



The 1913 Lockout

HISTORY

In 2013, Ireland remembered the Centenary of the 1913 Lockout with a series of special events and ceremonies. A series of commemorative stamps have been designed by Ger Garland and produced by An Post to remember the contributions of three key figures in the Lockout – James Larkin, James Connolly and Countess Markiewicz. More information on how stamps are designed and the history of stamps in Ireland can be found on www.anpostschoolbag.ie.

The 1913 Lockout was a major industrial dispute between almost 20,000 workers and 300 employers which took place in Ireland's capital city of Dublin. It lasted from 26 August 1913 to 18 January 1914, and is often seen as the most severe and important industrial dispute in Irish history.



James ('Big Jim') Larkin (1874–1947) was born in Liverpool of Irish parents. In 1908, he arrived in Dublin and set up the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU). Within five years, the union had over 10,000 members. What followed was a confrontation between the ITGWU and big business in Dublin. William Martin Murphy, an anti-trade unionist, who owned the Dublin United Tramway Company (DUTC), as well as a number of other companies, declared that any of his DUTC employees joining Larkin's union would be fired. Larkin urged them to strike so Murphy and other employers retaliated by locking out union members. Over 20,000 workers and their families were affected. While the strike didn't bring about improved pay or conditions at the time it did let employers know they could no longer treat their workers so badly.



James Connolly (1886–1916) helped to establish the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) with Jim Larkin during the 1913 Lockout to protect workers from the Dublin Metropolitan Police when they clashed during strikes. The ICA continued to grow after the Lockout ended and played a role in the 1916 rebellion. Connolly was a talented orator and was known for his speeches on the streets of Dublin. Connolly a key contributor to the Proclamation of the Irish Republic and during the 1916 Easter Rising he was located in the General Post Office where he directed military operations.



Countess Markiewicz (1868–1927) joined the ICA to defend the workers who were striking from the police. Although she was wealthy, she was sympathetic towards the workers. She recruited them to peel potatoes and distribute food all of which she paid for. She even sold her jewellery to help pay for this. As a Lieutenant in the ICA the Countess took part in the Easter Rising of 1916 where she was second-in-command at the fight on St. Stephens Green. She was imprisoned in Kilmainham and sentenced to death but her sentence was changed on grounds of her gender. Countess Markiewicz later went on to be the first woman elected to the British House of Commons and helped to form the first Dáil Éireann.



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Quiz

1. What does the word dispute mean?
2. How long did the Lockout last?
3. Was the 1913 Lockout a success?
4. What was the name of the Union James Larkin set up?
5. Who was William Martin Murphy?
6. Why was the Irish Citizen Army set up?
7. What was James Connolly's role during the 1916 Easter Rising?
8. What did Countess Markiewicz do for the striking workers?
9. Why was Countess Markiewicz's prison sentence changed?
10. What did Countess Markiewicz achieve after the 1913 Lockout and 1916 Easter Rising?

Suggested homework activities

- Imagine you were a Trade Unionist on strike during the Lockout. Write a letter to a friend living outside Dublin explaining the situation in Dublin and how you feel about it. You could include information about poor living and work conditions, speeches you may have heard from Larkin and Connolly, how the workers are being treated by the police, why you are striking and how you are coping with no money.
- Write a newspaper article discussing the Lockout remembering to give accounts from both sides – the workers and the employers. Include facts you know about the Lockout and those involved.
- Write an argument either for or against joining a trade union in 1913. What would it mean for your family? What would it mean for you? What differences would it make to your work? How would you be treated by other workers?



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Quiz Answers

1. It means a fight, argument or disagreement.
2. From 26 August 1913 to 18 January 1914 – almost 5 months.
3. The strike didn't bring about improved pay or conditions it did let employers know they could no longer treat their workers so badly.
4. The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU).
5. William Martin Murphy was an anti-trade unionist, who owned the Dublin United Tramway Company (DUTC) as well as a number of other companies.
6. To protect workers from the Dublin Metropolitan Police when they clashed during strikes.
7. During the 1916 Easter Rising James Connolly was located in the General Post Office (GPO) where he directed military operations.
8. Countess Markiewicz recruited them to peel potatoes and distribute food.
9. Her sentence was changed on grounds of her gender because she was a woman.
10. Countess Markiewicz later went on to be the first woman elected to the British House of Commons and helped to form the first Dáil Éireann.

Curriculum links

English

- 2.2.3 The skills of reading and listening with understanding and discrimination
- reading skills to cope with factual prose
 - reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, close reading and re-reading
- 2.3.2 The expression of the student's response should range widely over different modes of language.
- to write within the discipline of literary forms
 - to give shape to his/her response in a creative manner
 - Political developments in Ireland in the late 19th century and in the 20th century
 - Social change in the 20th century

CSPE

- 2.2.2. CONCEPTS
- Rights and responsibilities
 - Interdependence
 - Law