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Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

Guest contributors are always welcome! Please note, the IACI is an apolitical, non-sectarian organization and requests that contributors consider that when submitting articles. The IACI reserves the right to refuse or edit submissions. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of the IACI or any/all contributors to this site. Please submit articles for consideration to cbuck@iaci-usa.org.

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IACI Award Winner Announced

The RDS National Craft Awards is one of Ireland's most important annual showcase and competition opportunities for craft makers living and working on the island. Showcasing and rewarding excellence in Irish craft since 1968, from this year the RDS National Craft Awards is now a two strand competition with an independent panel of craft experts assessing the work of emerging and established makers separately. This allows the Awards to celebrate the best in Irish craft, as well as provide a platform the next generation of

makers.

The IACI RDS Muriel Gahan Award of €2,000 is awarded to an emerging craftsperson to assist with their career or business development. It is co-sponsored by the RDS and the Irish American Cultural Institute. This year the prize went to Ryan Connolly for his beautifully designed and finished walnut side table which the furniture judge described as *"a stunning piece of work, embracing new technology in furniture, beautifully shaped and curved"*. The prize money will help him to purchase some much needed equipment for his Galway studio.

With categories ranging from woodturning and jewellery to ceramics, glass and textiles, the RDS National Craft Awards is an important celebration of indigenous design and endeavour, and follows an RDS tradition of promoting and supporting the development of Irish craft which dates back to the nineteenth century.

To be eligible to enter the emerging maker strand, entrants must be able to show that they are either: Students studying craft in a third level institution, or have within the last five years set up a craft business, or are new to a craft discipline within the last five years, either studying via an apprenticeship or are a life-long learner on an informal course.

IRISH HUNGER AND MIGRATION- MYTH, MEMORY, AND MEMORIALIZATION

By Patrick Fitzgerald, Christine Kinealy, and Gerard Moran

Quinnipiac University Press 2015 ISBN 978-0-9909454-0-6 198 pps.

Having personally visited the Great Hunger Museum in Hamden, Connecticut, as well as the Irish Famine Museum in Strokestown, County Roscommon, I have come away with a better understanding of famine and emigration, two of the most important themes in Irish history. The book review this month is a collection of essays from different disciplinary perspectives not only by historians, but also sociologists, geographers, literature specialists, political scientists, artists, musicians, and others, about the Famine.

While the Great Famine was a defining moment in Irish history, it was not the only occasion when Ireland experienced subsistence crisis and food shortages. The collection of essays by E. Margaret Crawford showed that these were a common feature in Ireland, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries.

With poverty, hunger, and famine being constant features in the lives of the people, one of its consequences was an exodus from the country as people attempted to escape the ravages of hunger and death. While the famine theme is important in helping us understand how Ireland was transformed, that of emigration is every bit as significant and has dominated the Irish psyche from the 17th century up to the present.

This book is a contribution to the ongoing scholarship about the Great Famine and I found it to be a TOP SHELF read.

James Connolly and James Larkin, *The Socialist Irish Rebels* by Raymond D. Aumack

James Connolly was born in 1868 in Edinburgh Scotland. His parents had previously emigrated from County Monaghan, and settled in an area of Edinburgh, in an Irish enclave called Cowgate. His father and grandfather were laborers. Connolly himself joined the workforce at about the age of 11 at which time his formal education ceased. This was not at all unusual among the Irish poor. He had the equivalent of what we Americans consider a fifth grade education at St. Patrick's Parish School.

He worked as a laborer for five years and followed the route of many impoverished Irish by joining the British Army at the age of 14 under the fictitious name of Reid. He had lied about his age following the example of his older brother. He served in the army for seven years. His regiment was assigned to Ireland during a tumultuous time in Irish politics. He grew to hate the British Army and carried that hatred throughout his life.

When word came that his regiment was to be reassigned to India he chose the alternate option of escape. He actually deserted the army. By this time Lillie Reynolds had entered his life. They fled back to Edinburgh where they were married in 1890. Connolly opened a cobbler's shop. He closed it within the year because he really had no skills as a cobbler. By this time he was deeply involved in the Socialist Movement which was much more consuming than mending shoes.

Socialism

He became Secretary of the Scottish Socialist Federation. At the time, his brother, John, held that position. After John spoke at a rally in favor of an eight-hour work day, he was fired by the Edinburgh company for which he worked. James took over his role as secretary while John was searching for work. During this time, Connolly also became involved with the Independent Labor Party.

In 1895, after the birth of his third daughter, Connolly took a job in Dublin to work as the full-time secretary of the Dublin Socialist Club, a job that offered the salary of one pound a week. He and his family settled in Dublin. He quickly led the club to a new status as the Irish Socialist Republican Party. Irish historians are fairly agreed that the ISRP party had pivotal importance in the early history of Irish socialism and republicanism.

Before he left Scotland, Connolly was also the founding editor of a newspaper, *The Socialist* and was among the founders of the Socialist Labor Party.

He joined with Maud Gonne and Arthur Griffith in the Dublin protests of the Boer War.

In 1903, he uprooted his family to go to America, a move dictated by economic necessity. He had no plans or any idea of what he would do here. While in America he was a member of the Socialist Labor Party of America, The Socialist Party of America, and the Industrial Workers of the World. He founded the Irish Socialist Federation in New York in 1907. He also wrote a

book, Labor in Irish History, critical of Daniel O'Connell, the achiever of Catholic emancipation 60 years earlier.

On his return to Ireland in 1910 he was right-hand man to fellow-syndicalist James Larkin in the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. He stood twice for the Wood Quay ward of Dublin Corporation but was unsuccessful. In 1913, in response to the Lockout, he, along with an ex-British officer, Jack White, founded the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), an armed and well-trained body of labor men whose aim was to defend workers and strikers, particularly from the frequent brutality of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. It was at this time he recruited Countess Constance Markievicz and trained her with the soldiers of his army. She had started a soup kitchen to feed the workers and their families. She eventually became an officer in his army. Though they only numbered about 250 at most, their goal soon became the establishment of an independent and socialist Irish nation. He also founded the Irish Labor Party as the political wing of the Irish Trade Union Congress in 1912 and was a member of its National Executive. Around this time he met Winifred Carney in Belfast, who became his secretary and would later accompany him during the Easter Rising.

The Irish Rebel

Connolly originally stood apart from the leadership of the Irish Volunteers, not because he didn't believe in their cause. He considered them too bourgeois and unconcerned with Ireland's economic independence. In 1916, thinking they were merely posturing and unwilling to take decisive action against Britain, he attempted to goad them into action by threatening to send the ICA against the British Empire alone, if necessary. This alarmed the members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who had already infiltrated the Volunteers and had plans for an insurrection that very year. In order to talk Connolly out of any such rash action, the IRB leaders, including Tom Clarke and Patrick Pearse, met with Connolly to see if an agreement could be reached. During the meeting, the IRB and the ICA agreed to act together at Easter of that year.

When the Easter Rising occurred on 24 April 1916, Connolly was Commandant of the Dublin Brigade. As the Dublin Brigade had the most substantial role in the rising, he was *de facto* commander-in-chief. Following the surrender, he said to other prisoners: "Don't worry. Those of us that signed the proclamation will be shot. But the rest of you will be set free."

Death

Connolly was seriously wounded during the Easter Week battle. He was never in a jail cell but was detained in an apartment at Dublin Castle. He was sentenced to death by firing squad for his part in the rising. On 12 May 1916 he was taken by military ambulance to Royal Hospital Kilmainham, across the road from Kilmainham Jail, and from there taken to the jail, where he was to be executed. Though a doctor had already said he had no more than a day or two to live,

the execution order was still given. Unable to stand before the firing squad; he was carried to a prison courtyard on a stretcher. His absolution and last rites were administered by a Capuchin, Father Aloysius. Asked to pray for the soldiers about to shoot him, he said: "I will say a prayer for all men who do their duty according to their lights." Instead of being marched to the same spot where the others had been executed, at the far end of the execution yard, he was tied to a chair over an open grave and then shot.

His body and those of the other rebels was put in a mass grave without a coffin. The executions of the rebels deeply angered the majority of the Irish population, most of whom had shown no support during the rebellion. Now their consciousness was raised. It was Connolly's execution, however, that caused the most controversy. Historians have pointed to the manner of execution of Connolly and similar rebels, along with their actions, as being factors that caused public awareness of their desires and goals and gathered support for the movements that they had died fighting for.

The executions were not well received, even throughout Britain, and drew unwanted attention from the United States, which the British Government was seeking to bring into the war in Europe. H. H. Asquith, the Prime Minister, ordered that no more executions were to take place; an exception being that of Roger Casement as he had not yet been tried.

Connolly was survived by his wife and several children. His daughter, Nora, became an influential writer and campaigner within the Irish-republican movement, and his son, Roddy, continued his father's politics. In later years, both became members of the Irish parliament. Three months after James Connolly's execution his wife was received into the Catholic Church.

Legacy

Connolly's legacy is mainly due to his contribution to the republican cause and while his legacy as a socialist has been claimed by a variety of left-wing and left-republican groups, he is primarily associated with the Labor Party which he founded.

Connolly was among the few who opposed, outright, World War I. This put him at odds with most of the socialist leaders of Europe.

He was influenced by and heavily involved with the radical Industrial Workers of the World labor union, and envisaged socialism as an Industrial Union control of production. Likewise, he envisaged independent Ireland as a socialist republic.

In Scotland, Connolly's thinking was hugely influential for socialists such as John Maclean, who would, like him, combine his leftist thinking with nationalist ideas when he formed the Scottish Workers Republican Party.^[33]

There is a statue of James Connolly in Dublin, outside Liberty Hall, the offices of the SIPTU trade union. Another statue of Connolly stands in Union Park, Chicago near the offices of the Chicago branch of the IWW and UE. There is a bust of Connolly in Troy NY, in the park behind the statue of Uncle Sam.

Connolly Station, one of the two main railway stations in Dublin, and Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown, are named in his honor.

In 1968, the Irish musician group, The Wolfe Tones, released a single named "James Connolly", which reached number 15 in the Irish charts. The band Black 47 wrote and performed a song about Connolly that appears on their album *Fire of Freedom*.

James Larkin

James Larkin did not have a role in the Irish Rebellion though he was very supportive of the goals. He was living in America at the time (1914 – 1923). He was, however a great influence on James Connolly. It amazes me that though many of the heroes of Irish history were largely uneducated, they founded newspapers and periodicals and functioned as both publisher and editor. They left behind a vast body of literature, most of them articles in support of the causes they championed, and the great movements they founded and led. Larkin was an influence on Connolly's socialism though he himself later drifted to sympathize with communism. Both were active together in the labor movement. Both founded key movements among the laborers of Ireland. Larkin was really a mentor to Connolly.

Early Years

Larkin was born on 21 January 1876 the second eldest son of Irish immigrants, James Larkin and Mary Ann McNulty, both natives of County Armagh. The impoverished Larkin family lived in the slums of Liverpool during the early years of his life. From the age of seven, he attended school in the mornings and worked in the afternoons to supplement the family income—a common arrangement in working class families at the time. At the age of fourteen, after the death of his father, he was apprenticed to the firm his father had worked for but was dismissed after two years. He was unemployed for a time and then worked as a sailor and docker. By 1903, he was a dock foreman, and on 8 September of that year, he married Elizabeth Brown.

From 1893, Larkin developed an interest in socialism and became a member of the Independent Labour Party. In 1905, he was one of the few foremen to take part in a strike on the Liverpool docks. He was elected to the strike committee, and although he lost his foreman's job as a result, his performance so impressed the National Union of Dock Laborers (NUDL) that he was

appointed a temporary organizer. He later gained a permanent position with the union, which, in 1906, sent him to Scotland, where he successfully organized workers in Preston and Glasgow.

The Labor Movement

Larkin's star as a labor organizer began to rise in 1907 when on behalf of the national union of Dock Laborers (NUDL) he organized the dock workers of Belfast. The employers refused to meet the union's wage demands and he led the dockers strike in June. He succeeded in uniting the Catholic and Protestant workers and even persuaded the Royal Irish Constabulary to strike at one point. Other than that, when the strike ended in November there was very little success.

Larkin's next venture was to organize workers in Dublin, Cork, and Waterford with considerable success. However, he fell into an internal dispute with union leaders and was expelled from the union. He was later arrested and jailed on a trumped-up charge of diverting union funds. The injustice was very transparent and he was pardoned and released after three months.

Later that year he founded his own union, the Irish Transport and General Worker's Union. That organization still exists today. He soon moved to Dublin and established the union headquarters there.

The Great Dublin Lockout, 1913

The following description comes from the unnamed author of an internet article who tells the story briefly and well. The author obviously edited this from a much longer source, also unnamed..

In June 1911, Larkin established a newspaper, *The Irish Worker and People's Advocate*, as a pro-labour alternative to the capitalist-owned press. This organ was characterized by a campaigning approach and the harsh denunciation of unfair employers and political enemies. Its columns also included pieces by intellectuals. The paper was produced until its suppression by the authorities in 1915. Afterwards, the *Worker* metamorphosed into the new *Ireland Echo*.

Larkin achieved some notable successes in industrial disputes in Dublin; these involved frequent recourse to sympathetic strikes and blacking (boycotting) of goods. Two major employers, Guinness and the Dublin United Tramway Company, were the main targets of Larkin's organizing ambitions. Both had craft unions for skilled workers, but Larkin's main aim was to unionize the unskilled workers as well. He coined the slogan "A fair day's work for a fair day's pay".^[4]

Guinness staff were relatively well-paid, and enjoyed generous benefits from a paternalistic management that refused to join Murphy's lock-out. This was far from the case of the Tramways. The chairman of the Dublin United Tramway Company, industrialist and newspaper proprietor William Martin Murphy, was determined not to allow the ITGWU to unionize his workforce. On August 15th, he dismissed forty workers he suspected of ITGWU membership,

followed by another 300 over the next week. On August 26th, the tramway workers officially went on strike. Led by Murphy, over four hundred of the city's employers retaliated by requiring their workers to sign a pledge not to be a member of the ITGWU and not to engage in sympathetic strikes.

The resulting industrial dispute was the most severe in Ireland's history. Employers in Dublin engaged in a sympathetic lock-out of their workers when the latter refused to sign the pledge, employing blackleg labour from Great Britain and elsewhere in Ireland. Guinness, the largest employer in Dublin, refused the employers' call to lock out its workers but it sacked 15 workers who struck in sympathy. Dublin's workers, amongst the poorest in the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, were forced to survive on generous but inadequate donations from the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) and other sources in Ireland, distributed by the ITGWU.

For seven months the lock-out affected tens of thousands of Dublin's workers and employers, with Larkin portrayed as the villain by Murphy's three main newspapers, the *Irish Independent*, the *Sunday Independent* and the *Evening Herald*. Other leaders in the ITGWU at the time were James Connolly and William X. O'Brien, while influential figures such as Patrick Pearse, Constance Markievicz and William Butler Yeats supported the workers in the generally anti-Larkin Irish press. *The Irish Worker* published the names and addresses of strike breakers, *Irish Independent* published the names and addresses of men and women who attempted to send their children out of the city to be cared for in foster homes in Belfast and Britain. But Larkin never resorted to violence. He knew it would play into the hands of the anti-union companies and knew he could not build a mass trade union by wrecking the firms where his members worked.^[4]

The lock-out eventually concluded in early 1914 when the calls for a sympathetic strike in Britain from Larkin and Connolly were rejected by the British TUC. Larkin's attacks on the TUC leadership for this stance also led to the cessation of financial aid to the ITGWU, which in any case was not affiliated to the TUC. Although the actions of the ITGWU and the smaller UBLU were unsuccessful in achieving substantially better pay and conditions for the workers, they marked a watershed in Irish labour history. The principle of union action and workers' solidarity had been firmly established. Perhaps even more importantly, Larkin's rhetoric, condemning poverty and injustice and calling for the oppressed to stand up for themselves, made a lasting impression.

Toward the end of his career, Larkin gravitated to the attractions of Communism. He visited Russia and trained there. He was obviously impressed with the promise of Communism as it evolved during those early years in Russia.

He became involved in Irish politics when he returned to Ireland with mixed success.

James Larkin died in his sleep on January 30, 1947. His funeral mass was celebrated by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, and thousands lined the streets of the city as the hearse passed through the city on the way to Glasnevin Cemetery.

Legacy

Larkin's memory is commemorated in several poems by Brendan Behan,¹ Patrick Kavanagh, Frank O'Connor and Lola Ridge. His character has been central in plays by Daniel Corkery, and Sean O'Casey; and he is a heroic figure in the background of James Plunkett's novel *Strumpet City*.

He is also remembered with a statue on O'Connell Street, Dublin's main street.

Most of all, he is remembered as the champion of the working man and the formation of unions to protect them. His legacy continues to live on both sides of the Atlantic.

From the Leprechaun's Lair

By Tom Slattery

On July 18th, Jim Small and yours truly departed for Ireland. To set the stage, it was the first trip to God's country for both of us, and our total preparation consisted of getting passports, plane tickets, and a guaranteed rental car. We figured that the pilot would get us there, we could handle the rest.

Thanks do go to Micael Lawlor and Ed McDade for taking a lot of time in planning potential itineraries for us. However, we decided to blaze our own path, using Ed and Micaels' work as guidelines. 14 days and 1600 miles later we had: seen parts of 18 counties, 11 B&Bs, 50,000,000 cows, sheep, goats and dogs (most of them in our path), 5,000 pubs (400 of which we decided not to enter); each eaten 5 boxes of Corn Flakes and 36 loaves of bread of various colors and consistencies; drank our fair share (?) of Guinness pints (you got funny looks if you tried to order half-pints), 20 gallons of tea (which led me to finally appreciate an old Indian joke about drowning!), and 1 shot of 12-year old Tullamore Dew, the scars of which still linger.

Along the way, we learned: to stay on the left side of the road for the most part; not to turn on the windshield wipers when shifting into reverse; how to read street signs on the third time past (and if going over 30 to read the bottom of the signs); not to depend on Slattery's knowledge of the Irish language; that Irish mist is an understatement; the difference between a mile and an Irish mile; that tour buses, cows and bikes have the right of way; not to both order potatoes ala carte; and when the owner runs through the pub at 11:45pm yelling "Time" he really knows what time it is. There were, of course, other things we learned, but these seemed to be the important ones for survival.

What we had was a fantastic time! Ireland was more than we had hoped; its beauty, its people, its castles and homes and farms were overwhelming. We wanted a month. But in the short time we had, there are many memories:

Of realizing that: "Forty shades of green" was really true! Of a cow silhouetted on a hilltop and a farmer approaching with a pail and a milking stool! Of a 92 old grandfather sitting next to a peat fire listening to his 11 year old grandson play the tin whistle and the pile of ham and cheese sandwiches served on freshly baked bread. Of the Galway Races, and the young women in their finest outfits poring over their tote sheets – of the street musicians and sidewalk artists, and even my horse coming in first!

Of taking the scenic route from Killybegs to Kilcar, of climbing Slieve League, of the approach to Ardara, the Sligo plateau, the O'Connor Pass in Dingle, the Gap of Dunlow, the Cliffs of Moher in a sixty mile wind chasing a very wet Irish mist, the Lakes of Killarney at twilight, rows of haystacks with their white yarmulkes, and the pyramids of drying peat.

Of the people on bikes, both the locals and the tourists on their 20 oz. 10 speeders, of the father and three sons pitching hay, of the solitary dog driving 10 cows through Corofin, of the Burren, of the children begging in Dublin, and of the awe when you entered the Long Room for the first time.

Of the hikers carrying their 70 pound packs, sitting in the pubs with their cup of tea, but mostly to recapture their energy before the next trek. Of the friendliness shown, of the unlimited amount of musical talent, and of being told it was your turn to entertain!

Of finding the house where Jim's father lived; then meeting his cousins and then finding where his mother grew up, and finally where they first lived when they got married.

Of staying in a grand estate built in 1826 for an archbishop, of breakfast in a B&B served with first edition copies of the authoress who once lived there, of the friendliness and help given by every B&B owner we met. Of the blockhouse and automatic weapon we encountered both entering and leaving Fermanaugh.

Of the cigarettes offered around, and of the pints and cups of tea offered. And the apologies for the weather, and "we'll see you again, God willing" Of the neat villages, the women whitewashing their homes, and the children smiling, posing, laughing, walking and maybe even trying to get a ten pence. The pensioner cashing his check and putting a five pound note in the Live Aid box.

The great wonderment was always what was around the bend up ahead, and who would we meet next. The trip was an unforgettable experience; we saw so much, and yet missed so much. But you know we'll see more on the next trip, God willing!!