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Irish Workers and Global Class Formation

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The Challenge

Irish labour history has undergone a fantastic development in the last half century – at least that is the impression I have as an outsider. Irish academia long ignored labour. About twenty years ago, Emmet O'Connor observed that 'not a single person' was 'employed as a labour historian in any college or research centre in Ireland', a situation that remains unchanged.¹ The founding of the Irish Labour History Society (ILHS) in 1973 and the publication of *Saothar* since 1975 have contributed significantly to the fact that the history of work and workers has nevertheless become a vibrant research area. The ILHS and its journal have clearly been 'the main forum' for much of the ongoing work on Irish labour history.²

Looking back, the establishment of the ILHS was part of a longer-running international trend. Already in 1959 the Austrian Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung (Association for Labour Movement History) was founded. Britain came next in 1960 with the Society for the Study of Labour History, and in 1961 – inspired by this – an organisation was also established in Australia.³ After the ILHS, many other associations followed, including in Canada, India, the United States, Brazil, France, Italy, and Germany. The most recent addition is the Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Trabajo y Trabajadores (REDLATT), founded in 2017.

Although the ILHS was part of a wider pattern in that sense, it was different from most other organisations from the start. Not only because of the affiliation of trade unions and the participation of non-academic members, but also because of the break with 'methodological nationalism'. Let me briefly explain what I mean by that. Traditional labour history, as it emerged in the nineteenth century in Europe, and somewhat later in North America, has long identified society and state, and therefore considered the different nation-states as the isolated Monads of historical inquiry. Historians reconstructed the history of the working classes and movements in Germany, France, Great Britain and so on as separate developments.⁴

It was obvious from the outset that such an approach would not work for Ireland. Its past as a colony made it impossible to study its own history in isolation (monadologically). The great influence of the British Empire and the

enormous role of international migration made it clear that Irish labour history could always only be understood in a transnational context. Already the first issue of *Saothar* contained an article by the late David Doyle about the Irish and US labour.⁵ And after that, a stream of articles and books on labour history have appeared, many of which deal with transnational aspects. Irish labour historians never seem to have fallen victim to methodological nationalism to the same extent as their colleagues in countries such as the UK or France. In that sense they were an implicit vanguard.

The wider connection of Irish labour history was underlined by the establishment of Irish study associations in other parts of the world, which also dealt in part with labour history. For example, the *Australian Journal of Irish Studies*, which took off in 2001 (since 2006 it is named *The Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, reflecting the fact that the journal is now also covering Aotearoa/New Zealand), and the *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*, issued by the Society for Irish Latin America Studies (since 2003).

During the last decades methodological nationalism has been increasingly discredited. A first cause was the proliferation of international comparative research, beginning in the North Atlantic region. For a while this approach did not yet break with monadology, because it still saw countries as separate 'cases', but gradually the perspective broadened, when it became clear that movements sometimes have strongly influenced one another, and that not only 'case studies' but studies of interactions and entanglements were essential. The rise of labour history in the Global South contributed to the disintegration of monadology as well. The nation-state was increasingly historicized, and thereby relativised.

Moreover, a second subversive tendency gained influence, namely the critique of Eurocentrism – that is the mental ordering of the world from the standpoint of the North-Atlantic region: thus, the 'modern' period is supposed to have begun in Europe and North-America, and later extended step by step to the rest of the world; the temporality of this 'core region' determines the periodization of developments in the rest of the world.

These two subversive tendencies must be clearly distinguished, but they run more or less parallel to each other. Their appearance is linked to a series of changes that occurred since the Second World War, or started even earlier, including decolonisation, the growth of transcontinental imagined communities, such as Pan-Africanism, the 'discovery' of transcultural migrant lives, border cultures and transnational cycles of protests and strikes. Moreover, labour historians from different countries increasingly met at international conferences, such as the European Social Science History Conference, and the European and Global Labour History Networks. Labour history has become increasingly transnational, as evidenced by the growing

number of studies over the years examining the connections between or comparing national experiences.

The volume of literature on the Irish diaspora, as it has developed especially since the 1960s, is overwhelming and the quality is often impressive, while the historiography of the working class inside Ireland has also boomed. We now have a huge, but still somewhat disparate corpus of literature concerning the history of Irish workers across the globe. This makes it possible to ask more far-reaching questions about international contrasts and cross-border interactions. The integration of the available material is a wonderful challenge. In recent years first steps in this direction have already been made.⁶ In the following I would like to combine some insights from the available literature to highlight one important aspect of the global Irish class formation in one specific period: collective action in the years from the 1790s to the 1920s. Everything that follows is no more than a modest exploration of a possible research direction, made by a global labour historian who by no means is an expert on the Irish past.

Class & Moving Repertoires of Contention

In capitalism there *always* existed, and probably will continue to exist, several forms of commodified labour side by side. In its long development capitalism utilised many kinds of work relationships, some based on economic compulsion, others with a non-economic component. Millions of people were forced into slavery and brought by force from Africa to the Caribbean, to Brazil and in the southern states of the USA. Contract workers from India and China were shipped off to toil in South Africa, Malaysia or South America. 'Free' migrant workers left Europe for the New World, for Australia or the colonies. And today sharecroppers produce an important portion of world agricultural output. These and other work-relationships are synchronous, even if there seems to be a secular trend towards 'free wage labour'. Slavery still exists and sharecropping is enjoying a comeback in areas like California.

The history of capitalist labour must therefore encompass all forms of physically or economically coerced commodification of labour power – *plus* all labour which creates such commodified labour or regenerates it, that is parental labour, household labour, care labour, and subsistence labour. While taking all these different forms of labour into account, we should use households/families as the basic unit of analysis rather than individuals, because most households combine multiple sources of income in ever-changing ways; in addition to wage labour, they also perform subsistence activities, are frequently through debts or otherwise dependent on employers and persons of repute, and so on.

These considerations fit in well with the diverse past of the Irish working class, which included wage earners, sharecroppers, housewives, and domestics, but also indentured and convict labourers, and even slaves. I limit myself here

to the forms of collective action that Irish workers deployed over time. What was the relationship between developments in Ireland itself and abroad? What interactions have taken place and what changes have these interactions undergone over time?

Fundamental to the analysis of Irish struggles seems to be the specific culture of resistance that arose in response to British oppression and exploitation. The anthropologist James Scott has recalled that in many parts of the world 'Irish democracy' was a term used to describe 'the silent, dogged resistance, withdrawal, and truculence of millions of ordinary people'.⁷ In 1836 an English employer summarised this by declaring before a Parliamentary Commission that 'where there is discontent, or a disposition to combine, or turn-outs among the work people, the Irish are the leaders; they are the most difficult to reason with and convince on the subject of wages and regulations in factories'.⁸ Irish migrants were feared all over the British Empire, especially if they were numerous. When the arrival of forty Irish families was announced in Somerset County, Maryland, in 1681, the suspicion soon arose 'that ffourty ffamilyls will proove in the End to be ffourty thousand to cutt the Protestants throats'.⁹ In the English West Indies, 'Irish servants were cordially hated by their English masters'.¹⁰ In New York City in the early twentieth century people spoke of 'Irish rain', which meant 'a shower of bricks from tenement rooftops, onto the heads of scabs and their police protectors'.¹¹ The unruliness of the Irish was so notorious that other 'difficult' ethnic groups were identified with it. For example, when immigrants from Spanish Galicia were imported into Cuba after 1848, they became rebellious almost immediately and soon were known as 'Spanish Irishmen'.¹²

At times, 'Irish democracy' was manifested primarily in the motivation of individuals, as in the case of Ned Kelly, the nineteenth-century Australian outlaw and bushranger who, as the son of an Irish convict labourer, was strongly driven by 'his love of Ireland and its people and his hatred of Queen Victoria's oppression of the Irish, both in Ireland and in Australia'.¹³ More important, however, was probably that the Irish lower classes – familiar as they were with systematic oppression – developed forms of organised resistance of their own. In analysing this we can make use of an interesting idea of the historical sociologist Charles Tilly: participants in collective action ('claimants') resemble actors: they have a limited repertoire (petitions, demonstrations, etc.), which they perform whenever they wish to present their claims collectively to the authorities or to opponents. So, there are always certain repertoires of contention comprising several performances each. Repertoires may therefore be described as 'the limited, familiar, historically created arrays of claim-making performances that under most circumstances greatly circumscribe the means by which people engage in contentious politics'.¹⁴ Performances and repertoires evolve through confrontations with the adversary, the object of the claims. There is

continuous interaction between the authorities and the claimants. Assemblies are prohibited, consultation occurs, demands are presented, limits are explored: a repertoire is always the outcome of bargaining. It is plastic and changes over time.

The Irish countryside developed its own repertoire of contention, especially from the mid-eighteenth century when output, income, and consumption increased, but the underlying commercialisation of agriculture led, among other things, to higher rents, shorter leases, and prohibitions against subletting, and so tensions between landlords and tenants increased.¹⁵ It was under these circumstances that the famous secret societies – Whiteboys, Levellers, Defenders, Break-of-Day Boys – emerged that defended the traditional moral economy.¹⁶ Their community-based organisations, united by oaths, applied threats, destruction of property, torture, beatings and even rape and homicide to achieve their ends. They formed, in the words of Peter Way, ‘in effect, primitive syndicalist organisations’.¹⁷ It is probable that especially young men were attracted to secret societies, although this may in part also be misleading propaganda by the opponents.¹⁸ We still know little about the specifically gendered nature of these ‘homosocial (if often nebulous) organisations’.¹⁹ The Whiteboys, Ribbonmen, etc. were completely dominated by men. The typically Irish repertoire of contention was therefore clearly masculine. Whether women in Ireland have also developed a repertoire of contention at the same time will have to be further researched.

During emigration, the weapon of the secret organisation was taken along and adapted to the new circumstances. For example, when more than 400 ‘rebels’ of 1798 were deported to New South Wales, they almost immediately caused great, often well-organised, unrest. ‘There were disturbances throughout 1800: in February a seditious gathering was broken up in Sydney, and in May another plot was reported. In September and October further conspiracies were investigated, and supposed participants flogged or sent to Norfolk Island. In December, a plot on Norfolk Island was forestalled by the execution of two of its leaders’.²⁰

In the United States, Irish secret societies made their mark from the first decades of the nineteenth century. The workers who built the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal between 1834 and 1840 were mostly Irish; ‘they banded together and sought to establish a certain amount of control over the workplace and relations with their bosses. The Irish secret society acted as their model for mobilisation ... Neither formally structured nor unchanging, organizations lay dormant, then mobilised for specific grievances. Their ephemeral character reflected the rhythms of class struggle, periods of dynamic tension punctuated by explosive conflict’. They caused ‘at least ten significant disturbances and virtually continuous labour unrest ... necessitating the state militia to be called out five times and federal troops once’.²¹

Much more famous (or infamous) have become the Molly Maguires who were at the origin of 'America's first labor war'.²² They made their appearance in Pennsylvania's anthracite region from the late 1850s. The miners affiliated with the Molly Maguires (largely from north-central and north-western Ireland, especially Donegal) in particular used collective violence against mine owners and superintendents, policemen and municipal officials, but also against workers of other ethnic backgrounds, especially the skilled British miners. A late expression of 'Irish democracy' could be observed in South Africa in the 1880s, where 'a gang of Irish bandits, ex-navvies, in an 'Irish brigade' and under a 'Captain Moonlight', terrorised the Eastern Transvaal and parts of Portuguese Mozambique'.²³

A Second Repertoire

Over time, the 'classical' Irish repertoire gave way to the 'modern' trade union struggle. That was an important change in several ways. As Kevin Kenny commented on the Molly Maguires:

'Both modes of organisation, the trade union and the violent secret society, tried to improve conditions of life and labor in the anthracite region. But the strategy of the trade union was indirect, gradual, peaceful, and systematically organized across the entire anthracite region, while that of the Molly Maguires was direct, violent, sporadic, and confined to a specific locality. Trade unionism was a mode of labor organisation produced by, and uniquely adapted to, the prevailing social and economic conditions in nineteenth-century Britain and Pennsylvania. Molly Maguireism, by contrast, embodied a form of protest derived in its essentials from a specific part of the Irish countryside.'²⁴

Gradually, the second repertoire of contention took shape, in the form of local and small friendly societies and trade unions based on them. But in the first half of the nineteenth century, the standard repertoire, consisting of petitions, strikes, etc., was still regularly supplemented with forms of violence. Initially, the differences between the old and the new repertoire were thus limited. In addition to the early unions, unskilled urban workers in some cases organised 'quasi-secret brotherhoods' that could exercise a certain control over the local labour market. Usually, 'women lay beyond the ambit of labour organisation'.²⁵

For a long time, perhaps until the 1830s, the repertoires of contention co-existed. And it is also possible that they sometimes overlapped, for example when members of secret societies became active in cities and joined labour organisations. Irish workers all over the world became involved in unions during the nineteenth century. As known, in Ireland itself the influence of English and Scottish unions increased over time. This influence was of course promoted by the growing migration from Ireland, initially mainly as seasonal harvest migration. According to the Census of 1841 over 57,000 migrants crossed to Britain from Irish ports each year.²⁶ Circular migration brought, in the words of J. H. Johnson, 'increased familiarity

with conditions elsewhere and disturbed the traditional way of life in its source areas²⁷ – especially when seasonal harvest work in England was gradually converted into (semi-)permanent migration and shifted to non-agricultural work. A real breakthrough of the Irish trade-union movement, of course, did not take place until late in the nineteenth century, when unskilled workers also organised themselves and female wage earners began to stir more vigorously²⁸ – all this eventually resulting in the founding of the Irish Trades Union Congress (ITUC) in 1894, Irish Transport & General Workers' Union (ITGWU) in 1909, and the Labour Party in 1912.

But even more important for my subject is that Irish involvement also grew in trade unions abroad. This seems to have happened first in England and Scotland. It is plausible that men who had already done factory work in Ireland were pioneers in this area. Take the case of Donegal-born John Doherty.

'Doherty started work in Irish cotton workshops around 1808, at the age of ten. By 1816, now eighteen, he had become a cotton spinner in Lame, north of Belfast. Doherty emigrated to Manchester, England, that year. In Lancashire, he soon plunged into local struggles with the cotton masters. In 1819, Doherty went to prison for two years, convicted of helping start an 1818 strike by the Manchester spinners' union. By 1830 he had emerged as a nationally visible labour leader, continuing to organise major strikes in Manchester and to initiate such projects as the Grand General Union of Operative Cotton Spinners for the entire United Kingdom and the multi-trade National Association for the Protection of Labour.'²⁹

The Irish also played an important role in English political contention. Since the 1820s, the Ribbon Society (a Catholic secret society with agrarian roots) had established itself in several English and Scottish cities, and virtually everywhere 'an unusually high proportion of Irish labourers is found participating in local radical and labour movements'. They played a powerful role in the Chartist movement in England in the years 1838-1857, in which Feargus O'Connor was a prominent actor.³⁰

When Irish workers subsequently migrated on to another country, they took with them the acquired contentious culture and action repertoires and often integrated these into the foreign repertoires of contention. The US historian Timothy Meagher concluded: 'Many important Irish American labour leaders, Philip Murray and John Brophy among others in the modern era, and John Siney and Joseph McDonnell in the nineteenth century, came to America through Britain and gained experience with unions before they arrived here'.³¹ Naturally, these kinds of transcontinental learning processes also occurred at the local and rank-and-file level. For example, in the 1860s to 1880s thousands of Irish arrived in Fall River, Massachusetts: 'These immigrants ... [had] migrated from Ireland to the textile mills of Lancashire, where they were thoroughly apprenticed in the English trade union movement and class consciousness. With the English, they then left Lancashire for Fall River

because of blacklisting strikes or depressions in the textile towns of Oldham, Blackburn, or Manchester'.³²

Not only the moderate unions managed to find support among Irish migrants, but also the more radical ones. A prime example are the Industrial Workers of the World. Peter Cole mentioned 'a long history of Irish and Irish American radicalism [which] existed alongside the more conservative, racist traditions of other Irish Americans'; he pointed out that: 'Numerous Irish Americans became leaders in the IWW, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn being the most famous. Similarly, Irish labour leaders and revolutionaries, namely James Connolly and Jim Larkin, were drawn to the IWW when they lived and travelled in the States'.³³

Perhaps less spectacular, but effective was the resistance of Irish domestic servants in the United States who applied an element of the second repertoire in their own situation. When, towards the end of the nineteenth century, maids increasingly became 'live-out' rather than 'live-in' household employees, i.e. they were no longer locked up in middle-class homes, their personal autonomy increased and they were able to reconnect with the Irish community. In addition, other jobs became available, especially in industry. 'Aware of this, many maids began to leave their service jobs in the early twentieth century, claiming that they would find shorter hours, greater individual freedom, and more time for leisure in other lines of work'. Such resistance, combined with the influence of emerging social reform movements from middle-class circles, led to a certain improvement in working conditions.³⁴

In Australia, Irish involvement in the emerging trade union movement was high. 'Some workers brought the skills and experience necessary to organise labour. By 1860 in Victoria they had introduced craft (or 'trade') societies, won an eight-hour working day and established the Trades Hall'.³⁵ When, around the turn of the century, Labo(u)r Parties were founded, relatively many Catholic Irish people joined, as was also evident from their support in the 1910 elections.³⁶

An entirely new situation arose during the Great War and its aftermath. The many sensational events of that period were accompanied by important, but often temporary, adjustments and expansions of the repertoire. I am not only referring to the Easter Rising in 1916, but also to the worksite occupations, and the council movements in Limerick and elsewhere – partly inspired by the Russian Revolution – in later years.³⁷ Most remarkable from an international comparative perspective was the role of the newly established Irish Republican Army; this was of course – given the participation of petit bourgeois and businessmen – not a homogeneous class organisation, but nevertheless consisted very predominantly of 'poor working men'³⁸ and played an important role in the workers' struggle, if only by weakening state power and thus facilitating social protest.

The IRA can perhaps be seen as an organisation that modernised the first repertoire of contention, by building a nation-wide paramilitary structure.

The repertoire developed by the IRA inspired resistance movements in other parts of the world. British India is probably the prime example of this.³⁹ In Bengal, 'after the First World War Ireland became the most important model for physical-force nationalists in the province'.⁴⁰ From 1926 a secret section of the Labour Swaraj Party decided to prepare an armed struggle along Sinn Féin lines in India. Around 1930 an Indian Republican Army arose from this, following the explicit example of the IRA. It apparently began each meeting with a reading of the Easter Uprising Manifesto.⁴¹ In the night of 18 April 1930 the Bengal IRA organised an Armoury Raid in the port city of Chittagong in which 'more than sixty revolutionaries armed with revolvers and pistols captured and set fire to police and auxiliary force armouries ... and seized arms and ammunition, while others destroyed rail and telegraph communications. ... The raid created a boom in recruitment for revolutionary organizations and sparked British fears of similar raids elsewhere'.⁴²

In the years 1916-1923, expressions of solidarity with the Irish freedom struggle were integrated into the repertoire of contention of several foreign labour movements.⁴³ While the British Labour Party as a whole remained ambiguous and refused to opt clearly for Irish independence, the Independent Labour party, at its annual conference in 1920, advocated complete autonomy for Ireland, immediate withdrawal of British troops and the establishment of a democratically elected government.

In the United States, Irish nationalism became 'a mass movement', as David Brundage has observed.

'The Friends of Irish Freedom, founded in 1916, claimed nearly 300,000 members by 1919 and the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (AARIR), founded in 1919, was even more significant. By 1921 the organisation had 700,000 members and had raised over ten million dollars for the republican movement in Ireland.'⁴⁴

Polish American and African-American workers also expressed mass solidarity. In New York, during the 1920 MacSwiney strike, 'black dockers joined the strike on the first day and continued to support it for the duration'.⁴⁵

In Australia seven leaders of the local IRA branch 'established a training camp in the Blue Mountains, on the outskirts of Sydney' to prepare for assisting their compatriots in Ireland.⁴⁶ More generally, a vast network of Irish radicals existed in the Anglophone world during these years, contributing, among other things, to the establishment of the Australian Communist Party.⁴⁷ Also elsewhere – in Argentina, Finland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Quebec, Scotland, and South Africa – the Irish uprising had a clear impact.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The globalisation process of the last half century has made it clear that the national state is not an appropriate geographical unit for class analysis.⁴⁹ Historians of migration have pointed this out for some time. Kevin Kenny has rightly claimed, for example: ‘We have many excellent studies of Irish immigrants within individual nation states, but little sense of the migration as a unified whole’.⁵⁰ My previous notes underline the need for a holistic approach. The struggle of the Irish working class should not be seen in isolation, but in a much broader transcontinental context that includes not only the diaspora but also segments of the lower classes of different ethnic backgrounds.

What I have argued here needs a much more thorough elaboration though. First, repertoires of contention are only a very small part of class analysis; naturally, the analysis of collective action cannot be reduced to contentious repertoires. Moreover, a real study of class formation requires that we also do justice to the deeper aspects, in particular the structure of capitalist economic development; the social organisation of society ‘lived by actual people in real social formations’; and classes as “formed groups, sharing dispositions’.⁵¹ Enda Delaney was justified in pointing out that:

‘A transnational history of class would examine both the diaspora and the Irish at home, and, most importantly, develop sophisticated and theoretically informed models that look at the evolution of class consciousness, tensions between and across social classes, the language of class, barriers to upward social mobility, patterns of consumption, and gendered notions of what it meant to be middle or working class.’⁵²

Secondly, my one-sided focus on contentious behaviour may give the wrong impression that all Irish workers exhibited protest behaviour. And that that protest was always ‘left’. Sometimes it was the other way around. In early twentieth-century New York City for instance, the Irish were ‘the missing factor’ in the Socialist movement: ‘They made up fewer than one percent of enrolled Socialists in 1915, of party recruits between 1908 and 1912, and of party members in 1904’.⁵³ And although they were often victims of racism themselves, Irish workers could naturally be racists too.⁵⁴

Thirdly, the term ‘diaspora’ is somewhat misleading. Floya Anthias has pointed out that it deploys ‘a notion of ethnicity which privileges the point of ‘origin’ in constructing identity and solidarity’, and thus ‘fails to examine trans-ethnic commonalities and relations’.⁵⁵ The diaspora is only part of the story. For some time – two, three or four generations – Irish immigrants can, of course, maintain an ethnic enclave. The ways in which that happens can vary widely, from direct intervention by a Catholic pastor who separates his ‘flock’ from other ethnic groups as much as possible, as was the case in Argentina,⁵⁶ to the formation of a large enclave, as happened in the mining town of Butte in the northern Rocky Mountains, where the majority were from the same locality: ‘As late as 1917 Father Patrick Brosnan ... wrote back

to his father that ‘Everyone here is from Castletownbere’.⁵⁷ In any case, after some time a ‘gradual acculturation of immigrants and their socialisation in working-class environments and contexts’ occurs.⁵⁸ How far this acculturation can go is illustrated by the development in Jamaica, where Irish indentured labourers have gradually been absorbed into the local, predominantly black, population in which Irish surnames now appear frequently.⁵⁹ On Barbados, Irish servants ‘mixed with English people of similar social status, lost their distinctive Irish language, accent and Catholicism, and became ‘poor whites’. ... The many descendants of white Irish-slave relationships were certainly unaware of any sense of belonging to the Irish nation’.⁶⁰ The dilution of ethnic identity makes it even more important for historians to integrate Irish class formation into a broader multi-ethnic analysis.

This brings me to my final point: such integrated analysis requires in-depth knowledge of different cultures and languages. In exceptional cases one individual is able to do this. But, as the body of knowledge grows, this will become increasingly rare. Therefore, it is more and more necessary to see historiography as the teamwork of researchers worldwide.

Notes

- 1 Emmet O’Connor, ‘Ireland’, *Labour/Le Travail*, no. 50 (Fall 2002), pp. 243-248 (245).
- 2 Fintan Lane & Dónal Ó Drisceoil, ‘Introduction’, in Lane & Ó Drisceoil (eds), *Politics and the Irish Working Class, 1830-1945*, (Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2005), pp. 1-5 (5).
- 3 For backgrounds and context see Marcel van der Linden & Lex Heerma van Voss, ‘Introduction’ in Heerma van Voss & van der Linden (eds), *Class and Other Identities. Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labour History*, (Berghahn, New York & Oxford, 2002), pp. 1-39.
- 4 This is not to say that traditional labour history did not look beyond national borders. This indeed happened, but the premise usually remained monadological: the ‘civilised’ European world was supposed to consist of peoples who were developing roughly in the same direction, albeit at different rates. Some peoples are more advanced than others in certain respects – and so the laggards can see their future more or less reflected in the forerunners.
- 5 David Doyle, ‘The Irish and American Labour, 1880-1920’, *Saothar* 1, 1975, pp. 42-53.
- 6 For example, Kevin Kenny, ‘Diaspora and comparison: the global Irish as a case study’, *Journal of American History*, 90, 1, 2003, pp. 134–162; Enda Delaney, ‘Our island story? Towards a transnational history of late modern Ireland’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 37, 2011, pp. 599–621. See the special issue on ‘Irish and World Histories’ of the *Radical History Review*, no. 143, 2022. The number of international comparative studies has of course much increased in recent years.
- 7 James C. Scott, *Two Cheers for Anarchism. Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton & Oxford, 2012), pp. 13-14.
- 8 Rachel O’Higgins, ‘The Irish influence in the Chartist Movement’, *Past & Present*, no. 20, November 1961, pp. 83-96 (86).
- 9 Élodie Peyrol-Kleiber, ‘“Ffourty thousand to cutt the Protestants throats’: The Irish threat in the Chesapeake and the West Indies (1620-1700)’ in Lauric Henneton & Lou Roper (eds), *Fear and the Shaping of Early American Societies*, (Brill, Leiden & Boston, 2016), pp. 160-181 (160).

- 10 Richard Dunn, *Sugar & Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2000 [1972]), p. 69.
- 11 Charles Leinenweber, 'Socialists in the streets: The New York City Socialist Party in working class neighborhoods, 1908-1918', *Science & Society*, 41:2, Summer 1977, pp. 152-171 (154).
- 12 Duvon C. Corbitt, 'Immigration in Cuba', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 22:2, May 1942, pp. 280-308 (302).
- 13 Robert M. Utley, *Wanted: The Outlaw Lives of Billy the Kid and Ned Kelly*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2015), p. 196.
- 14 Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2006), p. vii.
- 15 Paul F. State, *A Brief History of Ireland*, (Facts on File, New York, 2000), p. 149.
- 16 As M. E. Curran observed in a book review: 'secret societies have been consistently more influential in Ireland than elsewhere in Europe outside of Sicily or Tsarist Russia', *Irish Economic & Social History*, 1, January 1974, p. 78.
- 17 Peter Way, 'Shovel and shamrock: Irish workers and labor violence in the digging of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal', *Labor History*, 30:4, Fall 1989, pp. 489-517 (501). See also the hostile but intelligent analysis of the Whiteboys and similar secret societies in George Cornewall Lewis, *On Local Disturbances in Ireland and On The Irish Church Question*, (B. Fellowes, London, 1836), p. 99: 'The Whiteboy association may be considered as a vast trades' union for the protection of the Irish peasantry: the object being, not to regulate the rate of wages, or the hours of work, but to keep the actual occupant in possession of his land, and in general to regulate the relation of landlord and tenant for the benefit of the latter'. In contrast, Lynn Hollen Lees opined that Irish secret societies were 'closer to the Mafia than to a trade union'; see her *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1979), p. 218.
- 18 Niall Whelehan, 'Youth, generations, and collective action in nineteenth-century Ireland and Italy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 56:4, 2014, pp. 934-966.
- 19 Aidan Beatty, 'The emergence of Irish masculinity studies' in Jyoti Atwal, Ciara Breathnach & Sarah-Anne Buckley (eds), *Gender and History: Ireland, 1852-1922*, (Routledge, London & New York, 2023), pp. 166-178 (171).
- 20 Anne-Maree Whittaker, 'Swords to ploughshares? The 1798 rebels in New South Wales', *Saothar* 23, 1998, pp. 13-22 (13).
- 21 Peter Way, *Common Labor. Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780-1860*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993), pp. 212, 214.
- 22 Mark Bulik, *The Sons of Molly Maguire: The Irish Roots of America's First Labor War*, (Fordham University Press, New York, 2015).
- 23 Donal P. McCracken, 'Odd man out: the South African experience' in Andy Bielenberg (ed), *The Irish Diaspora*, (Longman, Harlow, 2000), pp. 251-271 (259). A lively description of the 'Irish brigade' is given by Barry Ronan, a contemporary observer, in his *Forty South African Years, Journalistic, Political, Social, Theatrical and Pioneering*, (Heath, Cranton, London, 1919), pp. 109-120.
- 24 Kevin Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1998), p. 113.
- 25 Emmet O'Connor, *A Labour History of Ireland, 1824-2000*, (University College Dublin Press, Dublin, 2011), pp. 8-19 (quotes on pp. 13 & 8).
- 26 Anne O'Dowd, 'Seasonal Migration' in James S. Donnelly, Jr. (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Irish History and Culture, vol. 1*, (Macmillan Reference USA, Farmington Hills, MI, 2004), p. 442.
- 27 J. H. Johnson, 'Harvest migration from nineteenth-century Ireland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, no. 41, June 1967, pp. 97-112 (110).
- 28 Theresa Moriarty, *Work in Progress: Episodes from the History of Irish Women's Trade Unionism*, (ILHS, Dublin & Belfast, 1998); Maria Luddy, 'Working women, trade unionism and politics in Ireland, 1830-1945', in Lane & Ó Drisceoil, *Politics, op. cit.*, pp. 44-61.
- 29 Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain 1758-1834*, (Boulder, Paradigm, London, 2005), pp. xviii-xix.

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