

Documents for the new Leaving Certificate History

Case Studies Dublin 1913 – strike and lockout

These documents are intended to supplement the documents in the chapters of *Movements for Reform 1870-1914*, which deals with Dublin in 1913 (pages 191 to 230). They can be printed off and given to students who should be encouraged to start each document by noting who wrote/produced it, when, where and for what purpose.

Document 1 comes from the report of the inquiry into housing conditions in Dublin which was set up in 1913 after several people were killed when a tenement house collapsed. This includes the title page of that report and is intended to show students the kind of document which provides much of our information about the lives of Dublin workers at the time. The inquiry took evidence from a range of people with knowledge of the living conditions – priests, social workers, tenement owners, health inspectors – though not the slum dwellers themselves!

The evidence of John Cooke was selected because his descriptions of the conditions in the slums are clear and concrete. This is probably because, as he said, he had prepared himself for the inquiry by visiting families and noting the conditions in which they lived. Given the nature of his job, he would also have seen the worst off and most inadequate of the slum-dwellers.

This document could be used at the start of this Case Study to arouse the interest of students in the struggle, in Dublin and to make them aware of the human degradation which lay behind the struggle and which motivated Larkin and the socialists. It could be used in various ways. Short extracts in which Cooke describes the physical conditions in which some families lived, could be followed up by looking at the reasons he gives for those conditions. That might lead to questions about the role of drink, low wages and irregular work in producing these conditions – and about their effect on the people – especially the children living in them.

Documents 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 relate to the violence which erupted in Dublin after Larkin spoke at a banned meeting in O'Connell Street. (O'Connell Street was still officially known as Sackville Street, although the nationalist Corporation had for years been trying to change the name to O'Connell Street, which was what nationalists insisted on calling it.) The day was called 'bloody Sunday' at the time.

There were two main episodes which should be seen in the context of violence between strikers and police in the previous weeks. The first was in O'Connell Street after Larkin spoke. The key question here was did the police riot, or were they, as they claimed, trying to stop rioting workers? Later that day, they entered a flat complex in Corporation Buildings. Here the question is did they go in response to attacks on them or did they engage in gratuitous violence to intimidate the workers? These issues were investigated in yet another inquiry.

Document 2 is from Father Michael Curran, secretary to Archbishop Walsh of Dublin. Here he is speaking for himself rather than Walsh, who was away at the time. This document puts the case for the police who had come under sustained attack by the strikers in the weeks before 'bloody Sunday', but it is also informative in showing the attitude of middle class Catholic nationalists to the strike. Ask students to note the language he uses about the people whom he saw attacking the police. Where did his sympathies lie? How reliable is he as a witness?

Document 3 was written by a British Liberal MP, Handel Booth, who was staying in the hotel on O'Connell Street, from which Larkin made his speech. His account of events is interesting because he had a ring-side view and students could be asked to reconstruct what happened from his description. It is also worth asking whether they can detect any bias in his report.

Document 4 consists of two newspaper photographs which were taken just before and during the events in O'Connell Street. Get students to compare them with Booth's account of these events. Do they support his account of what happened?

Documents for the new Leaving Certificate History

Case Studies Dublin 1913 – strike and lockout

Document 5 relates to the events in Corporation Buildings later the same day. By then there had been considerable rioting as striking workers hit back at the police for the arrest of Larkin and their earlier actions. Corporation Buildings were a flat complex with the flats built off external balconies.

The residents alleged that policemen went along the balconies, entering one flat after another, smashing windows, destroying the residents' possessions and, in some cases, beating them up. The police responded that they entered the Buildings because they were being pelted with stones and bottles from the balconies and wanted to arrest the people responsible. They denied they had destroyed things or used unnecessary force.

A government inquiry heard evidence from both sides and Document 5 is one of those pieces of evidence. Ask the students whether they think Behan is a reliable witness? Get them to explain the reasons for their answer. Compare what he said with what two other extracts from other evidence on pages 218–9 of *Movements for Reform* (Documents D and C). Which of the three do they think is the most reliable? Which might lose by telling the truth? Which might gain by lying?

Document 6 is a cartoon from the satirical magazine *The Leprecaun*. This could provide a useful way of pulling the information from the previous documents together. Get students to compare its comment on these events with the editorial in the Irish Catholic in *Movements for Reform*, (Document B, page 218). Which do they think is the more accurate evaluation of the events of 'bloody Sunday'? Ask them to provide pieces of evidence from all the sources to support their answer.

Document 7 is a fairly typical hysterical reaction to the plan by some British well-wishers to bring the children of the strikers to stay with British workers' families until the strike was over. Today we are likely to be surprised that the concerns were more with the spiritual well being of the children than with their physical safety. Behind that lies a century of accusations of proselytism against various Protestant societies. But the reaction can also be seen as reflecting the hypocrisy of the Catholic middle class who consistently supported Murphy and did little to help the very children whose souls they worried about.

Documents 8 and 9 contain Murphy's public explanation of his aims. Both come from the early days of the lockout. Murphy's speech at the Dublin Chamber of Commerce aroused a lot of anger for its comment that 'the employer all the time managed to get his three meals a day but the unfortunate workman and his family had no resources whatever except submission'. Ask students about Murphy's attitude to Larkin and his ideas. How does he see his role in defeating Larkin? What is his attitude to the workers? Can they see any differences between the two statements? If so, how do they explain them.

Document 10 is Larkin's own assessment, made after the end of the lockout. Ask students to list the points he makes. Ask them to give his over-all assessment and then to compare that with what they themselves have learnt in the case study. Was Larkin's assessment realistic? Whatever answer students give, it must be supported by reference to events or sources.

M E Collins

REPORT

61

OF THE

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE

APPOINTED BY THE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD FOR IRELAND

TO INQUIRE INTO THE

HOUSING CONDITIONS

OF THE

WORKING CLASSES IN THE CITY OF DUBLIN.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



John Cooke sworn and examined

You are the Honorary Treasurer of the National Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Children?

– Yes

And your work brings you into contact with the poorer working class element?

– Yes, the poorer and some of the better working classes...

Will you tell us of your experience of the tenement system?

– My knowledge is acquired by social work in connection with the Society... For the purpose of this enquiry I undertook a personal investigation of the whole slum ... areas of the city... I took with me each of the Society's officers in turn through their respective districts. I went through the poorer streets, penetrating into all courts, lanes and alleys, entering into houses everywhere and noting on the spot what came under my observation.

No selection whatever was made of the of the houses... They were those that contained families whose cases were in the hands of the inspectors and had been immediately before my visit. Although I was well acquainted with the slums of the city I had never before made so extensive an inquiry or investigation into the conditions under which the poor live....

In every house I visited there was something to condemn. Bad or narrow or ill-kept staircases, congestion or overcrowding, bad air or light, no proper cooking and water accommodation, insufficient lavatory arrangements – one or more or all of these faults I found in every tenement room I entered. Lines across the rooms, the windows or doors or a rude pole out of the windows are the arrangements for drying such duds as are washed. Straight from the street the children are put to bed with dirty feet, hands and faces. Nearly all the houses I visited are single room tenements and the larger portion are below the standard of 320 cubic feet of air per person found in them. The one or two water closets which are often open are the accommodation per house for, say, 40 to 60 people ... while an outside tap gives the general water supply. The fireplace is invariably small and totally unsuited for cooking purposes. The furniture is of the poorest description, some rooms being totally devoid of sleeping accommodation, a piece of sacking or rags being considered such for the whole family. It was quite exceptional to get a room properly fitted with bedding ,table, chairs or some decent domestic utensils.

I speak now of what I know is the general condition of a large number of families occupying single tenements. Some indeed that I was asked in to see by the owners in passing their landing were a credit to the occupiers and their comfort and surroundings seemed a palace of luxury compared with the conditions of the other tenants. Asking one cheery occupier how she managed to do so well, she said in graphic language 'The froth of porter is never blown to the floor in this room'.

The good woman's reason is as true as it is expressive. All through the 24 years of the work of the Children's Society the dominating cause of misery, destitution of the working class and the consequent neglect and cruelty to children is drink. How far the housing accommodation is the cause of intemperance it is impossible to say... but the result of drink is quickly seen... It must be admitted that the squalid surroundings, the sordid poverty and the eternal struggle against want that reign over the tenement dwellers are, without doubt, contributory causes to the fall into bad habits. The uncertain wages of the casual labourer is often the cause of the misery to be found and adds its quota to the worst conditions in the tenements...

The worst feature of the housing conditions of the Dublin poor is the effect on children. In no city in these islands with which I am acquainted have the children such a freedom – I may say such possession of the streets as Dublin. Many thousand little ones throng the thoroughfares under no control, running moral and physical risks, ill-clad, ill-fed, ill-taught, undisciplined. How can they

become useful citizens or fathers and mothers of healthy children, serviceable to the state and the race? Numbers never rise out of slum life; they rush into matrimony at an early age and the old process is repeated – 5 to 11 all told of a family in a single room and the only change they get is to a neighbouring court or street ... or a small space in prison for drunkenness or some petty offence.

The woman left to herself in a single room with her children has no chance of cultivating any of the graces of life. She too quickly, as a rule, loses the few she ever had. The little of a useful kind she was ever taught she forgets or has no chance of putting it into practice. In all the rooms I visited I saw no woman with a needle in her fingers, while there were plenty of tatters on her own and the children's garments. Even were she inclined to cook, little could be done with the fireplace, while the shelf, if not entirely bare, has seldom anything better than the materials for a poor tea. Under such conditions of living, under such uncertainty of the means of livelihood among large numbers and with the drink habit so strong, it is very easy to account for the squalor and uncleanness and general untidiness prevailing in the slum areas of the city....

I have collected a number of facts which I can give you... In the north east area is a house with eight families, single tenements. One room measures about 16 feet square, with a small closet off it, containing absolutely no furniture but a broken bedstead and stool. The family of nine (seven children) sleep on the floor on which there was not straw enough for a cat and no covering of any kind whatever. The children were poorly clad; one was wrapped in a rag of a kind and his only other clothing was a very dirty loin cloth. The utensils were a zinc bucket, can and a few mugs and jam-pots for drinking. Rent– 2 shillings and 3 pence. Wages in late weeks 2 shillings and sixpence; maximum for some time past 12 shillings.

In the same street is another house with 10 families. A family of four (two children) occupy a large room with dilapidated walls and ceiling. The bed consisted of an old straw mattress and old cotton quilt for covering; a table, stool, orange box, two tin cases, saucepan and a few pieces of delft formed the rest of the furniture. Rent 2 shillings; wages 10 to 15 shillings. Man lately in hospital. The room clean; children fairly so....

A house nearby contains 11 rooms with a population of about 50 persons with one available closet in the yard. The other was locked. One family of 11 – father, mother and 9 children – were in a bad way, the father a tradesman being long out of employment. The bed, 3 feet wide and a stretcher with very little covering for both afforded the sleeping accommodation. The rent of the room was 3 shillings.... Rents varied from 2 shillings to 3 shillings and sixpence according to the position, front or back....

In a court off an open wide street I found one house of two storeys containing five families ... I visited three families and the conditions were very distressing, yard, walls and staircase very bad and the condition of two rooms were poor and squalid. The rent was 2 shillings and shillings and sixpence and wages most precarious. The third room gave as great distress... as I have met with. The front room is stone paved and too cold for occupation, exposed as it is open to the street. The back room measures 12' by 7' by 7'. It has one window with a piece of sacking for a blind. It contained two beds for the parents and four children and a brother-in-law who lay ill in it. There is absolutely no room to turn in it with the two beds. The father and mother seem to do their best in the present circumstances and knew the necessity of fresh air. The rent was 3 shillings. One closet gave accommodation to five families...

I condemn the whole tenement system now existing. It breeds misery and worse, it causes a great waste of human life and human force. Men, women and children can never rise to the best that is in them under such conditions. The whole environment is too sordid and mean for the great majority to resist. Men and women sow the wind of bad habits and the children reap the whirlwind of cruelty and neglect in youth, ruined manhood and womanhood in the years to come...

Letter from Fr Michael Curran, Secretary to Archbishop Walsh of Dublin, describing what he saw in central Dublin.

I passed through Great Brunswick Street on a tram between 4.30 and 4.45 pm on Saturday the 30th of August and witnessed the threatening conduct of the crowd towards the tramwaymen and their subsequent violent conduct towards the police.

At every street corner along Brunswick Street there were large groups of people, chiefly women and children of the degraded class, obviously labouring under great excitement. As the tram passed each group they lost all control of themselves and behaved like frenzied lunatics. They shouted coarse language and threats at the tramwaymen and with violent gestures indicated the fate that awaited the 'scabs' if the 'scabs' fell among them.

The violence was renewed and increased from time to time as policemen arrested men and escorted their prisoners along the street. Not only men but women with hair all dishevelled and even young girls of fifteen or sixteen rushed and surged around the police. The women indeed almost eclipsed the men with their wild cries, shaking their fists in the very faces of constables, hitting them on the back and pulling them and their prisoners about. One obsessed creature seized an empty coal bag from a cart and belaboured the constable to the utmost of her power.

I saw five or six arrests, and within ten minutes matters went from bad to worse. Cries gave way to more violent assault and assault to attempted rescue.

In the last case I witnessed as it turned towards Westland Row station, two policemen who made a double arrest were subjected to a very severe mauling and were violently hindered in making the arrest. They were surrounded by a dangerous-looking body of men who violently impeded the constables who, as far as I could see in the crowd, were subjected to very severe treatment.

The mob did not seem to contain more than one striker and he was more demonstrative than violent. It was composed of the roughest element in the city - people who in my opinion had no concern with the labour trouble as then existing. I consider it my duty to accede to the request of the police authority to state my opinion of what I saw. It is my distinct opinion that the five or six policemen (D.M.P and R.I.C.) who I saw subjected to these insults and violent conduct behaved with singular self-restraint and in some cases with actual good humour. There was an absence of violence on their part except in the last instance when they only employed such force as was necessary to secure and retain their prisoners. Their behaviour was the only redeeming feature of what was for a Dublin citizen a really humiliating and disgusting spectacle. MICHAEL J. CURRAN

Archbishop's House, Dublin
1st October 1913

(Printed in Report on the Enquiry into the Dublin Disturbances, Parliamentary Papers, 1914, Vol 18, page 432)

3

Report by an English Liberal MP, Handel Booth of what he saw in Sackville [O'Connell] Street on the morning of Sunday 31 August

Just before my wife and I sat down to lunch we looked out from the balcony and noted to each other that there was nothing going to happen, that everything was perfectly quiet. There was no riot, no meeting, no anything. My wife had seen the demonstrators go away and I had seen them set off for Croydon Park. Looking up and down the street we said there could have been nothing more peaceful when we sat down to lunch.

Larkin appeared. I did not know him. He wore a false beard. He appeared immediately in front of our table and addressed a few words to the street below. What he said I do not know because of the hum of the passing traffic. We were within a yard of him. We understood him to say he was going to speak until the police arrested him. Immediately he said that, he turned on his heel, passed our table and went, I understand, to the kitchen of our hotel where he was arrested by Superintendent Murphy.

We stepped back onto the balcony to see what was happening in the street. While on the balcony somebody shouted that it was Larkin, or that it might be Larkin. What else was shouted did not reach our ears but we were interested in seeing Larkin brought out of the hotel. He was brought out peaceably enough.

We were just thinking of turning to go back to lunch when the mad scene broke out. We looked down and saw the shouting and excitement in the street. The police had drawn their batons. Some of the police had gone one way, some another and were being met by others and by the people, many of whom, girls and others, wore straw and sailor hats. It was an ordinary Sunday crowd. They were certainly bewildered and did not know which way to turn.

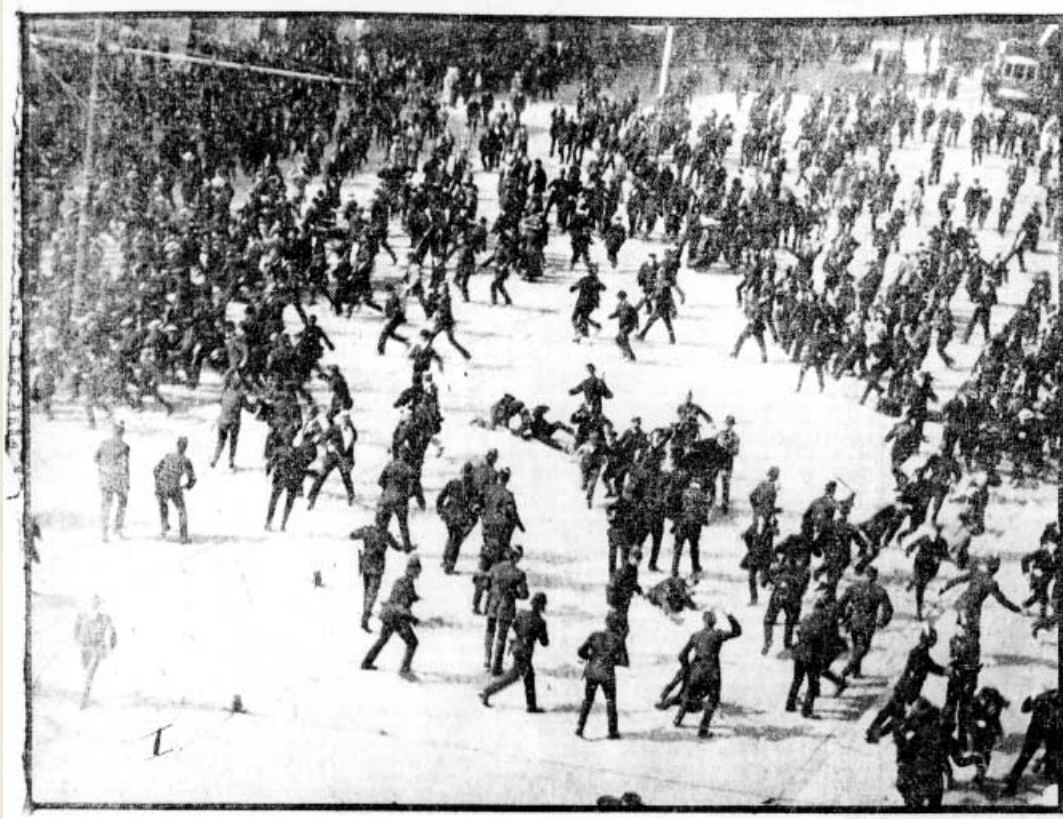
I was back on the balcony when Mr Larkin was removed by the police who had been rushing excitedly into the hotel. The puzzled crowd could not tell what was happening. Policemen came in view from all sides, girls hastened away with their companions and excited women shouted for cheers for Larkin. A few responded as the prisoner was marched away.

Then silence ensued save for pattering feet and sickening thuds. The noble street was in the hands of the most brutal constabulary ever let loose on a peaceful assembly. Up and down the road, backwards and forwards, the police rushed like men possessed. Some drove the crowd into side streets to meet other batches of the Government's minions wildly striking with truncheons at everyone within reach. In escaping, many ran the gauntlet until the third or fourth blows knocked them senseless. The few roughs got away first; most respectable persons left their hats and crawled away with bleeding heads. Kicking the victims when prostrate was a settled part of the police programme. Three such cases occurred in a direct line with our window.

(From *James Larkin, Lion of the Fold*, edited by Donal Nevin, Gill and Macmillan, 1998, pp 185–6)

4

Photographs of O'Connell Street taken just before and during the events which Handel Booth described in Document 3



What is your name? – William Behan.

Where do you live? – 79D Corporation Place...

Where is that dwelling situated? – On the second landing...

What is your position? – I am a labouring man... a pensioner ... from the Irish Lights service.

Now on Sunday 31 August, were you at your dwelling there? – Yes Sir.

Did you see the police coming into Corporation Buildings? – I did, Sir.

Were you on the balcony or in your room when they first came in? – On the balcony....

What did you observe them do first? – They stood at the office...

Did you hear anything from that time? – The first thing that attracted my attention was the smashing of glass...

Where did the sound come from? – From someone at the office window.

Did you observe the police doing anything? – I did, Sir, after they left the office...

And what did they do? – They charged up along to the front entrance on the opposite side to where I was and up to the stairs with their batons drawn. I went in when I saw the batons. I knew there was something wrong going to happen then. My windows look right across to where they went up with their batons drawn. They were twisting them.

What did they do? – They tipped the windows as they went along and the second man did the same as the first and so on. As far as they ran they smashed every pane of glass on the way.

They smashed every pane of glass as far as they went? – Yes.

Was there anybody dressed differently from the other men?

– Yes, there was a man with private clothes. I don't know who he was. He was the commander-in-chief of the police, leading on the charge.

Had this man in private clothes any object or article in his hand? – I could not say that...

How many balconies did you see these policemen on? – Two. First they went to the second and to the third and smashed the windows as they went along.

Did you see the police going into any of the hallways? – I did.

Did you see them doing anything? – I could not say. It was inside they were but as they came out of the rooms, they flung bottles across to my side and they smashed.

You saw them flinging bottles across to your side? – Yes and they smashed over the balcony where I was.

Did the police seem to be acting very coolly – were they quite cool?
– They were more like madmen than Christians. They were more like savages...

Could you see them in the rooms through the windows opposite you?
– Oh no. I could not see what they were doing inside.

Before the police came, were there any of these windows in the balconies broken? – No...

Did you see any people pelting the police from the balcony on the north side?
– I saw nothing fired at all.

How long were you sitting or standing on your own balcony before the police came in? – About five minutes before they entered the gate.

(Evidence the Enquiry into the Dublin Disturbances, Parliamentary Papers, 1914, Vol 18, page 497)

October, 1913.

THE LEPRACAUN.

215

**THE REAL STRIKERS**

On August 30 and 31 the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the R. I. Constabulary ran "amok" in the City of Dublin. Result: Two men batoned to death and several hundred men, women and children badly beaten, whose ages range from one week to ninety years.

A villainous scandal

Early yesterday morning fifty little Dublin children were driven into the public baths in Tara Street, there to be washed before being consigned like lambs to the slaughter, to English addresses selected by an Englishwoman of the Socialist-Suffragette variety named Mrs Montefiore; and the woman seems to have had as esquire, an English Syndicalist named Weigall, who seems to be connected with a 'League' of some kind formed to exploit a Syndicalist sheet written by an Irish anti-clerical crank ...

Dublin is a tortured city and the pressure of hideous want following upon months of destructive strife has, no doubt disheartened and to some extent demoralized some of its poor people; but it is almost impossible to believe that even in the direst extremity to which they can be reduced, Irish Catholic fathers and mothers are willingly handing over the bodies and souls of their little children to the Montefiores, Weigalls and the nameless crew behind them who have planned this vile and sinister campaign. The 'law' it seems has been 'put in motion' and not a moment too soon with regard to the matter. Dublin's priests and people cannot be expected to watch the quays and the railway stations hour after hour, by day and by night in order to outmanoeuvre the Montefiores and the Weigalls and their equally unscrupulous and infamous 'aiders and abettors' - among whom the persons responsible for the control of Liberty Hall must evidently be reckoned. The first 'batch' of Irish Catholic children marked out exportation yesterday were happily rescued - thanks to the vigilance and courage of a few priests and the determination displayed by the people when they realised the hideousness and horror of the situation brought about by the 'cosmopolitan' divisions of the scheme ... it is now about 268 years ago since Irish Catholic children were 'deported' in large numbers. Oliver Cromwell was the noble-hearted and sympathetic Englishman who put that splendid scheme into practical operation ...

It is an outrageous, dastardly and criminal business; but perhaps the most exasperating and galling thing about it ... is the supreme and unmitigated contempt with which ... the Montefiores and the Weigalls ... must regard the men and women of Dublin with whose children it sought to play these pranks and who are not, quite evidently, credited with the possession of elementary self-respect ...

Irish News [Belfast] 23 October 1913 (from A.C. Hepburn, *Ireland, 1905-25, A Documentary History*, p.116)

William Martin Murphy was President of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. On 1 September 1913 it passed a resolution thanking him for the energetic manner in which he had dealt with the labour unrest. This is part of his reply:

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the meeting for this resolution. I am particularly proud of it and I am also proud of my exertions... I have seen for a long time that the head of the labour agitation in Dublin has been aiming for a position that was occupied some time ago in Paris by a man who was called 'King' Pataud who was able to hold up the whole business of the city by lifting his little finger. That man was driven out of Paris and the other man will be driven out of Dublin shortly.

The question I have fought in connection with the Tramway Company was not one of wages or the treatment of those employed in the tramway service. The whole issue was the supremacy of Mr Larkin. And whether he was going to rule the trades of Dublin and whether men could be able to carry on their business and in fact be able to call their bodies and souls their own, unless they went cap in hand to him. The position was becoming intolerable.

It was time to stop this man and I think I have stopped him. I did not get into the matter in a light-hearted or haphazard way. I had laid out my plans of campaign and prepared for any emergency that might arise. Generally Mr Larkin was good enough to state in advance what he proposed doing and thus I was able to take him in anticipation. Larkin is now under the protection of the police. His victims, the employers, have been under the protection of the police for some time but for the past week Mr Larkin appeared to have been craving for the police himself and to get inside jail which would be the safest place for him when his victims are looking for him and find there is no strike pay for them.

The fight against Larkin was not, after all, so difficult. It was easier than it appeared. The prospect of a strike and the anticipation of it had much more terror for the employer than the actual strike when it took place. An employer who had never been up against a strike was terrorised at the prospect. When the strike actually took place, the employer had to get his back to the wall and the workman had fired his last cartridge. The employer all the time managed to get his three meals a day but the unfortunate workman and his family had no resources whatever except submission and that was what occurred in 99 cases out of 100. The difficulty in teaching that lesson to the workman is extraordinary.

One of the helps we have had in this strike, has been that Mr Larkin has provided an antidote to the poisonous atmosphere which he himself has created. The antidote is the hundreds of men he has thrown out of employment who can easily be had to take any work and undergo any risks so sad is their plight...

(From: James Larkin, Lion of the Fold, edited by Donal Nevin, Gill and Macmillan, 1998, page 245–6)

Mr Murphy first disclaimed any leadership of the Dublin employers. 'I am concerned only with the Tramways and the other concerns which I control and what has happened is that the other employers in the city are now following my example. The shipowners, coal merchants and others have endured Larkinism for a long time and it was not until Larkin began to attack the undertaking in which I am interested that I took action. Following my example but not my lead, the other employers have decided to end this tyranny once and for all. It is not a question of an attack on trade unionism at all. I have been in business for nearly fifty years and I have never before known anything like Larkinism. It is not trade unionism in the ordinary sense at all.'

'Do you consider that there is an opening for a policy of conciliation at the present state of things?' I asked

'I do not,' Mr Murphy replied. 'So long as the Transport Union stands for syndicalism and Larkinism, it is no use discussing it at all because the position has become intolerable for the trade of the city...'

I next suggested to Mr Murphy the trade union officials might be prevailed on to adopt ordinary trade union methods of negotiation in place of the sectional and sympathetic strike if the employers had made a combined effort to bring this about before taking drastic action. To this, Mr Murphy could not assent.

'There must be new men to lead and new methods' he said. 'If any organisation especially fitted for this class of labourers were established and run on proper trade union lines, the employers so far as I know would welcome it. But it must be carried on in the manner that is universal among the other trade unions in the United Kingdom. There is a prima facie case against Larkin's organisation. It is the only one banned by the employers. There have of course been disputes between employers and other trade unions but these have been dealt with and settled on ordinary lines. The men concerned have not been under an unscrupulous leader with no sense of responsibility.'

'Supposing', I asked Mr Murphy, 'that instead of adopting guerrilla tactics the union had prepared a programme asking for general improvement in the wages and conditions, how do you think the employers might have received it?'

'I think,' he replied 'they would have recognised and welcomed a union conducted on those lines if it had been organised in the interests of the men. The existing union certainly helped them in one way or another in the early days, but the ambition of this man to become dictator has completely destroyed any good effect which the union might originally have had in improving the conditions of the workmen. I have said over and over again that these unorganised men wanted organisation and that they were not as well treated as they ought to be by their employers...'

(Reprinted in the *Evening Herald*, 8 September 1913)

... Looking back over the immediate past – more particularly the long months of 1913 and the early months of 1914 – we saw there the attempt of an organised, unscrupulous capitalist class composed of men of different political parties and holding different sectarian views who had combined together for the purpose of destroying organised labour in Ireland. The lockout of 1913 was a deliberate attempt to starve us into submission and met with well-deserved failure. The workers emerged from the struggle purified and strengthened, with fierce determination and a fixed purpose. The employers' attitude was a direct attack upon the essential principle of trade unionism. The outcome of the attack had been the initiating of a new principle of solidarity inside the unions and for the first time in the history of the world the beautiful and more human principle had received universal recognition. 'An injury to one is the concern of all' that motto would be emblazoned on the banner of Labour the world over in the future, we have established a great human principle, once again the Dublin workers stood as pioneers in the upward and onward march of Labour.

The men and women engaged in the struggle had shown magnificent courage, loyalty and endurance. The history of their bitter sufferings and fortitude had rung like a clarion call throughout all the countries of the world....

I desire to bring you back for a moment and would speak with you on one or two points of the struggle in Dublin last year. We saw too plainly that sectionalism carried with it defeat amongst the working class. We had thirty-seven unions engaged in the struggle, each acting upon its own line of defence and attack and according to its methods. Those who were engaged had shown magnificent courage – women and men, ay and little children – had proved their heroism. Hunger, the gaol and death itself did not deter them. Let us not forget our comrades, Brady Nolan and Byrne, who were murdered in the streets of this city by the hired hooligans of the capitalist class – the police. We found that no political party, no church, made a protest against the abuse of the laws by the capitalist class. During that period it was shown clearly that there were but two camps – employers and workers. We found no Redmondites, Carsonites, or O'Brienites then. The enemy were all employers and every weapon they could wield – political, social and administrative – they used unsparingly.... Police, politicians, the Press and the judges on the bench were simply the tools of the employing class. No city in the world has a more useless and vicious capitalist class than that of Dublin.

Condemnation and calumny had been poured out upon the heads of the leaders of the working class. I too received more than my share. The employers claim victory but the employers did not beat back organised labour in this city. I admit that we had to retreat to our base but that was owing to the treachery of leaders in affiliated unions and betrayal in our own ranks.

(From *James Larkin, Lion of the Fold*, edited by Donal Nevin, Gill and Macmillan, 1998, pages 260–1)