is not less impor-
 tant for the workers than the amount of their