

Walter Carpenter: A Revolutionary Life
Ellen Galvin



Walter Carpenter: A Revolutionary Life

Dr. Ellen Galvin RSC

Also by Dr. Galvin

“A Mystic in Search of a Unifying Truth” (2013)

Foreword

This booklet has been published by the East Wall History Group to mark the 90th anniversary of the death of Walter Carpenter, a one time resident of our community. In the early 20th century, Walter Carpenter was amongst the most prominent socialist & trade union activists in the city during an intensely revolutionary period in Ireland's history. A companion of many of the most famous names of the era, his own story has been largely forgotten. We have, in recent years, set ourselves the task of restoring Walter Carpenter to the prominence he deserves.

We are proud to publish this work, written by Ellen Galvin, Walter's granddaughter. She offers a unique and personal view into the life and activities of her grandfather which is particularly valuable in highlighting previously unknown details of his early life and his final illness.

With so many new historical sources and fresh archival material becoming available to researchers, there is no doubt that material relating to Walter's political activity will continue to materialise. An examination of his contribution to working class politics and the influence of his ideas is worthy of further examination. For anyone willing to take on that task, Ellen Galvin's work is the best starting point and all the sign posts one needs can be found here.

It has been a pleasure to work with Ellen on this project, as it has been to meet and communicate with other family members in recent years.

Publication of this booklet coincided with the unveiling of a plaque in memory of Walter and the Carpenter family at number 8 Caledon Road, on the 8th May 2016.

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Acknowledgements:

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the many people who inspired me to take this journey through the story of my Grandfather's life and work. Firstly, my thanks to Mr. Joe Mooney (East Wall History Group) whose synopsis of Walter Carpenter's story posted on the internet, was my spur to take on this task. Reclaiming from the past the wonderful life of this man has been inspirational for me. Joe's story encouraged me to do more research and to put together the facts of the life of this most active man. Also, my gratitude to Mr. Pdraig Yeates for his encouragement and advice. Thanks to Sr. Brid Kerins for doing the proof reading and the public libraries for their courtesy and helpfulness, including The National Library of Ireland, Pearse Street Research Library and Ringsend Library. Likewise my thanks goes to the staff of SIPTU for their very generous help and The Irish Labour History Society, particularly Ed Penrose for his help and encouragement. Last, but by no way least, my thanks to Yvonne Altman O'Connor from the Jewish Museum.

A very special acknowledgement must also go to Joe Peake for his wonderful work in the restoration of Walters headstone at St Pauls, Glasnevin Cemetary.

Images courtesy of the family of Walter Carpenter.

Walter Carpenter portrait by Tom Kain (Secretary and Chief Mobilizing Officer of the Irish Citizen Army in 1916 , and renowned artist)

Appendix on Walter & Peter in the Irish Citizen Army reproduced with kind permission from "The GPO Garrison" by Jimmy Wren (2015)

Introduction

“Blessed are the dead that they may rest from their labours for their good deeds follow them.” (Bible R.S.V. Revelation Ch. 14: V 13)

These pages have been written with a view to reviving the life and work of Walter Carpenter. Walter’s story has lain dormant for nearly a hundred years, now is the time to recall it. From our research we can conclude that Walter was a man well ahead of his time. In the early twentieth century he was an extremely prominent figure, as a leading Socialist campaigner in Dublin and further afield.

Each chapter reveals his honest, generous and passionate character. Our research has shown what a dynamic forceful spirit was driving him. It was the poverty and squalor of the poor who were exploited by the wealthy that compelled him to become a founder member of the Socialist Party of Ireland. He was tireless and selfless in his efforts to improve the lives of all people in need.

Chapter One tells of how romance brought Walter to Dublin. Ellen Walsh was the attraction whom he had met in London and subsequently married in 1894 in Dublin. They eventually had nine children, two of whom died as teenagers. His wife Ellen became an invalid twelve years before his death in 1926. The family moved from 14 Sussex Street, Kingstown to number 8 Caledon Road, East Wall, Dublin. Later again, they had an address at number 110 Foley Street, Dublin, where Walter died aged fifty five years of age.

Chapter Two looks at the jailing of Walter during a royal visit, probably the incident his name is most associated with. The Socialist Party of Ireland (of which he was secretary) opposed the visit of King George to Ireland in 1911. The Party published a leaflet (written by James Connolly) denouncing the King and his inheritance. While speaking on the subject of “Socialism, Royalty and Nationality” Walter produced a copy of the leaflet, and was immediately arrested. He served a month in prison for the courage of his convictions.

Chapter Three looks at his activity as a trade unionist and revolutionary socialist. The Socialist Party of Ireland was the platform taken by Walter to expose the corruption and exploitation of the poor; especially in Dublin City. 1913 was the year of the Lockout by the employers. During this time two tenement houses in Church Street Dublin collapsed, resulting in the deaths of seven people.

Chapter Four. Walter Carpenter was a Municipal election candidate in 1914. Countess Markievicz and Francis Skeffington helped launch his bid. Though unsuccessful, the campaign gave him an opportunity to use his voice for the voiceless, and expose some of the corruption in their midst.

Chapter Five. The dignity of women, the working conditions of domestic servants and the needs of children were all amongst Walters's concerns and issues he campaigned on. He also vigorously opposed the compulsory vaccination of children.

Chapter Six. We look at Walters's membership of the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance. His changing attitude to the abuse of alcohol and its cause-and-effect gives us a glimpse of the compassionate heart of Walter Carpenter.

Chapter Seven: Walter was appointed General Secretary of the Tailors, Machinists and Pressers' Trade Union in 1913. He would be the influential leader of the "Jewish Union" until his own retirement in 1925.

Chapter Eight: In 1925, Walter retires due to ill health and would pass away on the 25th February, 1926. Details of his final illness are recorded here.

Appendix One: 'Under the Starry Plough' – a brief look at the role played by two of Walter's sons (Walter Junior and Peter) in the Irish Citizen Army and the 1916 Rising and subsequent period.

Appendix Two: *Visit of King George V* (Leaflet produced by Socialist Party of Ireland 1911)

Appendix Three: *Walter Carpenter Free* (*The Irish Worker*, 2 September 1911)



Walter with daughter Amelia (aged 6)

Chapter One: The Family Man

“...a most humourless and self-sacrificing man”

Walter Carpenter was the grandfather that I never knew. His death preceded my birth by two years. I never knew him that is until I came across an online article on his life and work, by Mr. Joe Mooney of the East Wall History Group. This story spurred me on to undertake my own research and to reclaim from the past the wonderful and inspiring life of this man. My research revealed a man of great integrity, courage, and compassion, acting on behalf of marginalised people with whom he came in contact with on a daily basis. He was tireless in his efforts to improve the living standards of the people. Today I am very proud to know Walter Carpenter as my Grandfather.

Walter was born to Walter Carpenter and Emelia May, on April 3rd 1871. They resided at Courthill Road, Lewisham, Kent England. Kent was known as *The Garden of England*, a title merited for its profuse production of fruit and hops. (Walter was not a Scotchman as inaccurately asserted by Mr. Donal Nevin, who was more accurate in his description of this leading socialist protagonist as “*a most humourless and self-sacrificing man*”). Nothing is known of Walter’s childhood or early development. The first piece of information comes from his daughter Amelia, who said that he had trained for church ministry. That may have continued until Ellen Walsh crossed his path. According to family lore the Walsh family had residential property in London and it was there Walter and Ellen met.

Continuing with Amelia’s account, he followed Ellen to Dublin where they eventually married on June 10th 1894, at the Roman Catholic Church, on Harrington Street, Dublin. Walter had come from a family whose traditional trade was chimney sweeps and he married into a family of chimney sweeps. An agreement existed between Walter and his father-in-law regarding the division of contracts and they operated in different sections of the city. Walter had a number of very substantial contracts and could have been a very successful business operator until knowledge of his political beliefs began to close many doors to him. Having sacrificed his worldly prospects for his beloved Red Flag, the Carpenter family moved home in subsequent years to increasingly impoverished districts of the city.

The 1901 census shows Walter living at number 14 Sussex Street, Kingstown, (now Dun Laoghaire) with his wife Ellen and three children, Walter, Peter and Amelia.

In time this would grow to nine, with the addition of Harry, Albert, Joshua, Frankie, Mike and Ellen (‘Nellie’). Joshua died aged sixteen years of age and Nellie followed

him at fourteen years of age. The family moved from Kingstown to number 8 Caledon Road, East Wall, Dublin. Later again, they had an address at number 110 Foley Street, (where Walter died, aged fifty five). It was said that in the early years, Walter would routinely walk from Dun Laoghaire to Dublin city in the evenings to be present at meetings.

According to the 1911 census, Walter could speak English and Irish while the rest of the family could only speak English. The religious profession of all the family members was recorded as *'Irish Church'* with the exception of Walter who stated that he believed *"in the doctrine of Christ, not attached to any Church."*² While in 1901 his occupation had been listed as *"master chimney cleaner"* by 1911 he was listed as *"Secretary - Socialist Party of Ireland."*

2 National Archives Ireland, 1911 census

Socialist Party in Ireland

(DUBLIN BRANCH).

THE ROYAL VISIT.

"The great appear great to us, only because we are on our knees :

LET US RISE."

FELLOW-WORKERS—As you are aware from reading the daily and weekly newspapers, we are about to be blessed with a visit from King George V. Knowing from previous experience of Royal Visits, as well as from the Coronation orgies of the past few weeks, that the occasion will be utilised to make propaganda on behalf of royalty and aristocracy against the oncoming forces of democracy and National freedom, we desire to place before you some few reasons why you should unanimously refuse to countenance this visit, or to recognise it by your presence at its attendant processions or demonstrations. We appeal to you as workers, speaking to workers, whether your work be that of the brain or of the hand—manual or mental toil—it is of you and your children we are thinking ; it is your cause we wish to safeguard and foster.

The future of the working class requires that all political and social positions should be open to all men and women ; that all privileges of birth or wealth be abolished, and that every man or woman born into this land should have an equal opportunity to attain to the proudest position in the land. The Socialist demands that the only birthright necessary to qualify for public office should be the birthright of our common humanity. Believing as we do that there is nothing on earth more sacred than humanity, we deny all allegiance to this institution of royalty, and hence can only regard the visit of the King as adding fresh fuel to the fire of hatred with which we regard the plundering institutions of which he is the representative. Let the capitalist and landlord class flock to exalt him ; he is theirs ; in him they see embodied the idea of caste and class ; they glorify him and exalt his importance that they might familiarise the public mind with the conception of political inequality, knowing well that a people mentally poisoned by the adulation of royalty can never attain to that spirit of self-reliant democracy necessary for the attainment of social freedom. The mind accustomed to political kings can easily be reconciled to social kings—capitalist kings of the workshop, the mill, the railway, the ships and the docks. Thus coronation and king's visits are by our astute, never-sleeping masters made into huge Imperialist propagandist campaigns in favour of political and social schemes against democracy. But if our masters and rulers are sleepless in their schemes against us, so we, rebels against their rule, must never sleep in our appeal to our fellows to maintain as publicly our belief in the dignity of our class—in the ultimate sovereignty of those who labour.

Chapter Two: A Socialist and a Revolutionary

“...the Spirit of revolution in my heart”

Walter was an extremely prominent figure in Dublin during the first quarter of the twentieth century and would be closely associated with many of the leading trade unionists and socialists of the day. He was one of the founder members of the Socialist Party of Ireland in 1909 and he went on to become the secretary of the Dublin branch in February 1911. In the span of a few short years, he would not only represent the Socialist Party but would also be an organiser with the Irish Transport & General Workers Union (ITGWU), be appointed General Secretary of Dublin’s “Jewish Union” and become a municipal election candidate. He spoke under the banner of the Socialist Party of Ireland to expose political and municipal corruption and to oppose the exploitation of the poor, especially in Dublin. His activity did not go unnoticed, as his arrest, trial and subsequent jailing demonstrates.



Dublin in July 1911 was preparing for a visit from King George V, amongst those opposing the visit was the Socialist Party of Ireland. James Connolly was a leading member and its secretary was Walter Carpenter from Caledon Road. The party had offices in Great Brunswick Street but was also very much associated with events held at Liberty Hall, Beresford Place.

The Socialist Party of Ireland had produced a very strong leaflet denouncing not only the King (“murder, treachery, adultery, incest, theft, perjury – every crime known to man had been committed by some or other of the race of monarchs from whom King George is proud to trace his descent”) but also condemning the whole concept of royalty from a working class perspective. It proclaimed that the future of the working classes requires ... that all privilege of birth or wealth is abolished, and that “every man or woman born into this land should have equal opportunity to attain to the proudest position in the land”.

On the fourth of July, a protest had taken place against a planned loyal address to Dublin Corporation at which a Union Jack was burned. The protest had resulted in the arrest and jailing of SPI members Helena Moloney and Mr. James McArdle. Helena had come equipped with a handbag full of stones which she distributed and threw one herself through a Nassau Street window displaying tributes to the King. Five days later Walter chaired a meeting at Beresford Place to protest at their jailing at which up to 1,000 people attended. He stated that “working men of the city regarded the Lord Mayor as a traitor to their cause and that of Irish Nationality.”

Walter was speaking on socialism, royalty, and nationality. During the course of the speech he produced a copy of the leaflet quoted above. He was arrested immediately

and taken to Store Street Police Station nearby where he was charged with using language calculated to lead to a breach of the peace and having endeavoured to degrade the King in the esteem of his subjects. Bail was provided by Jim Larkin. Walter appeared before the Northern Police Court the following day to answer the charges. According to police evidence, Walter had referred to decorations put up in the streets in honour of the King's visit and asked, "Do you know who you are honouring? Royalty who belong to the House of Brunswick. I do not know if you know the history of that House, but I can tell you; you are honouring the offspring of one of the vilest scoundrels that ever entered our country."³



Socialist Orator and the King.

Dublin Socialist sent to Prison ⁴

There was a second charge that he had endeavoured to degrade his Majesty King George V in the esteem of his subjects and the accused's application for a remand to enable him to seek advice was not entertained. The police authorities ultimately decided not to proceed with it. Inspector Brennan deposed to hearing Carpenter address a meeting at Beresford Place, his subject being "Socialism, Nationalism and Royalty." Some 300 people were present. In his remarks, Carpenter spoke of the streets of Dublin torn up, and miles and miles of poles and decorations set up to honour "Royalty who belong to the house of Brunswick."

Sargent Waters then arrested him and there was considerable cheering and jeering when he was taken through the crowd. Witness informed Carpenter on cross-examination, that he had never previously seen him to his knowledge; Sargent Waters corroborated.

Matthew Usher of Bow Lane and Alexander Kennedy, Gordon Street, Ringsend were examined for the defence. The former said Carpenter had, before his arrest, referred to a leaflet issued by the Socialist Party of Ireland. Witness had been attending Carpenter's meetings for years and never saw or heard any disorder at them, nor was there any risk of the kind at Beresford Place on this occasion. He heard no personal reference to the King, the allusion being, to a system: not to a person. "Kennedy's testimony was to the same effect."

"Walter had no legal representation; he denied inciting the crowd to riot but stated clearly that he had always advocated political action for the working classes. His comments were, he added "in reference to a system, not to a person."

3 <http://1913committee.ie/blog?p=542>

4 Sunday Independent July 23rd 1911

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Unsurprisingly, the magistrate found Walter guilty and imposed a fine of £40 shillings. On refusing to pay, he was sentenced to a month in Mountjoy Jail. While Carpenter was in jail, Moloney and McArdle were freed and did indeed receive a “most enthusiastic reception on their release.”

Perhaps too enthusiastic, as during the celebration, Moloney was arrested again as was Countess Markievicz. With Carpenter in jail, Markievicz chaired the welcome home meeting at Beresford Place; addressing the crowd of over 1,000 from the back of a truck, with a very large police presence in place. She acknowledged that Carpenter had been organising the home-coming before his jailing.

Francis Skeffington proposed the following: “That this meeting gives a warm welcome to McArdle and Miss Moloney on their release from jail and express its respect for all those who have suffered for their convictions in Ireland.”

Helena Moloney thanked the crowd for the magnificent reception she had received. She then said that there was one who was not present and she would like to say a word about him. This was Walter Carpenter who she said had been sent to jail and she then proceeded to repeat the comment she had made in relation to the King. At this stage, an inspector and accompanying constable moved to arrest Moloney. In climbing on to the lorry he was, as a newspaper reporter politely put it, “repelled by the Countess Markievicz by means of her foot.” More police moved in and “amidst considerable excitement and booing the women were taken to Store Street Police Station.” Moloney was charged with offences identical to Walter’s, while Markievicz was charged with assault (not only for repelling by means of her foot but also throwing gravel into the face of another constable).⁵

Walter was released on August 27th and again, a meeting was held at Beresford Place; on this occasion to welcome his freedom. He was joined by, amongst others, Helena Moloney, Jim Larkin and James Connolly, who presided. An unrepentant Walter addressed the assembled crowd and was enthusiastically cheered and applauded. Having expressed his thanks for the warm reception he had received, he then stated: *“I went to Mountjoy Prison with the spirit of revolution in my heart, and I have come out with that spirit intensified to the thousandth degree.”*

The Irish Worker, 2nd September 1911, reported a similar account of Carpenter’s discharge from prison. It says:

5 <http://eastwallforall.ie/?p=324>

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“A public meeting under the auspices of the Socialist Party of Ireland was held last Sunday at Beresford place to congratulate Mr. Walter Carpenter on his discharge from Mountjoy Prison, where he had been confined for a term on a charge of having used language alleged to be derogatory of King George of England. There was a considerable attendance, which included numbers of the national Boys Scouts in their uniform. Unlike previous meetings in Beresford Place, which were attended by a considerable force of the DMP, there was not a singled Cossack at Sunday’s gathering”.

“A resolution was adopted welcoming Mr. Carpenter back from prison, and congratulating him on “timely and effective protest against the recent outburst of flunkeyism in Dublin.”⁶

Mr. Keir Hardie, M.P. writing to Mr. William O’Brien, said:

“For the past thirty years every conceivable effort has been put forth by the ruling class to make fetish of Royalty into a kind of deity in the minds of the people. On this (the British) side of the channel they have, to a very large extent been successful, especially amongst the smug mediocrities who constitute the bulk of middle class. Now the thing is having its logical result in the shooting down of strikers and in turning England into a huge armed camp in order to suppress and intimidate working men who are struggling to improve their conditions. The object lesson will not be lost upon them.

In conclusion, Mr. Keir Hardie extended hearty congratulations to “our comrade Carpenter, on his martyrdom for the cause.”

In September of 1911, shortly after his month in jail, Walter was the main speaker at the launch of the Sligo branch of the ITGWU, leading the Bishop of the Diocese to describe him as “*an imported mischief maker*”.

It was also in that year the union fought (and won) a hard won battle when Wexford workers were locked out. This anecdote illustrates not only the commitment but also the self-sacrifice of organisers such as Walter and Jim Larkin:

“During the Wexford strike [in 1911] every penny that could be raised in Dublin was spent to support the strikers, and when Jim came to look for his wages all that could be found was £1. Walter Carpenter and he split it between them, but even Jim shrunk from offering Mrs. Larkin 10.s for her weekly housekeeping, and

6 The Irish Worker 2nd September 1911

7 The Times August 28th 1911

begged Carpenter to call round and leave the money with her”.⁸

“ Aside from his socialist and trade union activity, Walter continued to engage in other matters that were considered socially progressive, but were not necessarily political or labour related. Some of his comments during the housing inquiry would suggest some influence of the Garden City Movement. In 1915 Walter chaired a meeting on “garden allotments” featuring a lecture by a professor from the Royal College of Science who told the meeting that “A man was never so happy as when he was pottering among his plants ... the only reason why working men in towns could not indulge in this pleasure was because of space there, there was no land.” While a motion was passed requesting “the Municipal Council to facilitate, to the extent of their power, the use of housing sites for allotment gardens for workers until money was available for building purpose” Walter emphasised that the meeting was unconnected with any political movement. He maintained his involvement with The Socialist Party of Ireland. The relevance of the S.P.I. ebbed and flowed over the years, but it had a constant presence and committed core of activities. In terms of its significance as expression of organised and militant working class it was continuously overshadowed by other bodies, namely the ITGWU, The Irish Citizen Army and the Labour Party.

The Socialist Party of Ireland went through a re-organisation in September 1921, with Roddy Connolly (the twenty year old son of James Connolly) taking a leading role and Walter Carpenter taking on dual responsibility as General Secretary and editor of its paper, ‘The Workers Republic.’ A month later the party officially became the Communist Party of Ireland with Roddy as president and Carpenter maintaining his position. Walter was to resign from the position of Secretary with the Communist Party of Ireland in February 1922, explaining “*the C.P. is my first love, but my union claims all my time and I cannot, under present circumstances, neglect my union.*” During his time with the Communist Party, he was very generous with his time and dedicated to its cause.

8 “The Story of Irish Labour” by J.M. McDonnell (1919)

9 <http://eastwallforall.ie/?p=324>



Coadys Cottages, East Wall, early 20th Century

Chapter Three: The 1913 Lockout and Housing

“Be of good cheer and fight on...”

“The Dublin Lockout of 1913 gave us a country in turmoil, divided by the issue of Home Rule and self-government for Ireland. Nationalists saw their goal within reach, whereas Ulster Unionists, led by Dublin M.P. Edward Carson, prepared for resistance by force. It was against this backdrop that a violent industrial conflict was to take place between William Martin Murphy on the side of the employers and Jim Larkin and James Connolly on the side of the workers. On the 26th August 1913, drivers and conductors left their trams on O’Connell Street to begin the strike that would become the “Dublin Lockout.”

1913 was to be an unforgettable year for the people of Dublin City. It was a watershed event for the Irish Labour movement when employers and workers went face to face in battle with each other. It was open warfare, with the Employers Federation attempting to destroy the effective workers movement embodied by the ITGWU and the union fighting for its very survival. Continuing into the early part of the following year, the Lockout would involve over 20,000 workers and their families. The industrial struggle had barely begun when, on September 2nd, the collapse of two overcrowded tenement houses in Church Street resulted in the deaths of seven people and injury to many more.

These events, the Lockout and the broader issues of working class life in the city were to feature heavily in Walters’s activity.

“During the Lockout, in a reversal of their roles from 1911, Walter was to speak at a rally welcoming the release of James Connolly from jail. Connolly had been arrested at Liberty Hall at the end of August, along with another Union leader, William Partridge. Charged with “incitement to cause a breach of the peace” Partridge agreed to be bound over and was released on bail while Connolly refused and was sentenced to three months imprisonment. Connolly engaged in a hunger strike (and later escalated this to a thirst strike) which led to concerns about his health. As a result, he was eventually set free early. Though Connolly himself was too weak to attend, a meeting to celebrate his release was held by the Socialist Party of Ireland at Beresford Place.



Addressing a crowd of up to four thousand, Walter used his speech to condemn the City's Chief Magistrate E.G. Swifté who had become notorious for his harshness in dealing with strike related cases. He had not only ordered the jailing of Connolly, but had also issued the proclamation banning Larkin's meeting on Sackville Street which led to the now infamous baton charges. Walter revealed that Swifté was a shareholder in William Martin Murphy's Dublin United Tram Company and condemned him strongly.

On the Sunday afternoon of Connolly's release from prison, four thousand people attended a rally by the Socialist Party of Ireland at Beresford Place to celebrate Connolly's release but he himself was too weak to attend. The most notable feature of the gathering was the revelation by an ITGWU organiser, Walter Carpenter, that the city's chief police magistrate, E.G. Swifté was a share-holder in the DUTC. Carpenter, English by origin and a sweep by trade, had himself served three months in prison for defaming the King in 1911. He now described Swifté as a man who 'helped create this strike and in his own interests...signed the proclamation, and in his own interests too...sent James Connolly to gaol for three months (cries of "shame").' Interestingly, newspaper reports ignored these accusations but they were recorded as quoted above by a Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) note taker at the meeting.¹¹



Mr. Sheefy-Sheffington had just visited James Connolly in prison and reported that his message had been:

"Be of good cheer and fight on,

Be of good cheer and fight on,

The Authorities did not beat me,

and if the workers stand together they won't beat them" ...

Mr. T. Lyng proposed a resolution congratulating Mr. Connelly on his release, and also the workers on their solidarity in the present struggle. Mr. Walter Carpenter seconded, and said that a worker was no use in a revolution like theirs until he had been in jail. A man went into prison now and came out a fully-fledged rebel. Mr. Connelly had set an example, and if workers were sent to jail because of the strike they should make government in this country impossible. Mr. P.T. Daly supported the resolution, which was adopted and asserted that on Sunday week the police were not sober. If they were not drunk with the lust of blood they were drunk with something else.

11 <http://eastwallforall.ie/?p=324>

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The Transport Workers held another meeting in Custom House Square, and Mr. P.T. Daly assured the men on strike that they would be provided with their daily bread, if necessary, from the other side of the channel, where a minimum sum of £25,000 was guaranteed for their support. He called upon the men to stand together, and to turn up in the morning at the “Hall” prepared to take up the work of peaceful picketing in earnest, keeping carefully within the law. If this thing, he said was not settled within a couple of days the employers would live to repent it. Mr. D.R. Campbell, referring to the “sympathy strike”. Saying the workers were only following the example of the employers who had been acting together for the last two centuries. The men on strike were assured of bread and financial assistance from the other side of the channel as Daly had stated; but if the negotiations broke down and everything came to the worst, his advice to the men was this – that – “if and when it became necessary the man who allowed his wife and his bairns to starve while there was bread within reach would not be worthy of the name of man. The meeting broke up quietly, and there was no disturbance during the night. Some excitement was caused during the day owing to a woman having got into the water near Butt Bridge. She was rescued by some men in a small boat and conveyed to Jervis Street hospital”.

The collapse of the houses in Church Street gave rise to a housing enquiry. Walter was not found wanting in his concern for the working class people who lived in these hovels and “cave dwellings” the notorious slums of Dublin. This led to his participation in “the inquiry into the housing conditions of the working classes in the City of Dublin” held at the City Hall.

“

Representing the Independent Labour Party, Carpenter claimed that they had “hundreds of members in Dublin, comprising of all classes – University men, professors, coal porters, dock labours and a captain. There were housed in different areas which were absolutely neglected by the Corporation, and should have been closed long ago”. He also claimed that “This enquiry would never have been held only that the houses fell in Church Street and killed some persons.”

He also gave a number of examples of the appalling housing conditions he knew of – detailing how in South Cumberland Street he had “found a family living in a dark cellar. He had described it as one of the cave dwellings of Dublin. Such dwellings were common all over the city. A yard in Foley Street was in a filthy condition. The people had to get themselves saturated in alcohol before they could live in such conditions.”¹³

12 Irish Independent, 14 / 09 / 1913

13 <http://eastwallforall.ie/?p=324>

A startling admission from a man who was a staunch advocate of temperance. The deaths described in the following section are believed to have taken place on Caledon Road, where the Carpenter family had been living for a number of years.



“Two houses in the North Dock Ward were without proper drainage, and the corporation officials neglected their duty in regard to them. The houses were drained into a ditch at the back of other houses, and it was not until four children died that the public health committee acted in the matter.”

Walter was not afraid to name members of the Corporation and other politicians as owners of slum property, and he accused the authorities of serving their interest, while some conscientious officials “were afraid of their bosses” and “would not interfere with their slum property”. He didn’t just criticise, but made recommendations. This included holding night sittings of corporation meetings, so workers could attend, which he believed would lead to “a better class of councillor”. Having branded recently built houses as not fit for a working class family to live in (“the houses did not provide for home comforts and every one of them should be provided with a bath”) he made detailed recommendations – “immediate provision should be made for at least 10,000 families” but acknowledged that this “meant a problem that could only be solved with the assistance of the state in the matter of finance” which must “work for the improvement of the life of the people as a whole.”

The next year, Walter was again to highlight the high levels of corruption. He claimed that over £3,000 a year was received by members of the corporation in rebates on rates. Rebates of between 25 to 33 per cent of rates were available on property if it was in good condition. Having become aware of this, he obtained the applications for rebates by members of the corporation for the past decade, and compared them to the sanitary officers’ reports. He discovered that several members had received rebates on properties judged unfit”.¹⁴

It was this investigation by Walter that justified his decision to contest the 1914 Municipal elections under the slogan “The man who exposed the slum landlords.”

In 1914, Walter would also undertake a lecture tour of the United Kingdom, billed as the secretary of the Independent Labour Party of Ireland. The lectures were promoted with the message “If you want to know the truth about Dublin you must hear him” and an endorsement by James Connolly: “Carpenter is an excellent propagandist, with a first class knowledge of the men and movements of the Irish Capital.”

14 <http://eastwallforall.ie/?p=324>.

FITZWILLIAM WARD.
ELECTION OF COUNCILLOR,
January 15th, 1914.

A MASS MEETING

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

The Independent Labour Party of Ireland,
WILL BE HELD IN

National Boy Scouts' Hall, 34 Camden Street,
TO-NIGHT, 2ND JAN., 1914,
AT 8 O'CLOCK,



In Support of the
Candidature of ::

WALTER CARPENTER

(Secretary of Independent Labour Party of Ireland; Member of National Union of Life Assurance Agents);

LABOUR CANDIDATE for the Councillorship of Fitzwilliam Ward.

Several Prominent Labour Speakers, including Countess Markievicz, James Connolly, Sheehy Skeffington, Tom Lyng, Tom Kennedy, Pat Monks, Harry Miller, W. H. Farrell, and the Candidate will address the meeting.



VOTE FOR
CARPENTER,

THE MAN WHO EXPOSED
:: THE SLUM OWNERS ::

And brought to light the Rebate
of Rates' Scandal at the recent
:: :: Housing Inquiry. :: ::

Chapter Four: An Election Candidate

“The man who exposed the slum landlords...”

“ The Dublin Labour Party, which is composed of representatives from all trades, is meeting constantly, and a further list of candidates will shortly be ready. In addition to these candidates; who will run on a Labour programme without any “isms”. The socialist party (which bears the somewhat confusing name of Independent Labour Party of Ireland) is running one candidate on the full Socialist ticket, without any support in funds, or otherwise, from the Dublin Labour Party. The Socialist candidate is Walter Carpenter.¹⁵

“ In January 1914, as the Lockout was continuing, municipal elections were scheduled to take place in Dublin. Walter stood in the Fitzwilliam Ward as an Independent Labour candidate. His campaign was launched at a meeting in the National Boy Scouts Hall on Camden Street, presided over by Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. The large attendance was told that “they all know the magnificent work Mr. Carpenter had done in exposing the slum-owners and the whitewashers. Corruption was rampant in the corporation, and the only public spirited people left were the working men of Dublin”. Walter set out his agenda at length, as reported in the Irish Times: “so far as he was concerned, this was going to be a clean fight, without abusive personalities; it must be fought on records of work accomplished or work undone. He was not waiting for his enemies to say that he was a socialist; he placed it at the forefront of his programme.” It also recorded his unashamed commitment to the cause of women’s rights “Another issue on which he was a whole-hogger was the woman question. He believed in the absolute equality of the sexes, and the women rebels were teaching the men to fight. Women working for the corporation or anyone else should be paid the same rate as men for the same work.”¹⁶

“ He had worked for many years in the Temperance movement, but came to the conclusion that it was impossible for men and women to lead sober lives in the existing housing conditions in Dublin. The Alderman for Fitzwilliam Ward, Corrigan, was one of those who robbed the citizens by getting rebates on houses which the sanitary offices had reported as unfit for such rebates, and their present opponent, Councillor Gallagher, was elected on the same ticket as Corrigan, worked with him in the Corporation, and must share his responsibility.¹⁷

15 Freemans Journal 03 / 01 / 1914

16 <http://eastwallforall.ie/?p=324>.

17 Daily Herald, Monday January 5, 1914

James Gallagher was not too happy with this challenge to his candidacy. The Irish Independent reported the outgoing councillor's objection to Walter's nomination, which read as follows:



Dear Sir or Madam,

I have been your representative in the City, Council for the past six years, during which time I have served your interest to the best of my ability, and I submit with good results, as the condition of the Ward will testify.

As a very large ratepayer, the running of the city on economical lines, combined with efficiency, must appeal to me. This contest has been forced on me by a Mr. Carpenter, who proclaims himself a Socialist, and who is a non-resident and a non-voter in this ward.

I am, and have always been, a believer in the right of Irish people to govern themselves, and I am also a consistent supporter of the Irish Party.

I leave the issue with the Electors in absolute confidence, and hope that their verdict will be such as to deter others in future from putting the citizens to unnecessary expense, and to show what few adherents of anti-Christian Socialism are to be found in the Fitzwilliam Ward.

I beg to remind you that voting takes place on Thursday, January 15th, at Grantham Street Schools. ...

Your obedient servant,

James M. Gallagher. T.C.¹⁸

The Irish Worker, before polling day, made an election issue out of the shockingly bad condition of the housing in the city. We have already given Walter's analysis of the housing, stating that such habitation was far from fit for purpose. He had once remarked "Every house should have a bathroom so that a man's shirt need not be taken out of the pot for his dinner to be put into it."

Another damning report on the housing situation in Dublin was published in the *Daily Herald* during the election campaign. Mrs Dora Montefiore, detailed how she was taken around a certain large house, (20 rooms) and:

18 Irish Independent 09 /01 /1914

“

“she claimed that it helped her to see what no newspaper reporter could see, the “homes” of the Dublin Workers. The very centre of Dublin contains street after street of beautiful old eighteenth century houses; now known as tenements. Mrs. Montefore continues; at the top of the first flight of stairs an unkempt woman staggers down under the weight of a bucket of slops from the weeks wash, and tips the contents into the gutter in front of the house. There are about twenty rooms in the house, and each room holds a family. There is one sanitary convenience in the yard, and all water has to be fetched from a tap in the same yard. These houses could only be visited by daylight as no light was provided on the stairs, and difficult as it was to find the homes we were in search of by daylight, it became an impossible task after dark.

We entered that afternoon house after house, and climbed dozens of flights of stairs, but the conditions, though varying in intensity of squalor, were practically the same, and I then understood, as nothing else could have made me understand, why the kiddies were unwashed, and why the despairing mothers were unkempt and devitalised.

When weary and heartsick I began almost to wish for a devouring fire to burn out this belated eighteenth century barrack, which was holding the people in a rotten charnel house (a building where corpses or bones were kept) of decrepit bygone glories...The Municipal tenements appeared to be the culmination of horror. My revolt all the afternoon had been against the economic compulsion which herded men, women, and children into one room, where they fed, slept, bred and died. But in the Municipal Tenements, the Municipality setting its seal on this abhorred arrangement, by actually providing one-room “homes” for families; the only improvement on the eighteen century barrack being that the stairs to these warrens were lit, and a cupboard off each room was provided, a sink and a W.C.

These single room tenements let for £1s. 6d. a week, which will give the rebel reader an idea of what wages were like in Dublin... except in the underground kitchens, the only fireplaces on which the tenants can cook and do their washing, are the ordinary open fire places of a sitting room or bedroom. Unless the week’s washing hangs from strings across the ceiling of the “home” it decorates the spiked railing in front of the house!

If the Lockout by Murphy and his friends of Dublin workers has served to call attention to the housing conditions of the workers in Dublin, it will be indirectly helping the work of James Larkin, who, with Connelly, is standing against all the forces of vested interest and of reaction, and its striving to raise the condition of the unskilled and the exploited makers of wealth”.¹⁹

In describing the appalling conditions of the era, historian and author Padraig Yeates recorded that:

“some of the most damning evidence came from Catholic priests who worked in the slums, such as the Franciscan Father Aloysius and Rev. T.J. Monaghan off Meath Street. Father Aloysius said that the condition of the housing in Church Street had deteriorated since the disaster in September. Father Monaghan recounted his twelve years of pastoral work in the slums of the Liberties and gave detailed descriptions of houses such as number 10 Francis Street, where 107 people had only two closets (toilets) to meet the all sanitary needs”.²⁰

“The Irish Worker set out the deplorable housing in the city as a central election issue, and promoted the “Vote for Labour and sweep away the slumps” it quoted the Medical Officer of Health as saying “There is no city that I know ... which requires a more extensive system of housing improvement to be carried out than in Dublin”. It went further, to add “Even those who escape death from the slums still suffer from their curse. They are weakened by bad air and bad food, a prey of sickness, constantly falling out of work through weakness ...” The paper described Carpenter’s platform as one of housing and municipal reform. The Irish Citizen, the paper of the suffragette movement, while expressing its disappointment at the lack of women candidates, called for support for Carpenter. It cited his role in launching the school meals campaign and speeches in favour of women’s franchise. For a working class socialist like Walter, the Fitzwilliam Ward always going to pose a challenge, comprising as it did areas such as Stephen’s Green, Baggot Street and Harcourt Street. He was unsuccessful, receiving only 277 votes in comparison with 939 received by his United Ireland league rival. (By contrast, in the North Dock constituency which included East Wall, the ITGWU endorsed candidate received 997 votes, while Alderman Alfie Byrne topped the poll with 1,550 votes).²¹

“The Fitzwilliam Ward was not a working class area. In defeat Walter was not disappointed, the campaign gave him an opportunity to use his voice for the voiceless and to expose some of the corruption in their midst. The elections were barely over when Walter once again found himself before the courts. Standing in defence of his friend and election helper Simon Mackey, Walter’s own character and integrity was called into question. Mackey was accused of assaulting a strike-breaker. Walter was called as an alibi witness for Mackey, whom he claimed was helping his municipal election campaign at the time of the offence. During the trial Walter’s own character was called into question, as the following exchange during the cross examination illustrates:

20 Mr. Padriag Yeats, Lockout 1913 Pg 501

21 <http://eastwallforall.ie/?p=324>

“

“Were you ever in jail?”

“I was in for a political offence. I was addressing a public meeting, and one of the policemen at it thought the words I was using were likely to cause a breach of the peace.”

“Were the words not actually cursing the King?”

“No Sir I do not curse.”

“Was it an attack on the King when he came here on a visit?”

Not his personality. I was attacking a system.”

“You are, I believe a socialist leader in Dublin?”

“When a man becomes involved in social reform he is generally called a socialist!”

As if this evidence wasn't clear enough, the judge, having reviewed the evidence, enquired philosophically: What was preventing men and masters coming together, coming to terms of good feeling? Good feeling that long prevailed in the city between them? Was it men of the type of Mackey, or men like him who would substitute the gospel of good will for what they called the Gospel of social reform?²²

Unfortunately the presence of Walter probably did more harm than good, as Mackey was found guilty of common assault.

“

The Sunday Independent carried a little more information on Walter's recent career:

...Walter stated that he was an insurance agent, and he was a teetotaller and attended night classes and thinking there was no chance of getting back to business he bought a horse and cart for £32 and started in business for himself as a carrier.

Cross examined, he said he had charge of the chimney-sweeping of the Board of Works for a number of years.²³

22 Weekly Irish Times , February 14th, 1914

23 Sunday Independent 10/02/1914

Court appearances and failure to succeed in his candidacy to win the Socialist Party/ Independent labour Party seat in the Municipal elections could not daunt Walter's revolutionary spirit and concern for people and the common good.

A tumultuous and historic period in the country's story: an armed insurrection in 1916, a Guerrilla War from 1917 to 1921 would all pass before Walter would throw his hat into the electoral arena one more time. His second attempt would be in the Dublin Municipal elections of 1920. He was chosen by the Socialist Party of Ireland as a candidate. Along with six men nominated by the ITGWU, he contested the election on a worker's republican platform. Again he was unsuccessful.

Walter had an education in the workings of municipal politics years earlier when he was active with the Kingstown Municipal Reform Association.

“The quarterly meeting of the Kingstown Municipal Reform Association was held last night in the Courthouse, Kingstown ...among those present was Walter Carpenter. Mr. Walter Carpenter supported the resolution, he said that he was one of the deputations that awaited last Wednesday; the deputation on that occasion stated that Kingstown was overtaxed; and they were prepared to prove it. In Kingstown at present there were numerous men willing to work, but they could not find employment, and yet the Council if they wished, could provide employment for them. Their secretary proposed at Christmas that work should be provided for the unemployed, and he suggested that the patch of ground opposite Salthill Hotel might be turned into a play-ground for the workers, and that the men so employed should be paid the standard rate of wages; but instead of adopting the suggestion the Council proposed something else which was merely disguised charity.”²⁴

On this occasion Walter wondered if it would not be better to give ten men employment than to have to pay for their keep in the workhouse. On the quality of the elected representatives he was scathing, pointing out that they only showed an interest in 'the people' at election time:

“Mr. Walter Carpenter said they were in a state of distress in the township in consequence of the enormous amount of money squandered in Kingstown by twenty of twenty one members of the Council. He was glad to be able to say that in that body there was one man who was a friend of the people, the other twenty were friends only every three years and that was generally about the 15th of January. For the rest of the period they forgot their promises and treated them like pie crust which was made to be broken.”²⁵

24 Freemans Journal 30/ 1/ 1909

25 Wicklow News-Letter 15 / 01 /1909



Chapter Five: Women, Children and Domestic Servants

“...the Gospel of social reform”

Walter involved himself in a wide variety of campaigns and tried to address many issues of the day. In this chapter we use newspaper reports and the letter pages to look at some of his concerns throughout a decade of intense activity. The dignity of women, the working conditions of domestic servants and the welfare and well-being of children were all to the forefront of Walter’s concerns. Broader health matters, including the care of tuberculosis sufferers and opposition to the compulsory vaccination of children occupied his attention. The social impact of alcohol abuse amongst the poor saw him actively engage within the Temperance movement, though he changed his priorities somewhat, coming to believe that destructive alcoholism was a symptom of, and not a cause of poverty.

Walter had made his stance on women’s issues well known during the 1914 election. The following excerpt helps illustrate the heightened tensions the issue of Women’s voting rights invoked, while we see also Walter prepared to castigate Irish political leaders for their failures in this regard:



Woman’s protest against Government’s Injustice.

Academy Portrait slashed.

“The fashionable throng who visit the academy to view the portraits’ exhibited there of the “upper tea” received a rude shock yesterday afternoon.

About 1.30. the smashing of glass was heard, and a woman was observed to be slashing a portrait of Mr. Henry James by Sargent, with a butcher’s cleaver.

Immediately the fashionable throng went mad, and, amid shouts of “lynch her” attempted to strike the woman. A gentleman who defended her was much maltreated.

Ultimately she was got away from the “artistic” throng, and handed over to the police. At Marlborough Street she gave the name of Mary Wood.

Steward Boyd said he saw the prisoner deliver three blows on the picture with a meat chopper. In the company with another man he detained her. Asked if she had any questions to put, she said: “No thank you. I acknowledge what I did as a protest.”

P.C. 124C said that prisoner remarked: “if they only gave women the vote this would never have happened. I am glad I am not detained before I had done it.

“

What about Edward Carson? Many a poor girl was arrested for nothing and he was allowed go free.” At Vine-Street she stated: “I am grieved to have to do this. There is no even justice in these days. It will be over immediately women have the vote.”

Mr. W.R. Lamb said the academy was not informed of the value, but the picture might be worth £700. It is repairable. The amount of damage done is very difficult to say until it has been repaired. The depreciation would be somewhere between £100 and £200.

Mrs Wood: put it down to the liberal Government’s injustice. The prisoner was committed for trial.

“

“A large meeting, under the auspices, of the Irish Women’s Franchise was held yesterday in the Phoenix Park to demand the inclusion of Ireland in the Franchise Reform Bill ... The present political bosses in Ireland are prepared to ally themselves with the most reactionary elements of English and Irish Toryism in their attempt to hold on to power. Mr. Walter Carpenter, who described Mr. Redmond as primarily responsible for the intrigue, Mr. Cullinan being one of the marionettes, said that it was only a question of time when Ireland would be rid of the greatest set of twisters and capitalist place-hunters that any country was ever burdened with.”²⁶

At a demonstration in Dublin a minimum wage was demanded for low paid employees.

“

“Affirming the right of every human being to work and live, and demanding that the Labour Party’s Right to Work Bill should be passed into Law in the present session of Parliament; demanding the recognition of a universal 48 hours week, and the payment of a minimum wage; calling for the immediate introduction of a Bill to carry out the recommendations of the Viceregal commission on poor law; demanding the extension of the medical benefits of the insurance Act to Ireland; extension of the number of boys being introduced into some branches of industry; and calling for the nationalisation of the Irish railways as recommended by the Majority Report of the Viceregal Commission.

They called on the State to provide proper food and clothing for children where parents were unable or unwilling to support them; to deal with the unemployed question by readjusting the relations between capital and labour.”²⁷

26 Irish Independent 15 / 07 / 1917

27 Freemans Journal 25 / 05 / 1913

Walter Carpenter was listed among the speakers at that meeting, and also in relation to another important improvement demanded at that time:

“

Feeding of school children.

“He presided yesterday afternoon in Beresford Place at a meeting to demand that the Feeding of School Children Act be applied to Ireland. He said if they wanted a strong and vigorous manhood and womanhood in the Ireland of the future they must start with the children. A reference to the proposal of 70,000 for a promenade at Clontarf drew the remark from one of the audience that it was an election dodge, to which the chairman replied that the demand of the meeting would be an election dodge of the future and they were going to win.... a resolution was adapted calling on the Irish Parliament Party to introduce a Bill for the purpose for extending the Feeding of School Children Act to this country during the next session of Parliament”²⁸

“The Irish Worker” carried a slogan as an election appeal “Vote for Labour and save your children’s lives”:

“

“Every year 2,600 babies under five years of age die in Dublin. Nine out of every ten of them belong to the working class. In proportion to the population, for every baby that dies in an upper class home, and for three babies that die in middle class homes, no less than fourteen die in the houses of labourers.” These babies died because their parents were poor. Labour Councillors would not only carry out housing reforms but would provide municipal milk, baby and school clinics, regular medical inspections for children and school meals. They would also seek higher wages and shorter hours for as many workers as the corporation’s influence could secure.”²⁹

“

“Dear Sir.

It’s now a respectable number of years since I read a paper before a great medical body, on the grave consequences to the nation of attempting to rear the young without milk. It was pointed out that while in a few big towns it was a question of quality. It was quite another story in the country where in whole districts milk was unobtainable altogether or obtainable in very small quantities. We had at that time no compulsory land purchase, but we had all the same compulsion firmly established in other directions where the interest of the nation demanded it.

28 Irish Independent 01 / 12 / 1912

29 The Irish Worker , quoted by Pdraig Yeates Lockout Dublin 1913 pg.504

“

The writer proposed therefore that these precedents should be availed of by extending compulsion to the case of milk. My proposal was simply this, that the parents of infants and young children should be entitled to receive from some neighbouring occupier the quantity of milk required at the price paid for same at the nearest public Institution.”³⁰

Compulsory vaccination had existed since the mid 1800's in Great Britain and Ireland. The Anti-Vaccination League had been founded in 1896 to campaign against this, and in 1898 a Conscientious objection clause introduced. However, this was not extended to Ireland, and further legal reforms in 1907 were again similarly curtailed. Perhaps due to the different pace of progress, or possibly reflecting the developing separatist movements, an Irish Anti-Vaccination League emerged in 1905. Campaigners included Francis and Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington, Eamonn DeValera, and George Bernard Shaw who would later serve as vice president of the group. Walter would serve as the league's secretary. In 1912 the group's publicity material claimed that between 1875 and 1909 a total of 1,338 deaths had resulted from vaccinations, including two within the previous year.

Walter made his first recorded public statements on the issue in 1909, relating to the vaccination of his own children. He declared his status as a 'conscientious objector' but acknowledged that this held no legal status in Ireland.

“

At Kingstown Police Court yesterday, before Mr. Mahony, a number of parents were summoned by the Rathdown Union of Guardians for not having their children vaccinated within the prescribed period of three months after birth. W. & J. Shannon appeared for guardians.

The cases were adjourned to enable the defendants to get their children vaccinated. Walter Carpenter said that the past Chairman of the Guardians advised parents not to get their children vaccinated, and stated that as long as he held the position he would not sign an order to institute prosecutions against defaulters. He acted upon the Chairman's suggestion, especially as he was a well-known public man. He (Mr. Carpenter) was an Englishman, and in England if a person had a conscientious objection he need not have his child vaccinated but that law did not apply to Ireland. He had a conscientious objection, but of course he could not sustain it in this country, and consequently he had his children vaccinated before the issue of the summons and produced a certificate of successful vaccination.

“

The Rathdown Guardians were to blame for leading people to think that it was not compulsory on them to have their children vaccinated.”

Mr. Mahony- Did the chairman of the Board of Guardians make that statement?

Dr. O’Flaherty – I believe that is the reason we have all this trouble.”³¹

In later years, Walter had strengthened his views on the controversy, and was “advocating vigorous agitation” on the issue.

“

“Anti-vac” Meeting.

“The meeting of the Marlborough branch of the Irish Anti-Vaccination league took place on Thursday the 23rd of December. A number of committee members attended, and were most emphatically protesting against the action of the L. G. Board in ordering notices of prosecution to be served on parents to coerce them into having their healthy children vaccinated against their will, and we are sure that as long as the guardians and parents stand side by side in this fight, as in every public matter, public opinion must win. Further we beg to refer the board of Guardians to section 7 of Vaccination (Ireland) Act, which gives power to Poor Law Boards to hear the reasonable excuse of parents before directing legal proceedings.

Arising out of a discussion on the conscience clause, it was pointed out that if the Irish M. P. were more active, the grievances of Irish parents could be redressed. It was ordered that the Hon. Secretary write to the representatives of the country, urging them to use their influence in Parliament to have the same Laws extended to Irish Parents under the Vaccination Acts as those enjoyed by English, Scotch and Welsh parents.

The following resolutions, passed at the annual Conference of the national Anti-Vaccination League, were read and adopted:- that this Conference expresses its gratification at the steady progress of the Anti- Vaccination Movement in Ireland, congratulates the parents who have submitted to fine or imprisonment, rather than allow their children to be diseased by an Act of Parliament, and thanks to those Boards of Guardians who are resisting the enforcement of a law which has been revoked in England, Scotland and Wales. It urged Anti-Vaccinationists in Ireland not to rest satisfied with licences to keep their children healthy such as are granted to parents in Great Britain, but to demand complete freedom of conscience before the law by repeal of the Irish Vaccination Acts.”

“

The committee wished it to be made known to parents who may be served with notice of prosecution that they are to apply for information to either Mr. J. P. Bennett, Hon. Secretary or C.F. Harcham, Hon Secretary. Correspondence from the new General Secretary, Mr. Walter Carpenter, 44 York Street, Dublin was read, advocating vigorous agitation during the coming year. It was decided to hold the annual general meeting on Sunday, 7th January 1917, and that the usual affiliation fee be forwarded to the Central Office”.

In a letter appearing in the Kildare Observer, Walter addresses the people of the Baltinglass district on the matter of vaccination for their children.

“

I notice under the heading of the Baltinglass Guardians the relieving-officer was ordered to notify twenty seven defaulters who had refused to have their children's lives put in jeopardy by the loathsome practice of vaccination to get them operated on. I presume failing to comply with this order, the Guardians of Baltinglass Union will once help the British Government, through its agents, the local Government board, to put into force another of the many Coercion Acts passed for the benefit of the Irish people. With your permission, I would like to ask the Guardians of the poor (so called) of Baltinglass did they know, first that vaccination is not compulsory in England, Scotland and Wales, that in either of these countries it is quite optional with the parents if the child is vaccinated or not; Secondly, Do they know that in England if a parent believes in vaccination the doctor must attend the home of the child to perform the operation without any charge being paid by the parent; thirdly, do they know that a doctor must not vaccinate a child if he considers the home of the child to be in a dirty or insanitary condition and, lastly are they aware that millions of children in the above-mentioned countries are to-day unvaccinated and no harm has come to them, but it has been proved that children who are vaccinated have the best chance of living owing to not having their vitality reduced by this loathsome and obsolete operation? If they know, then, the above facts, then why coerce Irish parents in the instigation of the English government.

In conclusion, I would appeal to the parents in Baltinglass district not to submit to this form of coercion, as vaccination does not prevent smallpox, neither does it mitigate it. Vaccination is sure to bring untold suffering on the child, and very often permanent injury, or death.

I am prepared to prove any of the above facts, if proof is required, and should be glad to hear from any of the people who are, or may be in the near future, threatened with proceedings in respect to vaccination. Thanking you in anticipation, yours faithfully,



Walter Carpenter,
Secretary Irish Anti-Vaccination League,
44 York St., Dublin.³³

The following excerpt is from the Daily Herald, and in its report on Dublin happenings a story recounted by Walter is quoted, questioning the standard of medical care available to workers suffering from tuberculosis.



Girls went to jail for workers;

Sanatorium Patient's Story of neglect.

Overcrowded Dormitory.

A parade of the Citizen Army was held yesterday afternoon in Croydon Park, Dublin. During the afternoon Jim Larkin, on behalf of the Union, presented souvenir brooches to the girls and women of the Workers Union who had gone to gaol for the Workers' cause during the great struggle against Murphyism. Jim made a speech praising the courage and spirit of the girls, and exhorting them and all their comrades, men and women, to be ready to make similar sacrifices whenever needed in the cause of Labour.

Last night a farewell social was held to give a send-off to Walter Carpenter who is just starting on his lecturing tour in Great Britain. Tributes were paid to Carpenter's indefatigable work and many sacrifices for the cause of socialism in Dublin. He was urged on no account to allow himself to be detained long away from Ireland, where he will be sorely missed during the Summer Campaign.

Carpenter, in reply exhorted all other members of the Socialist party to redouble their efforts in propaganda while he was away, and assured his friends that he would speedily return.

He opens his British tour on Friday at Tilbury.

33 Kildare Observer, 10 / 11 / 1916

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“I have just heard a remarkable account of what Lloyd George’s rare and refreshing fruit mean to a proletarian suffering from tuberculous. My informant, Andrew Doyle, was certified, three months ago, as tubular, and as a fit subject under the Insurance Act for treatment in one of George’s first-class hotels. He had to wait two months before a vacancy could be found for him in Crooksling Sanatorium.

He was there for the last four weeks, and has now according to his statement to me, which I have no reason to doubt, been expelled for refusing to do work unsuitable for tubular patients.

If his account of the state of things at Crooksling is accurate a public inquiry into the management of the Sanatorium is imperative. The poor patients, because they are poor, are treated with the grossest neglect, herded together like animals, twenty-three men in one dormitory. With sanitary accommodation on the scale of a Dublin slum, rather than of a hospital. Doyle told the doctors that their methods were calculated rather to foster and spread the disease than to cure it.

He got up a memorial, signed by the patients, protesting against the management, so he speedily became a marked man. He was threatened and bullied by a doctor as he lay in bed, and on Saturday, on refusing to do floor sweeping, which with its dust-rising, is apt to be most injurious to tuberculosis lungs, he was told he could go, a certificate being refused to him.

I take no responsible for Doyle’s story, beyond reporting what he told me, but I have known him for some years as a hard worker and a straight man. I believe his account to be true. At all accounts there is a case for investigation”.³⁴

The issue of the conditions and treatment of domestic servants also came under Walter’s caring eye. In the Irish Independent we read that at a public meeting:

“

Mr. Walter Carpenter made a strong attack on the treatment of domestic servants by their mistresses, who he declared “bought them at so much per month, and then when they had done with them gave them the sack.” He also complained that the mistresses were holding a meeting at a time when, it would be impossible for domestic servants to attend, as they would probably be engaged scrubbing floors and stairs. Lady Dockrell indignantly, repudiated the suggestion; those mistresses were opposing anything that would be for the benefit of the servants. The amendment was lost, and the original motion was declared carried.”³⁵

34 Daily Herald, Tuesday, April 28, 1914

35 Irish independent, 29 / 11 / 1911



The Insurance of Domestic Servants Bill was discussed at a meeting held in Molesworth Hall, Dublin under the auspices of the Irish Women's reform League, and a resolution was agreed to, stating that, under the Bill, the servants did not receive an adequate return for their contributions, the matter appearing to depend of the discretion of the Insurance Commissioners or on servants forming a strong friendly benefit society, especially as regards the working of the Bill in Ireland.

There was a large attendance of ladies at the meeting; but there did not appear to be many domestic servants present. ... Miss Bennett, Hon. Secretary, read letters of apology, which included one from Mrs Hannay, Westport, who pointed out that owing to the present condition of things in the West of Ireland, the Bill would be very severe on domestic servants.



“The whole loaf”

Lady Dockrell believed that most mistresses did not wish that domestics should be left out of the operations of the Bill. That would be a dangerous thing for all, for all legislation in the past had either ignored altogether cavalierly with women. Therefore it was better to bring women within the scope of the Bill than to leave them out, and she did not want domestic servants to be excluded. As far as the principal of insurance was concerned, most mistresses – even at pecuniary loss – would support any measures that would give servants real benefit. She held however, that 19s. 6d to be contributed by the mistresses and servants would be burdensome, especially on poor mistress, and would be out of all proportion to the benefits conferred. The provision would also make every mistress a tax collector for Mr. Lloyd George. (laughter) The servants themselves seemed opposed to the Bill on the grounds that they could not afford to pay the amount that they would be called upon to pay. Lady Dockrell thought the proposed scheme would serve to still further frictionise the relations between mistress and servants. (“No, no from the back of the hall).Well she hoped the ‘no’ would stand up afterwards and freely ventilate her opinions.



A Voice “A half loaf is better than no bread.”

Lady Dockrell said, what we want is to get the whole loaf (applause). She did not see why they did not make a fight for three-quarters of the loaf, if not the whole loaf. They should press for 8s. 11d instead of 7s. 6d. the present scheme would be a bad bargain financially for the women.



Self Help

Rev. E. Lewis-Crosby said that masters and mistresses owed more than they could calculate of the happiness and the welfare of their homes to domestic servants. Though the servant could only get 7s 6d a week during illness that was surely something worth having; and suppose a domestic servant was permanently disabled she would get 5s per week for her life.

Then they would have the advantage of sanatoria throughout the country. He emphasised the principle of self-help embodied in the Bill. There was the objection to the old age pension scheme that it was not contributory, and the contributory and the contributory principal held to be one of the greatest advantages of the insurance Bill. He urged the appointment of a lady commissioner for Ireland as had been done in England.

A somewhat noisy demonstration took place during the asking of questions. A lady in the hall asked could not unemployment benefit be obtained for domestic servants out of employment. An affirmative reply was given to the question as to whether a servant receiving £4 or £5 or £8 in the West of Ireland would have to pay the same amount as a servant in Dublin getting £26 a year; and it was suggested that, in many cases, the mistresses might have to pay all the money – a very great grievance and very unfair, a lady remarked. ...and it probably lead to more unemployment.

Mrs Duncan said that the very worst point about the Bill was that it would throw the servant out of her house which they would expose to be more or less comfortable. The first thing that should be done was to establish Cottage Homes where the out of home and out of health servants could go to. She considered an ordinary lodging house was no place for a sick servant. ...An amendment was submitted welcoming the Bill, and especially the servant's clauses, and demanding medical benefits should apply to Ireland".³⁶

It is clear that these servants were unprotected and wholly dependent on the good will (or otherwise) of their mistresses. When an effort was made to give them more security and greater recognition of their value an impression was given that not all domestic servants accepted or approved of the efforts. This is made clear in the following letter from a male servant, though whether written freely or under instruction is a matter of speculation.

36 Irish Independent, 29 / 11 / 1911



Molesworth Hall Meeting.

Sir – as a male domestic servant, I protest and object to Mr. Walter Carpenter’s remarks about the Molesworth Hall meeting. Some female servants and myself went there. Neither were we stopped at the door nor asked to sign a petition. I heard several servants whom I know ask for forms to sign at their own request. I never heard anybody being asked to sign a petition nor did I see anyone refused admission.

At about 3.15 p.m. the Hall was full, and we got in quite easy. I was near the door the whole time, and nobody, servants or others, was refused admission. Are the Socialist trying to get up an agitation against “domestics”? If that is their game, they will never get servants foolish enough to subscribe to any society to keep idle agitators going from meting to meeting, causing trouble.

Mr. Carpenter says the number of domestics who have read the Bill is not numerous. That may be so. Of course they have not as much time as Mr. Carpenter has for reading. In any case, servants are intelligent enough to have nothing to do with Socialists or Socialism.

I and a good many more prefer to remain as we are than come under the Bill. I again protest against Socialists pretending to champion our cause, as they are directly opposed to us in every way, and to them from whom we get our living.

John O’Sullivan

(footman)

Dublin, Dec, 1, 1911”³⁷

SOCIALIST MEETING IN KINGSTOWN.

Mr. James Connolly, Socialist writer and speaker, delivered an address to a public meeting held on the Queen's road, Kingstown, last evening. Mr. Connolly was advertised to speak at the Green, but he was prevented from doing so by the police, who stated they would not allow him to speak there, as the place was Government property. Mr. Walter Carpenter presided at the meeting, and it was evident from the beginning of the proceedings that the lecturer was not in sympathy with all the members of his audience. The gist of the speaker's remarks was that the workers should enrol themselves in the Socialist organisation, and should elect to the Urban Council only those who held Socialist views on the latter question. A heckler, who was present, asked the speaker whether he was there in opposition to the Nationalist Party as they had had a Conservative Party in power in the Council for some years, and they did not want either a Conservative Party or Independent Party there longer. The speaker replied that he represented no Party but the Party of the workingmen.

LABOUR UNREST

Demand of Dublin Tailors and Tailoresses.

On behalf of the members (men & women) of the International Tailors, Machinists and Pressers' Trade Union Mr. Walter Carpenter, the Secretary, has served on the employers in the Dublin district a fresh schedule of wages and hours of work. In the case of piece workers men and women are to get equal pay for equal work, and the rates, which average about 25 per cent of an increase, are to come into operation after April 14th.

Mr. Walter Carpenter supported the resolution. He said he was one of the deputation that waited last Wednesday. The deputation stated on that occasion that Kingstown was overtaxed, and they were prepared to prove it. In Kingstown at present there were numerous men willing to work, but they could not find employment, and yet the Council, if they wished, could provide employment for them. Their Secretary proposed at Christmas that work should be provided for the unemployed, and he suggested that the patch of ground opposite Salthill Hotel might be turned into a playground for the workers, and that the men so employed should be paid the standard rate of wages, but, instead of adopting that suggestion, the Council proposed something else which was merely disguised charity. By amalgamating the two offices a sum of £500 a year would be saved, and that would provide employment for ten scavengers and their families the whole year round. He asked if it would not be better to have these ten men employed than to have to pay for their support in the workhouse?

The Chairman put the resolution, which was unanimously adopted.

STRANGE SPEECH

Socialist Orator and the King

PRISONER GOES TO JAIL

PREVENTION OF INTEMPERANCE.

MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL

A meeting of the General Council of the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance was held in the X.L. Cafe, Dublin, on Wednesday. There were present—Messrs. W. A. Shea, D.L. (in the chair); Walter Carpenter, C. L. Jameson, Dr. Joynt, representing the Executive; Mrs. Crozier, representing the International Order of Good Templars; Mr. Thomas F. Davis, J.P., representing the Dublin Total Abstinence Society; Rev. W. J. McCreery, B.D., representing the Church of Ireland Temperance Society; Mr. Francis Neale, representing the Friends' Total Abstinence Association, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read.

Street Occupied by Police.

The thoroughfare extending at the back of the Pro-Cathedral, from Cathedral place, appeared to be almost wholly occupied by D.M.P. and R.I.C. constables to the number of probably 150 or more. They were under several inspectors. Another body of police took up a position in the O'Connell street end of Earl street, a third party was drawn up at Eden quay, and there were a couple of files near the Rotunda. Small patrols of two or three remained on ordinary police duty at various points.

Promoters Appear.

A brake, in which Captain White, D.S.O.; Mr. Bulmer Hobson, Mr. Walter Carpenter, the Countess Marckievicz, and Mrs. Connery were seated, drove along from the direction of O'Connell Bridge. These were received with some cheers by the crowd gathered along the street, the proportions of which had by this time largely increased. A throng surrounded the vehicle, and followed it to near the Father Mathew Statue, where it was brought to a halt right in the middle of the thoroughfare, and a meeting was held.

As the first of the speakers, Mr. Bulmer

Chapter Six: An Advocate of Temperance

“The people had to get themselves saturated in alcohol before they could live in such conditions”.

Walter was an active and vocal advocate of the work of the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance.

He was greatly concerned with the over-consumption of alcohol, and the disastrous effects it had on workers and poor families. Yet his concern was not fanatical or overly moralistic. Unlike some within the movement he did not blame all the woes of daily life on alcohol abuse; rather he acknowledged that the conditions of the working class led to such abuse. As he stated at the housing enquiry “The people had to get themselves saturated in alcohol before they could live in such conditions.”

“

“The usual meeting of the Executive Committee of the Irish Associate for the prevention of intemperance was held in the Board Room Eustace Street, Dublin. Among those present was Walter Carpenter. A report was received from the sub-Committee of the General Council of the Association that an open meeting was held in Kingston on Friday the 19th. And the Rev. William Crawford M.A. and Mr. William Wigham spoke. There were about 500 persons present, and a number of pledges were taken. The success of the meeting was very largely due to the efforts of the Kingstown Good Templars and members of the pioneer centre, who most ungrudgingly gave their services.

The action of the Irish National Temperance Executive in connection with the extra spirit duty was reported on, and some time was spent in considering how to strengthen the hand of the temperance party in resisting the demand of the liquor trade for the removal of this extra duty. This further consideration was adjourned to the next meeting.

A circular from the British Institute of Social Services was received. This circular pointed out that the institute had reduced the subscription payable by the members in the hope that everyone interested in the success of social betterment and other social problems would now be willing to join the Institute and help them in their work of supplying information to all inquiries.

“

A memorandum as to the effect of the Act of 1906 on the cases of drunkenness in Ireland was laid before the committee, and minutes of the finance committee were read, signed and approved. The cheques were drawn for current expenses, leaving the balance due to the bankers £327.1s. 7d. The final report of the subcommittee on finance was referred to a future meeting of the executive, but³⁸ the necessity of obtaining adequate financial support was strongly emphasised.”

This coverage appeared in 1910. A very popular topic, details and reports from a great number of meetings relating to the Prevention of Intemperance have been recorded in the newspapers and journals of the day. Trade Union bands would often play a prominent role in Temperance events, and prominent figure such as Larkin and Connolly were teetotallers. This following selection is taken from the Freeman’s Journal throughout 1910 and 1911.

“

“The monthly meeting was held in the Board Room, Eustace Street Dublin. Among the committee members present was Walter Carpenter. ... A member of the General Council of the Association suggested the advisability of holding a monster Temperance Demonstration in the Phoenix Park some Saturday afternoon in August was read. Further consideration of this important matter was adjourned to the next meeting in order to give the other temperance associations in Dublin ample time to state whether they would be able to co-operate in the demonstration, and, if so to what extent.

The secretary reported that the restaurants (Ireland) Bill promoted by Mr. P.J. Brady and others had been withdrawn, as it had been opposed by both the Temperance members of the House of Commons, and also by the Republican Party. To make the position of the Association quite clear with regard to such Bills it was moved by Mr. C.L. Janie and seconded by Walter Carpenter, and carried – that the executive committee of the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance cannot approve of any legislation which may lead to greater facilities for the sale of intoxicating drink.

A letter was read from the Board of National Education making it quite clear that it was against their rules for anyone to apply for an occasional licence for any national School, the Commissioners stating that they always took, whenever a case of the sort came before them”³⁹.

A meeting of the General Council of the Irish Association for the prevention of Intemperance was held in the X.L. Café in Grafton Street Dublin.

38 Freemans Journal, 26 / 08 / 1910

39 Freemans Journal, 11 / 11 / 1910

Attendees listed included Mr. Walter Carpenter.

“ Mrs Crozier, representing the Order of Good Templars was present; also present was the Rev W.J. McCreery, B.D., Church of Ireland Temperance Society, Mrs Francis Neal representing the Friends' Total Abstinence Association.

The Sub-committee on Open Air Meetings had been held from Monday the 4th of July to Saturday the 9th; at the back of the Custom House. Also on Wednesday the 13th and Thursday the 21st, at the same place. The attendance varied from 500 to 2,000.

Among the many speakers listed for these events was Walter Carpenter.

“ The bands of the Boys' Brigade and St. Mathias Boys' Brigade assisted on one evening each in Dublin, and the band of the Ringsend Y.M.C.A. helped on two evenings. Over 650 pledges were taken during the crusade. The expenditure amounted to £10 11s 6d and so far subscriptions had been mounting to £5; two other subscriptions were promised at the meeting. The names of those who had taken the pledge were ordered to be sent to the District Secretary of The International Order of Good Templars so that as many as possible could be drafted into Temperance Organisations. The Order of Good Templars have promised to do what they can in this matter. It was decided to send this report to the affiliated Societies, and ask them to appoint a delegate to Act on the open-air sub-Committee, and also to guarantee a sum towards the expenses of the open-air next year.

The Rev. W.J. McCreery gave an interesting report as to the “Forward” Movement of the Church of Ireland Temperance Society, in which he stated that arrangements had been made not only to hold a Temperance Mission in every parish in Ireland, but also to hold meetings in connection with such organisations as Boys' Brigades, Mothers' Meetings, etc. He also reported that the Hibernian Band of Hope Union had decided to hold a fete at Ballsbridge on the 22nd June 1911.

Mr. Thomas F. Davis gave some account of the work of the Dublin Total Abstinence Society in connection with the Coffee Palace and the Coffee Stalls in different parts of Dublin.



Mr. Frank Neale told of the work of the friends' Total Abstinence Association in their endeavour to spread the truth by lectures and the distribution of literature. The Secretary gave a report of the work of the Executive in connection with licensing matters and of some of the results of this work. He also gave figures showing the amount of alcoholic liquors used in some of the Dublin hospitals, principally taken from the report of the Board of Superintendence.”⁴⁰

“At another meeting of The General Council of the Irish Association for the prevention of Intemperance, and after the usual business was attended to; a letter was received from the Dublin County and City Lodge of the I.O.G.T. offering a grant of £1 in aid of expenses. It was proposed by Mr. Walter Carpenter, seconded by Mr. Frank Neale, and carried unanimously, that a Sub-Committee and the names of several others were suggested to be asked to join.

Miss Edmundson gave an interesting account of the meetings conducted by the Dublin Women's Temperance Association, especially those for girls employed in several of the business houses in the city. She also mentioned successful lectures and garden parties which had been by her Association.

Mr. A.C. Stewart sketched the progress of the Rechabite Order in Dublin, and gave figures showing the very encouraging growth of the juvenile section, which last year won the shield for the greatest increase. The juveniles were now becoming the adult workers, and the prejudice which had once existed against the order had entirely disappeared.

Mr. Frank Neale told the Council of a very clear and concise statement which Dr. Bewley had made to members of the Friends' Total Abstinence Association on the effect of alcohol on the human body, and mentioned that the doctor had spoken very strongly against the use of medicated wines, which he styled as abominable. The Friends had also held a most successful Band of Hope during the Christmas holidays.

The Independent Order of Good Templars, through their representative Mr. Walter Carpenter, laid before the Council the undesirability of grocers having publicans' licences, or publicans owning tenement property, and the advisability of forming a Temperance Electoral Committee to influence municipal and Poor Law elections.”⁴¹

While the latter months of 1913 would bring much greater concerns for social campaigners in the City, Walter was outraged by and responded to a newspaper claim linking the Independent Labour Party to the scourge of gambling in the city.

40 Freemans Journal, 11 / 11 / 1910

41 Freemans Journal 20 / 01 / 1911

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“Sir-

My intention has been drawn to a letter appearing in your columns yesterday re “The Game of House”, and signed by one John Bergin, in which he states that, we hear members of the so called independent Labour Party denouncing Stock Exchanges gamblers and exploiting capitalist, while they themselves are actually thriving on gambling among the workers.

This is but one more instance of people rushing into print and writing about a subject they are entirely ignorant of. I am not out to defend the game of “house” or any other form of gambling. I have consistently opposed gambling for the last 25 years, whether it be gambling at “House”, stocks and shares, or human lives.

But when your correspond singles out the I.L.P. of Ireland and charges them with thriving on the game of House while at the same time denouncing other forms of Gambling he is, to say the least of it, asserting that which is not true.

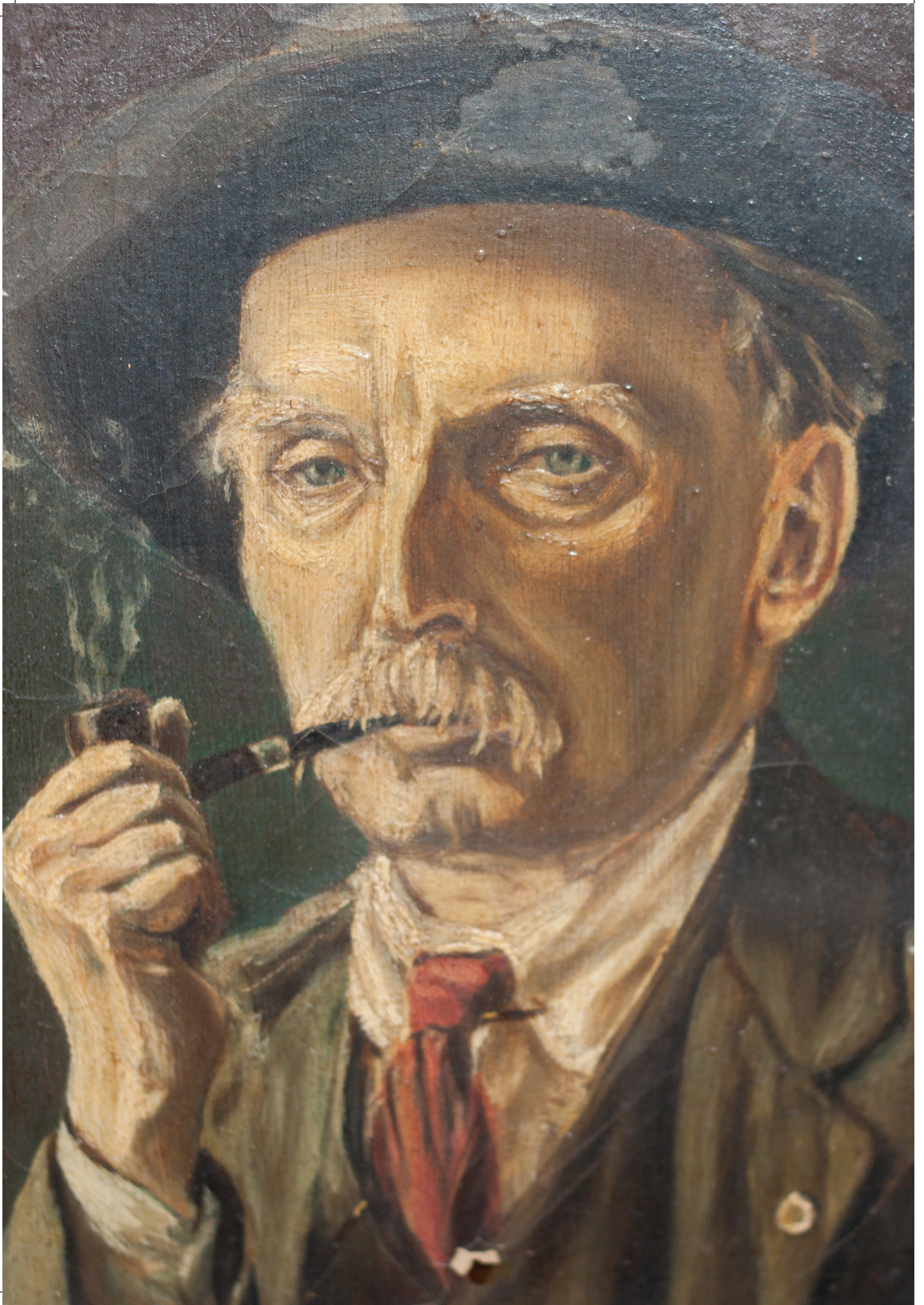
In none of the branches of the labour Organisation is gambling in any shape or form allowed. But instead there is a comradeship existing among all its members, and the principal recreation enjoyed in its halls is an intellectual one—a study of literature, art, sciences, political economy, and the like. I wish the same could be said of all other halls in the country.

I wish the Right Hon. The Recorder would look after the gambling hells of this city, and if he did and the police were to do their duty, I venture to say that the trade union halls would not be found the worst offenders. I know of a club where thousands of pounds changed hands nightly; there are some such in Dublin and you never hear the police, the clergy, and the recorder asked to interfere. Oh, dear no, that would never do, there might be some respectable people lose their reputations.

I should like to advise, if your correspondence is not adverse to it. He states he is an unskilled worker; His wages do not exceed £1 per week; there are a 100 men employed with him. I take it he is a Trade Unionist; If he is not he does not count, and I am sorry I have written; but if he is the union he is a member of the playing House. Let them attend its meetings and raise h-l instead of writing letters to the Press by trying to stop it. He would be rendering a service to his fellow-workers. His efforts would be appreciated, and he would be honoured by all that is best in the Labour Movement; but so long as he continues to write what is obviously not true he will only be despised”.

Walter Carpenter,
Secretary,

Ancient Concert Buildings, Dublin. May 27 1913



Chapter Seven: Jewish Union and Labour Unrest

“The right Divine of Labour...”

Walter Carpenter was appointed the General Secretary of the International Tailors, Machinists and Pressers’ Trade Union in 1913. This was known in Dublin as “The Jewish Union”. As early as 1902 James Connolly had recognised the progressive role this section of the City’s population may play. Standing as a candidate for the Irish Socialist Republican Party (a precursor of the Socialist Party) he had distributed a leaflet in Yiddish. This contained a stirring appeal for support from the Jewish Community, in terms that Walter would readily identify with:

“

“You ought to vote for the Socialist candidate and only for the Socialist candidate. The Socialists are the only ones who stand always and everywhere against every national oppression. It is the socialists who went out onto the streets of Paris against the wild band of anti-Semites at the time of the Dreyfus case. In Austria and Germany they conduct a steady struggle against anti – Semitism. And in England, too, the Socialists fight against the reactionary elements who want to shut the doors of England against the poorer Jews who were driven to seek a refuge in strange land by the Russian government’s brutality and despotism...

... In conclusion, a few words to you, Jewish workers of Dublin. Upon you rests the obligation to support the Socialist candidates as much as you can. The aims of the Irish Socialist Republican Party ought to be close to you. These are your own interests, the interests for which every knowledgeable worker must fight. These are the objectives for which every worker must strive. What does this party want? It wishes to abolish that system of private ownership under which the working class is condemned to labour, to create the wealth of the world and enjoy for itself absolutely nothing It wishes to construct a system in which the worker shall have the right to benefit from his labour and live a free, happy and enlightened life without bosses and rulers over his body and soul.”⁴³

Walter, in his capacity as secretary of the Socialist Party had come into direct contact with the union a number of years before his appointment:

43 <http://comeheretome.com/2011/01/17/james-connollys-1912-yiddish-election-leaflet-translated/>

“

This Union was founded in 1908 by Russian Jewish clothing workers from the South Circular Road, part of the city's Little Jerusalem. In 1909, when the recently formed International Tailors, Machinists and Pressers' Trade Union was involved in a major strike, Walter Carpenter had attended a solidarity rally as a representative of the Socialist Party Ireland. In 1913 the Union's general secretary retired and Walter took on the role, leading the Union until his own retirement in 1925. It was often referred to as the "Tailors and Pressers Union" by its members, the union was generally known as "The Jewish Union" in Dublin. The union's rule book makes it clear that the members were largely Jewish. By 1923, its highest ever membership was recorded as 600 (both Jewish and otherwise). In that year the union was represented for the first time at the Annual Conference of the Irish Trade Union Congress, by two delegates – Walter Carpenter and Isaac Baker. During his speech to Congress, Baker condemned "any discrimination between Jew and Gentile, as long as either does his work right"⁴⁴.

A plaque now marks the spot on Camden Street where the Union headquarters once stood. At its unveiling, tribute was paid to the role Walter played in the union:

Mr. Manus O'Riordan in his research claims that the union had chosen well in making Walter Carpenter its second General Secretary. His Solidarity with them had already been made manifest four and a half years earlier during the very first strike, as also his utter opposition to all forms of anti-Semitic prejudice when, on the same occasion, he proclaimed the need to confront the even more scandalous and intense sweating being perpetrated by Christian firms in Dublin.

“

In 1915 the Tailors and Pressers Union had incorporated into its rule book lines written by the 1848 Young Ireland Leader Joseph Brennan, for the distribution of which Walter Carpenter had himself served three months imprisonment) in 1911:

The right Divine of Labour

To be first of earthly things:

That the Thinker and the Worker

Are Manhood's only Kings.

“

It is said that these lines may well have inspired the Jewish Volunteer A. Weeks who joined James Connelly's Irish Citizens Army during the 1916 Rising and gave his life in that week's fighting. He was inscribed in the roll of Honour – alongside James Connolly – with the words “A. Weeks, a Jewish comrade who joined on Easter Monday and died in action.”

Walter was hard working and deeply committed to the success of the union – as recently as 2002 his contribution was recalled by SIPTU “In leading his union through all the political and industrial strife of those years, their Second General Secretary also gave his all.”⁴⁵

This newspaper report details the demands been made by the union in 1919, and shows the broader context of workers issues at the time.

“

Labour unrest. Demand of Dublin Tailors and Tailoresses.

“On behalf of the members (men and women) of the International Tailors and Machinists and Pressers' Trade Union Mr. Walter Carpenter, the secretary, has served on the employers in the Dublin district a fresh schedule of wages and hours of work. Piece workers men and women are to get equal pay for equal work. And the rates which average about 25 per cent of an increase are to come into operation after April 14th. Men workers are to be paid £3 10s, all holidays to be paid for. All over time is to be charged for as time and a half. And bank holiday work double rates. The working hours are to be from 9a.m. to 6 p.m. With an hour for dinner – on all days of the week, except Saturday when they shall be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Subcontracting in the workshop is to be abolished, and no non Union labour is to be employed, while the pay for underworkers is to be fixed by the Union.

According to information from the Irish Clerical Workers' Union trouble is brewing among the clerical staff of the Department of Agriculture in Dublin. A meeting of the temporary Clerks was called for to-day to discuss their grievances, and yesterday notices of dismissal were issued to several of them. The officials of the ICWU regard this development as a direct challenge, and steps taken for a counter offensive. Delegates from the clerical staffs of all the Government departments in Dublin are accordingly expected to a make rally at the meeting tonight at 1, College Street.

45 SIPTU Press Release – Unveiling of a Camden Street plaque commemorating the Jewish Tailors and Pressers Union. 16 October 2002



Carters Demands

The Dublin Master Carriers Association, at a conference with the Irish Transport and General Workers Union submitted revived proposals as to wages and hours of work, and they will be considered by a mass meeting of carters in Liberty Hall.

Dublin Dockers' working hours.

The National Transport Workers Federation, it is stated, is meeting employers of dock and waterside labour in Dublin on Tuesday next with a view to adjusting the hours of dock labour in Ireland in accordance with the national agreement arrived at for Great Britain, which gives the workers a 44 hour week⁴⁶.

Later in the same year, Walter alerted the newspaper to the details of an agreement reached between the Union and Arnott's. Interestingly, earlier in the decade Arnott's had been the source of the first uniforms acquired by the Irish Citizen Army.



Arnott's Dispute Settlement.

To the Editor of the Freeman's Journal.

Dear Sir – I have been directed to forward copy of agreement (enclosed) in connection with the strike of dressmakers, etc. at Messrs Arnott, with a request that you will kindly publish same if space will permit.

Thanking you in anticipation, - Yours faithfully,

Walter Carpenter.⁴⁷

At the Irish Labour Party and Trades Union Congress held at the Mansion House in 1921 Walter contributed to a debate on the Nationalisation of the Railways:

46 Freemans Journal, 01 / 04 / 1919

47 Freemans journal, 22 / 08 / 1919



Labour Delegates Discuss Railway Wage Cuts.

“The discussion initiated on a resolution proposed by Mr. T.J. O’Farrell (Railway Clerks) as to the nationalisation of the Irish railways was continued. After a long discussion the resolution was adopted. The resolution urged complete nationalisation of Irish Railways. With a central board of control responsible to the Irish people, upon which organised workers on railways should have adequate representation. Mr. Molloy (N.U.R. Broadstone), who seconded the resolution, said that the rank and file believed that if nationalisation were brought about, and the railways were controlled by the Irish State, it would be well for the country as a whole and well for the workers. They firmly believed that the present managers of the different railways were very extravagant. Nationalisation meant a standard wage and a standardisation of rolling stock; and railwaymen would have a reasonable working day, and a very good chance of receiving a pension. At one time the midland Company had a small pension scheme, but, unfortunately for the men, the Lloyd George Insurance Scheme killed it.

Mr. Walter Carpenter described the resolution as a hardy annual, and said that the time had arrived for the workers on railways to take their minds off the word nationalisation and demand the railways for themselves. He held that the workers on Government railways in Germany and France were as great slaves as under any capitalist company. Instead of asking for the nationalisation of railways they should demand the socialisation of them, and he asked Congress to turn the resolution down. Councillor P.T. Daly (Dublin) said they had been told that if there was any attempt made to reduce the railwaymen’s wages they would have all the powers of organised labour behind them in their fight, so he wished to know if it was true that the railway clerks on the one hand had accepted a reduction of their wages without making any announcement to Congress. If such was the case, then all he had to say was that the discussion arising on the question before them was quite unnecessary, quite a waste of time as well as a deliberate attempt to mislead the railwaymen of Ireland. (hear, hear)

Seeking Enlightenment

Unless the railway clerks and the railway men took the Congress into their confidence in connection with the matter it would only mean leading them into a morass (hear, hear) he trusted the delegated would be enlightened on the subject.



Mr. O' Farrell said Mr. Daly's first statement was quite outside the terms of the resolution, but he would reply. The regular standardised condition of wages was agreed upon by the Railway Trades Union, and there was a minimum agreed upon below which the rates could not go. There was a sliding scale on the cost of living also, and after October last, as the cost of living also, came down from 165 per cent there was a correspondence reduction. That was part of the agreement, and when they signed the agreement to that effect they should abide by it, and the same had taken place in the case of the civil servants. It did not in the least interfere with the standardised conditions and the rate below which the wages would go (hear, hear). It was the minimum rates that were being attacked.”⁴⁸

Walter would also contribute to the debate on tariffs on imported goods to boost native industries:



The Bottle Trade

“Mr. Walter Carpenter (Dublin), said he saw very little difference between the amendment and the resolution, but he thought the question might be deferred to the August Conference. Mr Robinson (Dublin) supported a protection policy. They had the bottle trade in Ringsend practically extinct and a tax on the imported article would revive it. The Labour Party would be faced with this question in a short time and they should be able to say “yea” or “nay”.

Mr Carroll declaring this was a question of survival of the fittest, and that the Labour Movement stood for that principle. He wanted to give a chance for the survival of the least fittest. Were they going to let their industries die out and revive them later on even under a greater handicap that with which they were faced now? To purchase in the cheapest market was not likely to improve Irish Industries.”⁴⁹

Of course, in addition to his trade union based activity there was also a period of time when Walter was heavily occupied in trying to build the Communist Party and continue the promotion of a more radical overhaul of society. In 1922, he resigned as secretary of the party explaining “the C.P. is my first love, but my union claims all my time and I cannot, under present circumstances, neglect my union”. In what he would no doubt regard as a counter-revolutionary period, he diligently served his members interests within the prevailing atmosphere, but a hint of despair at the broader workers movement can be detected in this uncustomary bad tempered outburst:

48 Freemans Journal, 05 / 08 /1921

49 Freemans Journal, 16 / 03 / 1924.



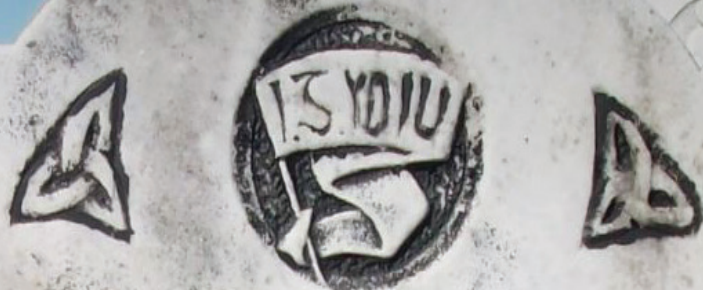
LABOUR DAY IN DUBLIN

NO STOPPAGE OF WORK – MEETING OF COMMUNISTS

“In accordance with the decision of the Irish Labour Party there was no stoppage of work in Dublin for “Labour day”. Labour Day will be observed on Sunday next, when the I.T. and G.W.U. will hold their annual sports meeting in Croke Park. The Licensed Grocers, Porters, section of the I.T.G.W.U. to arrange that Sunday next would be a day for all of them.

Under the auspices of the Communists Party, a meeting was held in Beresford Place last night. There was an attendance of between 200 and 300. Two red flags were displayed. Mr. McCabe, who presided, expressed the hope that 1923 would see some of the ambitions of the Communists Party realised, now that Jim Larkin had come home again.

Mr. Walter Carpenter said the workers of Dublin should bow their heads in shame because there was not a labour stoppage all over the city that day, as in other countries. Miss White and Mr. O’Leary also spoke. Resolutions were passed declaring that Labour Day should be observed as a national holiday, and protesting against the lack of unity in the Labour Movement.”⁵⁰



IN MEMORY OF
WALTER CARPENTER

DIED 25TH FEB. 1926

SECRETARY
IRISH GARMENT MAKERS
INDUSTRIAL UNION,
FROM 1915 TO 1926

R.I.P.

ERECTED BY THE UNION.

Chapter Eight: Final Illness and Death

“Gradually he softened towards religious subjects”

Poor health would eventually over take the committed and tireless activist. Having dedicated his life to the cause of care and concern for those excluded and marginalised, in 1925 he was forced to retire from public activities.

The following extract is from the annals of the Religious Sisters of Charity, relating to their convalescent home, Linden, Blackrock, Dublin. It records:

“

“Another consoling case of an old man (55 years of age), who came to us in a very suffering state of health, but far worst state of soul. On his appearance amongst the men, it was apparent they did not approve of him. Though as the custom was he was treated with civility, they soon let the Sisters know that he was a red hot socialist; the editor of a socialist paper, and never had a good word for Priests or Nuns. He was however treated like everyone else, and we trusted that prayer and the pervading religious atmosphere would do God’s work in God’s own time. Gradually he softened towards religious subjects. And though he attended the evening rosary, and Sundays Mass, he resisted all efforts to try to get him to go to confession. His sufferings were intense and at first he was inclined to blame God, but by degrees, and untiring prayers and Sister Mary Johns devoted efforts he was at last gained. He went to Confession and Holy Communion whilst with us, and left Linden a much happier man. A month later he collapsed in Marlboro Street Church after receiving Holy Communion. He was taken to the Mater Hospital, where he remained for some time. As nothing could be done to relieve his sufferings (he had internal cancer), he returned home, lived for some months in the most acute agony, but through it all said, he was willing to suffer all the more, to make up for the past, and to experience the happiness and peace of mind he now enjoyed.”⁵¹

For a man who did such caring work on behalf of his fellow men, he had nothing to make up. He went to his maker with hands full of goodness. (Today, Walter has two granddaughters, including the author, in religious life).

Once home, he was attended by the Sisters from Gardiner Street and a Jubilee nurse. He received Holy Communion frequently during his final illness. Walter died February 25th 1926 from heart failure.

The funeral took place from our Lady of Lourdes Church, Gloucester Street to Glasnevin Cemetery. The chief mourners were his sons Walter, Peter, Harry, Albert, Frank and Michael and daughter Milly (Amelia). All the aspects of his revolutionary years were represented:

“ Mr. Joe Murray and Miss Nellie Byrne represented the Irish Republican Soldiers federation, Messrs . McCabe and McLay represented The Connelly Educational Club, Messrs J. Redmond and May Fletcher represented the Irish Garment Makers Union, Jim Larkin represented the Workers Union of Ireland (WUI) and William O’Brien the Irish Transport & General Workers Union (ITGWU).

And a contemporary report also notes the presence of:

“Miss M Dillon and Mr. Cahill. The Soviet Workshop. The Fintan Lalor Pipe band (associated with the ITGWU AND ICA) and the W.U.I. band were present, and played the “Dead March”. Mr. Mc Lay of the Connelly Educational Club delivered the graveside oration at Glasnevin. A number of wreaths were placed on the grave.”

As a mark of recognition for his years of commitment, the Jewish community in Dublin erected his tombstone. R.I.P.

A Poem from the Daily Herald March 21, 1914:

This poem (by Poem is by Marie C. Stopes) has been chosen because it sums up the harshness, the poverty, the dullness and darkness of the environment in which people were trapped. While the spirit was aching to release the creative beauty within, the human person could not rise above the obvious.

My heart is lit with beauty I am aching to translate;

But my hands are busied with the daily toil I hate.

My heart is full of song that breaks and dies within my throat;

For in offices and shops a song is an unseemly note.

Only through grey walls of houses can my heart's eye see the fields;

And a trodden stalk of cabbage is the herb the dry street yields.

O' I long to dig the earth, to watch it blossom and bear fruit;

But the only earth I see is iron-railed and black with soot.

My limbs all white and curved like flowers are panting for the sun.

But they are hid by shapeless clothes that clog me as I run.

My life is like six million lives, all strained and awry;

Six million lives are around me that should make the devil sigh.

Even the earth worms have forsaken the hard path on which I tread;

But I spend my days upon it, for there lies my daily bread.

My Heart is lit beauty which I am aching to create-

But I must be a coward, for I hand my life to fate.

To escape might be easy-only just to walk away,

For our city is not walled- yet I live on here day by day.⁵³



Conclusion

Reflecting on the life and work of my Grandfather Walter Carpenter, we meet a man of great courage and integrity. He was a very loyal to socialist ideals, and committed to the betterment of the people he encountered on a daily basis. He even went further afield to help and guide workers in need.

He served time in prison for the courage of his convictions; on his release he stated that while he was there his revolutionary spirit was intensified 1,000 times over. He exposed the names of slum owners who demanded exorbitant rents from poor people condemned to accommodation unfit for purpose.

Although he was one who spent himself for the excluded of society, Walter was a man with a heart full of compassion. Himself a strict teetotaler, he recognised that people were not to blame if they got saturated with alcohol before entering their hovels. He demanded better housing and living conditions for people. He called for school meals for children, and he claimed the necessity of a good supply of milk for children.

Women's rights were high on his agenda, especially the exploited and the low paid, such as domestic servants though not all seemed to appreciate his efforts to improve their situation. Walter seemed to have a third eye, none escaped his care. He fulfilled a full life in a relatively short space of time.

Walter was a man ahead of his time. As we read this work may the recapturing of his spirit and selflessness give us fire us to walk in his footsteps.

Appendix 1: Walter and Peter in the Irish Citizen Army

The following biographies are reproduced by kind permission of Jimmy Wren from his definitive history 'The GPO Garrison Easter Week 1916' Geography Publications, 2015.

Walter (Wally) Carpenter: (1895 – 1970)

*Irish Citizen Army, (Gloucester St Section). O/C I.C.A. (Boys Corps).
Roll of Honour*



Wally Carpenter was born in 1895 and was the eldest son of an English socialist, also named Walter, who settled in Dublin in the 1890s. He resided at 8 Caledon Road, East Wall, when he joined the Irish Citizen Army with his brother, Peter, at its foundation. He was O/C of the Irish Citizen Army, Boys Corps that was attached to various units and acted as messengers and dispatch couriers. In 1916, at the age of twenty one, he resided at 110 Foley Street and he fought in the GPO during Easter Week with his brother, Peter. On Easter Monday he went from Liberty Hall to the GPO and was sent in a party,

under the command of Frank Thornton, to assist the Irish Citizen Army men in the City Hall area. They came under sniper fire from the Crown Alley Telephone Exchange and they spent the night in a public house in Fleet Street, before making their way back to the GPO on Tuesday. He fell ill on Wednesday and was sent home from the GPO by James Connolly.

He took part in the War of Independence with the Irish Citizen Army. He was a co-founder of the Communist Party of Ireland with Roddy Connolly and Seán McLoughlin in 1921, and he fought on the Republican side in the Civil War. He was a member of the Four Courts Garrison in June 1922 and was arrested and interned in Mountjoy Jail, Gormanstown and Newbridge, until December 1923. During his internment he went on hunger strike for eleven days. During 'The Emergency' he was a sergeant in the 26th Infantry Battalion, which was made up mainly of Old IRA men. He was a former president of the Irish Trade Union Congress.

Wally Carpenter, of Linenhall Parade, died on May 18th 1970 and was buried at Deansgrange Cemetery.

References:

RH; IMA, MSPC; NLI, *William O'Brien Papers*, (Ms 15,673); Seán O'Casey, *Drums under the Window*, book 3, (1972); Ann Matthews, *The Irish Citizen Army*, (2014); *Labour News*, 23rd October 1937, (na); *Evening Herald*, 19th May 1970, (dn).

Peter Carpenter: (1897 – 1984)

Irish Citizen Army, (Gloucester St Section). Roll of Honour

Peter Carpenter was born to Ellen, an Irish mother and Walter, an English father of Wicklow decent, in 1897 and resided at 110 Foley Street. His father was a founder of the Irish Citizen Army, the Socialist Party of Ireland and a friend of James Connolly. Peter was employed as a plater in the Dublin Dockyard and was member of the Irish Citizen Army with his older brother, Wally. They both were part of the GPO Garrison in Easter Week. On Easter Monday he was one of a group of Irish Citizen Army men, under the command of Captain Thomas Craven, sent to the Fairview and Ballybough area. A headquarters was set



up in the offices of the Vitriol Works at Annesley Bridge and he and several others then took up a position in O'Meara's Public House. They remained there until the whole unit in the area was recalled to the GPO on Tuesday evening. He then joined those fighting in the Metropole Hotel and remained there until the building was destroyed by constant shelling. He returned to the GPO and remained there until its evacuation on Friday evening. After the surrender he was deported to Knutsford Jail on May 1st and interned in Frongoch until Christmas 1916.

On his release from internment he joined H. Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade and was employed at the Midland and Great Southern Railway, Phibsborough. He fought in the War of Independence and took the anti-Treaty side during the Civil War. Towards the end of the Civil War his health broke down and he was admitted to Crooksling Sanatorium suffering from T.B. After his release from Crooksling, he remained in poor health and was unable to work again.

Peter Carpenter died at his home at 44 Anner Road, Inchicore, on April 17th 1984.

References:

RH; IMA, MSPC; NLI, *Lynch Papers*, (Ms 11.131) & *William O'Brien Papers*, (Ms 15, 673); *Irish Times*, 26th September 1983, *An Irishwoman's Diary*, (Eileen O'Brien, na); *Evening Herald*, 18th April 1984, (dn).

Appendix 2: Response to visit of King George V (1911)

Visit of King George V

Fellow workers – As you are aware from reading the daily and weekly newspapers, we are about to be blessed with a visit from King George V.

Knowing from previous experience of Royal Visits, as well as from the Coronation orgies of the past few weeks, that the occasion will be utilised to make propaganda on behalf of royalty and aristocracy against the oncoming forces of democracy and National freedom, we desire to place before you some few reasons why you should unanimously refuse to countenance this visit, or to recognise it by your presence at its attendant processions or demonstrations. We appeal to you as workers, speaking to workers, whether your work be that of the brain or of the hand – manual or mental toil – it is of you and your children we are thinking; it is your cause we wish to safeguard and foster.

The future of the working class requires that all political and social positions should be open to all men and women; that all privileges of birth or wealth be abolished, and that every man or woman born into this land should have an equal opportunity to attain to the proudest position in the land. The Socialist demands that the only birthright necessary to qualify for public office should be the birthright of our common humanity.

Believing as we do that there is nothing on earth more sacred than humanity, we deny all allegiance to this institution of royalty, and hence we can only regard the visit of the King as adding fresh fuel to the fire of hatred with which we regard the plundering institutions of which he is the representative. Let the capitalist and landlord class flock to exalt him; he is theirs; in him they see embodied the idea of caste and class; they glorify him and exalt his importance that they might familiarise the public mind with the conception of political inequality, knowing well that a people mentally poisoned by the adulation of royalty can never attain to that spirit of self-reliant democracy necessary for the attainment of social freedom.

The mind accustomed to political kings can easily be reconciled to social kings – capitalist kings of the workshop, the mill, the railway, the ships and the docks. Thus coronation and king's visits are by our astute neversleeping masters made into huge Imperialist propagandist campaigns in favour of political and social schemes against democracy. But if our masters and rulers are sleepless in their

schemes against us, so we, rebels against their rule, must never sleep in our appeal to our fellows to maintain as publicly our belief in the dignity of our class – in the ultimate sovereignty of those who labour.

What is monarchy? From whence does it derive its sanction? What has been its gift to humanity? Monarchy is a survival of the tyranny imposed by the hand of greed and treachery upon the human race in the darkest and most ignorant days of our history. It derives its only sanction from the sword of the marauder, and the helplessness of the producer, and its gifts to humanity are unknown, save as they can be measured in the pernicious examples of triumphant and shameless iniquities.

Every class in society save royalty, and especially British royalty, has through some of its members contributed something to the elevation of the race. But neither in science, nor in art, nor in literature, nor in exploration, nor in mechanical invention, nor in humanising of laws, nor in any sphere of human activity has a representative of British royalty helped forward the moral, intellectual or material improvement of mankind. But that royal family has opposed every forward move, fought every reform, persecuted every patriot, and intrigued against every good cause. Slandering every friend of the people, it has befriended every oppressor. Eulogised today by misguided clerics, it has been notorious in history for the revolting nature of its crimes. Murder, treachery, adultery, incest, theft, perjury – every crime known to man has been committed by some one or other of the race of monarchs from whom King George is proud to trace his descent.

“His blood Has crept through scoundrels since the flood.”

We will not blame him for the crimes of his ancestors if he relinquishes the royal rights of his ancestors; but as long as he claims their rights, by virtue of descent, then, by virtue of descent, he must shoulder the responsibility for their crimes.

Fellow-workers, stand by the dignity of your class. All these parading royalties, all this insolent aristocracy, all these grovelling, dirt-eating capitalist traitors, all these are but signs of disease in any social state – diseases which a royal visit brings to a head and spews in all its nastiness before our horrified eyes. But as the recognition of the disease is the first stage towards its cure, so that we may rid our social state of its political and social diseases, we must recognise the elements of corruption. Hence, in bringing them all together and exposing their unity, even a royal visit may help us to understand and understanding, help us to know how to destroy the royal, aristocratic and capitalistic classes who live upon our labour.

Their workshops, their lands, their mills, their factories, their ships, their railways must be voted into our hands who alone use them, public ownership must take the place of capitalist ownership, social democracy replace political and social inequality, the sovereignty of labour must supersede and destroy the sovereignty of birth and the monarchy of capitalism.

Ours be the task to enlighten the ignorant among our class, to dissipate and destroy the political and social superstitions of the enslaved masses and to hasten the coming day when, in the words of Joseph Brenan, the fearless patriot of '48, all the world will maintain

*“The Right Divine of Labour
To be first of earthly things;
That the Thinker and the Worker
Are Manhood’s only Kings.”*

Published by Socialist Party (Dublin Branch) in Ireland 1911

Written by James Connolly

Appendix 3: Walter Carpenter Free

Public Congratulations

Sunday's Meeting in Beresford Place a public meeting under the auspices of the Socialist Party of Ireland was held last Sunday at Beresford Place to congratulate Mr Walter Carpenter on his discharge from Mountjoy Prison, where he had been confined for a term on a charge of having used language alleged to be derogatory to King George of England. There was a considerable attendance, which included numbers of the National Boy Scouts in their uniform. Unlike previous meetings in Beresford Place, which were attended by a considerable force of the DMP, there was not a single Cossack at Sunday's gathering.

Mr James Connolly, Organiser Irish Transport Workers' Union, Belfast, presided. In the course of his address opening the proceedings Mr Connolly said he was glad to see such a large meeting despite the rain and other adverse circumstances. They had their comrade, Carpenter, again with them, and next to him, but perhaps higher in the degree of criminality, they had Miss Molony (applause). It is, continued Mr Connolly, perfectly shocking to hear you cheer such criminals. I take it that in expressing my own sentiments in this matter I am expressing the sentiments of every man around me – that is to say, that in welcoming Carpenter on his release from prison, we take that opportunity, not only of associating ourselves with him in the crime that he committed, but of declaring our fullest sympathy, and not only our fullest sympathy, but our completely unqualified endorsement of the words for which he was sent to prison (cheers).

We are to-day living in times of change – in times of what it is no exaggeration to describe as a revolution. On such an occasion it is but fitting that the party to which our friend Carpenter and Miss Molony belong – the Socialist Party of Ireland – should come forward and take their position with the people in the great crisis with which we have been face to face. It is a pleasure to me as one of the oldest pioneers of trades unionism in Dublin to say how glad I am to be able to call your attention to the fact that in the two great crises – the national crisis and the industrial crisis – in both of which the people of Dublin were met with all kinds of temptations and bribery and with all kinds of poison in order, if possible, to lead them astray and destroy their national spirit – in both these crises the Socialist Party of Ireland were ready with the people to recognise that the national cause and the industrial cause were at stake, and that their place was in the firing line in front of the people (cheers). I am glad to recognise that during these crises you and they acted up to the fullest sense of your responsibilities as

men and women. In the first of these crises they had to encounter a perfect orgy of flunkeyism. According to the English newspapers Dublin was the most loyal place in all the dominions of the king of England, and the people were supposed to be like bellowing slaves going down on their knees and protesting their loyalty and selfless adulation and worship to a king who rules, we are told, according to the grace of God, but with forty thousand bayonets at the back of him (cheers and laughter). Despite all this attempt to represent Dublin as enthusiastically loyal about a month ago, no sooner had his Gracious Majesty taken his departure from their shores than they saw Dublin a seething mass of discontent – seething with rebellion and ready to go to any extreme in the attempt to gain freedom.

I cannot tell you how this old heart of mine rose with gladness when in the North I heard that the people of Dublin – the workers of Dublin – had taken the measure of their responsibilities and had unfurled the banner of freedom – of national and industrial freedom – not only for themselves, but for their struggling brothers across the water. Those men and women who were most enthusiastically national in the first of these crises were at the same time most enthusiastic in support of the industrial uprising during the last few days and weeks; and whether in the workshop or outside it were amongst the first to support their brothers who took active steps to uphold the dignity and the rights of the working classes (cheers).

Let us draw the lesson of this great struggle of the last few days and weeks. The newspapers told them that England was one mass of rebellion. Fifty thousand troops were concentrated in London, four warships were in the Mersey, and the guns of these warships and the bayonets of the soldiers were pointed, not against Germany, not against Russia, but against the working classes in the cities of England, just as they were presented against the working classes here in Dublin. All the newspapers had been full of this great upheaval in England, in Dublin, and in Belfast and elsewhere. They had been telling you in great headlines of the terrible news of the great strike in England, Ireland, and Scotland – everything was powerless, works had been suspended and railway communication cut off, and the nation had been threatened with bankruptcy. As Mr Mahony declared in the Dublin Police Court, if this went on society would be dissolved. Why?

Because the workers had stopped work – the poor ill-considered, badly-paid, ill-requited, slave-driven and degraded workers had stopped working; and mark you, my friends, the moment you stopped working society went to chaos, to everlasting smash. Does not that teach you a great lesson – the power of the people; the power of the working classes? We are living in a new age – the age of

solidarity of labour. You must recognise that you are living not only in an age of progress, but in an age of revolution. We in Ireland did our part in that struggle, and we have shown that we are determined to win for the workers complete industrial freedom, and the right to live in the country in which they were born.

They had but one thing to serve in this struggle, and that was to maintain and uphold the dignity of labour, and they would do that by acting their part as men and as women. In conclusion Mr Connolly read for the meeting the following resolution, which would be proposed for adoption:— “That this meeting of Dublin workers tenders a cordial welcome to Mr Walter Carpenter on his release from prison, and heartily congratulates him on his timely and effective protest against the recent outburst of flunkeyism in the city” (cheers).

Irish Worker, 2 September 1911.

Appendix 4: Walter Carpenter Marriage and Death Certificates

(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)	
111.	10 25	Walter Carpenter	W Thomas	all married	55	Secretary Dial Government Industrial Managers	Hart Kent Bureau Plumber Plumber Plumber	W P Carpenter Son of David 110 Selby St.	County 5th 202	10 26 Registrar.

4/4	18 Dec 1871	Walter Carpenter	Walter Carpenter	Amelia Carpenter formerly May	Sweep	A. Carpenter Mother 22 Paera Street Lee	Eggleston Eggleston 1871	John Thomas Robert Barrington Registrar
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"I went to Mountjoy Prison with the spirit of revolution in my heart, and I have come out with that spirit intensified to the thousandth degree"

The Life and work of Walter Carpenter (1871 -1926)

Walter Carpenter was a trade unionist, socialist and revolutionary. In the early 20th century he was one of the most prominent campaigners in Dublin City, active on concerns such as women's suffrage, eradicating slum housing and municipal reform. He was a close friend to James Connolly, and had been an early ITGWU organiser alongside James Larkin. His sons Walter and Peter served with the Irish Citizen Army from its foundation in 1913.

In this book, published to mark the 90th anniversary of his death, his Grand Daughter Ellen Galvin revives the story of this remarkable man and his works.

(Cover image designed by Ellen Galvin, depicting new growth arising from a seemingly dead tree. "As the tree continues to sprout into new life, so does the indomitable spirit of Walter Carpenter")



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