

**Cork City and County Archives**  
**U216 Cork Council of Trade Unions**  
**Descriptive List**

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## Identity Statement Area

<b>Reference Code:</b>	IE CCCA/U216
<b>Title:</b>	Cork Council of Trade Unions
<b>Dates:</b>	1915-1916; 1925 – 1988
<b>Level of description:</b>	Fonds
<b>Extent:</b>	36 items (6 boxes)

## Context

### ***Creator***

Cork Council of Trade Unions and predecessor bodies Cork Workers Council and Cork District Trades Council.

### ***Archival History***

The collection was deposited in the Archives in 1974, 1983, 1986 and 2002.

### ***Biographical / Administrative History***

Umbrella organisation for trade unions in Cork. In June 1960, Cork Workers Council merged with the Cork Council of Irish Unions to form the Cork Council of Trade Unions. In 1962, the Council represented 35,000 members in 41 branches/units.

Precursor bodies included Cork District Trades Council and Cork Labour and Trades Council that merged to form the Cork and District Trade and Labour Council in c. Nov. 1916. This body was renamed Cork and District Workers' Council in c.1925, and was based at the Mechanics' Hall, Grattan Street and later at Father Mathew Quay. It was later known as Cork Workers Council.

## Content and Structure

### ***Scope and Content***

Minutes of Cork District Trades Council, Aug 1915 - Oct 1916

Minutes of Cork and District Workers' Council / Cork Workers Council, 1925- 1960

Minutes of Cork Council of Trade Unions, 1960-1988.

Annual reports of Cork Council of Trade Unions, 1976 – 1985

Secretary's incoming correspondence, 1925 -29, 1931-34, 1946.

The collection is a major source of information on the history of Cork, the minute books in particular documenting the discussion of various topics relevant to the labour movement, such as union organisation, strikes and industrial relations, terms and conditions of employment, unemployment and poverty, cases of hardship, wages, prices of necessities, government employment schemes, support for local businesses and trades, emigration, working class and social housing, inter-union co-operation and disputes, vocational training, local services and investment.

Also documented in the collection is the political engagement of the Council at both local and national levels in representing their members, including involvement with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, support for the Labour Party, and engagement with officials such as the City Manager and the Lord Mayor locally and figures such as government ministers and Taoisigh nationally.

The collection helps to document the response of the labour movement to the social and economic conditions experienced by workers and communities, as well the response to local, national and international events such as, the closure of the Ford and Dunlop factories in Cork, excessive taxation of PAYE workers, Ireland's accession to the EEC, and the troubles in Northern Ireland.

### ***System of Arrangement***

1. Minute Books 1915 -1916, 1925 – 1988 (23 items)
2. Annual Reports 1976 – 1985 (10 items)
3. Secretary's Incoming Correspondence Files 1925 – 29, 1931 – 34, 1946 (3 files)

## **Allied Materials**

### ***CCCA:***

Various local trade union records, including Stonemasons, Plasterers, Plumbers, Coopers, Engineers, Typographers, Sheetmetal workers, ITGWU.

### ***Elsewhere:***

Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Dublin.  
Irish Labour History Museum

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## **Conditions of Access and Use**

Open by appointment to those holding a current readers' ticket.

*Language:* English

*Finding Aid:* Descriptive List. Some of the later minute books contain an index.

## **Archivists Note**

Brian McGee,  
Archivist,  
Cork City & County Archives  
June 2011

## List of Items and Descriptions:

### **1. Minute Books, 1915 -1916, 1925 – 1988**

1/1 19 Aug 1915 – Oct 1916

Minute book of Cork District Trades Council with a record of proceedings of Council meetings.

(c.60pp plus 18pp enclosures)

Includes:

Proposals to establish munitions factory in Cork (19 Aug 1915)

Complaint of County Council steamrollers being repaired by firm not employing skilled trade union fitters (16 Sep 1915)

Letter from W. O'Brien, M.Healy and J. Redmond , MP's, promising support against abolition of halfpenny postage (14 Oct 1915)

Resolution appealing for clemency to those arrested following Easter Rising in Dublin (27 Apr 1916)

Agreed to co-operate as far as possible with Mr. Sheehan and the consumers league in resisting increases in the price of necessities (3 Aug 1916)

Resolution from Limerick Trades Council, asking Governing Body of UCC to extend educational facilities to the working classes (28 Sep 1916)

Amalgamation of the 2 Cork trades councils (District Trades Council, and Trades and Labour Council) copies of agreed printed rules submitted. Final meeting of Cork District Trades Council to be held on 9 Nov 1916. (26 Oct 1916)

Plus 15 enclosures, mainly correspondence; such as, letter from workers at Haulbowline dockyard concerning grievances (April 1916).

1/2. Missing

1/3. 15 Oct 1925 – 19 Sep 1929

Minute book of Cork and District Trade and Labour Council

(350pp)

Includes:

Suggestion from Lord Mayor to hold an exhibition in Cork, also invitation of views from Philip Monahan City Commissioner regarding proposed rebuilding of City Hall or provision of working class housing (18 Mar 1926, p41)  
Chairman draws attention to amount of distress in the city, and request to Lord Mayor to call a meeting of the St. Vincent De Paul Society. (21 Oct 1926, p104)  
Call for support of Patrick Murphy, National Union of Railwaymen, for election in East Cork constituency (2 Jun 1927, p164)  
Lord Mayor's communication with Harbour Board for the restoration of Cork Corporation and abolition of the Commissioner system 'which was causing a great deal of unemployment in the City' (7 Jul 1927, p171)  
Note about letter from President Cosgrave about the government building scheme, restricted to Dublin at present (12 Apr 1928, p.234)  
New church to be built at Evergreen Road, Turners Cross, importation of material, and cost of building in stone (27 Sep 1928, p271)  
North Dispensary unheated and crammed with people in the cold and rain.  
Secretary to contact Secretary of the Board of Health (Dec 1928, p293)  
Letter read from Child Welfare League asking for delegates to a conference on housing (19 Sep 1929)

1/4. 26 Sep 1929 – 25 Jan 1934

Minute book, Cork and District Trades and Labour Council /Cork and District Workers Council

(350pp)

Includes:

Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration, involvement in procession.  
Lectures by Professor O'Rahilly and Professor Busted on labour and unemployment. (14 Nov 1929, p.13)  
Possible unemployment of workers in the Cork Tramways Company once taken over by the Electricity Supply Board (28 Feb 1930, p.41)  
Historic trade union banners, placing of in a museum or in the College (25 Nov 1930, p.99)  
Tenders awarded for erection of 250 houses in the North West Ward to be divided into lots of 50 to allow small builders the chance to compete and give more employment. Agreed by City Manager. (1 Sep 1932, p.219)  
Widespread unemployment in the building trades in the City, notwithstanding strenuous efforts of the government to procure work (16 Feb 1933, p.258)  
Poor state of cooperating industry, resolution to call on minister for agriculture to compel Free State creameries to pack butter in Irish made boxes (22 Jun 1933, p.290)

Local cinema importing a painter, despite local unemployment (26 Oct 1933, p.320)

1/5. 1 Feb 1934 – 13 Jan 1938

Minute book Cork and District Workers Council

(390 pp plus enclosures)

Includes:

Support for strike at Fergusons Hairdressing due to importation of non-union labour (30 Aug 1934, p.47)

Irish Trade Union Congress acknowledges Council's resolutions, which will receive the attention of the National Executive. (1 Nov 1934, p.71)

Letter from TJ Murphy TD concerning contract for new schools at Turners Cross had been signed (11 June 1936, p.237)

Threatened dismissal of flour mill workers (2 Dec 1937, p.376)

Plus 13 enclosed documents, such as, 2. Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts half year ending 31 Dec 1936, with list of affiliated unions and such as 8. Poster for Seanad Protest Meeting by Cork Workers Council and Labour Party, Mechanics Hall Grattan Street (21 April ?1938); and such as 9. Blank election ballot paper [for Seanad], n.d.; and such as 12. Model Rules and Standing Orders for Trades and Workers Councils (1 Jan 1938).

1/6. 27 Jan 1938 – 29 Aug 1940

Minute book of the Cork and District Workers Council

(254pp plus 17 enclosures)

Includes:

George Dineen and Humphrey O'Connell to be delegates to the Cork City Constituency Council of the Labour Party (27 Jan 1938, p.2)

Extension to St. Augustine's Church. Replies from architect unsatisfactory, matter may have to be discussed 'in the presence of the press' (23 Feb 1939, p.116)

Emergency committee set up by Lord Mayor to deal with economic and social problems arising out of the war, particularly food prices (21 Sep 1939)

17 Enclosures include: 1. Rules of the Cork and District Workers Council (October 1938) 3. Letter from Commission on Vocational Organisation (4 Nov 1939); 13. Cork Operative Butchers Society, list of prices of Beef and Mutton (May 1940). 15. Letter from James Hickey, TD, Dail Eireann (5 June 1940).

1/7 5 Sep 1940 – 4 Jun 1942

Minute book of the Cork and District Workers Council

(174pp plus 22 enclosures)

Includes:

Question of government contracts, none coming to Cork (5 Sep 1940, p1)  
Letter from Dept. of Industry and Commerce employment branch seeking 2 representatives on the Cork Advisory Committee For Juvenile Employment (19 Dec 1940, p33)  
Complaint by Operative Butchers against the ITGWU that members were infringing on their rights in some bacon factories, due to shortage of pigs owing to war (17 Jun 1941, p79)  
Call for jobs to be provided to stop 'wholesale exodus' of population and 'export' of young men and women (4 Sep 1941 , p96)  
Notice of lecture at UCC by Seamus O'Farrell, national organiser of the Labour Party on " Ireland's 'Surplus Population' " (30 Oct 1941, p116)  
22 enclosures include: Balance Sheet and Statement of accounts, half year ended 31 Dec 1941; several thank you letters; notices of motions.

1/8 11 Jun 1942 – 1 Feb 1945

Minute Book of Cork Workers Council

(257 pp plus 2 enclosures)

Includes:

Dispute between Operative Butchers and ITGWU, intervention of Lord Mayor welcomed (10 Sep 1942, p19)  
Preliminary conference of the Labour Party to be held in Carpenters Hall to consider selection of candidates for general election, delegates required from CWC (3 Dec 1942, p44)

3 Enclosures: including Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts, for half years ended 30 June 1943, and 30 June 1944.

1/9 8 Feb 1945 – 1 Aug 1946

Minute book of Cork Workers Council

(249 pp)

Includes:

Chairman notes slow rate of progress in Gurrabraher housing scheme owing to shortages of supplies such as timber (8 Feb 1945)

Strike in baking industry, Council has done all it can in the matter. Employers refusing to give a fortnights holidays with pay. (17 May 1945, p40)

Dispute at Rushbrooke Docks, meeting to be held by Chief Conciliation Officer (10 Jan 1945, p153)

1/10 *Missing (c. 2 Aug 1946 – c.2 February 1949)*

1/11 3 Feb 1949 – 12 Jul 1951

Minute Book of Cork Workers Council. With index.

(c.352 pp plus 4 enclosures)

Includes:

Postponed strike at CIE, by Railway Clerks' Association (3 Aug 1950, p203)

Non affiliated bodies, contact to be made with (such as INTO, ATY, boilermakers, shipwrights) (8 Oct 1950, p224)

Appointment of Rev. Dr. Lucey as Bishop of Cork, authority on capital, labour and social rights, welcomed (23 Nov 1950, pp248 - 249)

Enclosures: 4 news clippings

1/12 19 Jul 1951 – 22 Oct 1953

Minute book, Cork Workers Council. With index.

(345pp)

1/13 29 Oct 1953 – 3 March 1955

Minute book of Cork Workers Council. With Index.

Includes:

Corporation free fuel scheme, protest at delay by City Manager (29 Oct 1953, p1)

Tribute to Alfred O'Rahilly, President of UCC on his death (2 Jul 1954, p118)

Special Meeting on Housing (20 Jan 1955, p228)

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1/14 10 Mar 1955 – 19 Jul 1956

Minute Book, Cork Workers Council. With index.

(253pp)

Includes:

Cork Corporation direct labour scheme, commendation of (10 Mar 1955, p1)

Letter from Cork Anti-Tuberculosis Association, regarding mass radiography (8 Dec 1955, p130)

Annual General Meeting, speech of 8 pages, by President of the Council, Alderman Sean Casey re. work of Council, wage increases, housing, cost of rates, etc. (19 Apr 1956, p.182)

1/15 23 Aug 1956 – 16 Jan 1958

Minute Book, Cork Workers Council. With index.

(255pp plus index)

Includes:

Call to government concerning problem of unemployment and emigration (10 Jan 1957, p.74)

Lord Mayor Ald. Sean Casey, text of address to Annual Meeting (2 May 1957, p120)

1/16 23 Jan 1958 – 12 Nov 1959

Minute Book, Cork Workers Council. With index.

(259pp plus index)

Includes:

List of 27 affiliated unions (index)

Complaint to South Infirmary management re. treatment of injured worker (23 Jan 1958, p.1)

£30,000 unexpended by Corporation from housing loan, use to create more employment through direct labour, etc. (27 Feb 1958, p16)

Executive Committee members present at meeting 11 Sep 1958, J.Barrett, P.Eagar, J.Harrington, G. Kavanagh, J. McAuliffe, S. O'Leary, M. O'Neill, L. Stack, D. Long.(p89)

Adjourned meeting and vote of sympathy on death of Pope Pius XII, '...no Pope has endeared himself so much to the ordinary working people...' (9 Oct 1958, p103)

1/17 19 Nov 1959 – 2 June 1960

Minute Book of Cork Workers Council. With index.

(91pp)

Includes:

Election of delegates to the new Cork Council of Trade Unions (5 May 1960, p82)  
Final meeting of Cork Workers Council (2 Jun 1960, p87)

1/18 12 Jun 1960 – 24 Oct 1963

Minute book of the Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU). With index.

(350pp)

Includes:

Inaugural meeting of the CCTU, held at the Cork Catholic Young Men's Society hall, Castle Street (12 Jun 1960, p1)  
Letter of thanks from Bishop Lucey to CCTU for support of his efforts in the Gas company strike and 'the message of loyalty to the church'. (2 Mar 1961, p81)  
Address of President PJ O'Brien, to AGM of CCTU. Refers to 35,000 trade unionists in 41 affiliated units in Cork; also annual report of Secretary DV Long, referring to strikes and industrial unrest in 1961 (29 Mar 1962, p194)

1/19 2 Nov 1968 – 26 Aug 1966

Minute book of the Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU). With index.

(259pp)

Includes:

Support for ICTU circular condemning breakaway and splinter organisations (7 Nov 1963, p2)  
Text of address to AGM by President Denis McDonnell; also record of number of votes obtained by executive committee candidates (27 Mar 1966, p219)  
Commemoration for James Connolly, as part of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations for 1916 Rising (19 May 1966, p238)

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1/20 8 Sep 1966 – 6 Feb 1969

Minute book of the Cork Council of Trade Unions (CCTU). With index.

(256pp)

Includes:

Sympathy on death of Lord Mayor Alderman Sean Casey TD (4 May 1967, p72)

1/21 19 Feb 1969 – 30 Sep 1971

Minute Book of the Cork Council of Trade Unions. With index and newscuttings.

(259pp)

Includes:

Criticism of unofficial strikes by outgoing President Liam Stack (22 Mar 1970, p106)

Dispute at Verolme Cork Dockyard, unions to meet (2 Apr 1970, p114)

Photographic newscutting from Cork Examiner, of officials attending the Trades Union annual dinner (18 Mar 1971, p199)

1/22 14 Oct 1971 – 6 May 1976

Minute Book of the CCTU. With index and newscuttings.

(261pp)

Includes:

Text of address by President Tom Bogue to AGM, referring to picketing, the national wage agreement, price control, unemployment, accession to the EEC, events in Northern Ireland (26 March 1972, p43)

1/23 20 May 1976 – 6 Nov 1980

Minute Book of the CCTU. With index, and newscuttings.

(257pp)

Includes:

Discussion on promoting Cork Airport (20 May 1976, p2)

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Address by Liam French, General Manager, Cork Harbour Commissioners on development of the harbour region (1 Dec 1977, p86)  
Election of Betty Dillon, 1<sup>st</sup> female president of the CCTU (22 Mar 1979, p156)  
Resolution condemning Long Kesh concentration camp in Northern Ireland (21 Feb 1980, p216)

1/24 10 Nov 1980 – 6 Jun 1985

Minute Book of the CCTU. With index, and newscuttings.

(257pp)

1/25 20 Jun 1985 – 24 Mar 1988

Minute Book of the CCTU. With index, and newscuttings.

(257pp)

## ***2. Annual Reports of CCTU, 1976 - 1988***

2/1 – 2/15 (1960 – 1975) : Missing

2/16 16<sup>th</sup> Report, Mar 1976

2/17 17<sup>th</sup> Report, Mar 1977

2/18 18<sup>th</sup> Report, Mar 1978

2/19 19<sup>th</sup> Report, Mar 1979

2/20 20<sup>th</sup> Report, Mar 1980

2/21 21<sup>st</sup> Report, Mar 1981

2/22 22<sup>nd</sup> Report, Mar 1982

2/23 23<sup>rd</sup> Report, Mar 1983

2/24 24<sup>th</sup> Report, Mar 1984

2/25 25<sup>th</sup> Report, Mar 1985

### **3. Secretary's Incoming Correspondence 1925 - 1946**

3/1 1925 – 1929

File, various letters and other material sent to Council Secretary George Duncan (c.20 items)

Includes:

Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, List of Affiliated Organisations to 34<sup>th</sup> annual congress, Belfast (Aug 1928)

Letter from Town Tenants League, Cork Branch (20 Dec 1928)

List of CWC affiliated unions and names of union secretaries (n.d.)

Letter from RS Arthur TD, Dail Eireann re. widows and orphans motion (n.d.)

3/2 1930 – 1934

File, letters sent to George Duncan, Secretary, Cork Workers Council. (c. 20 items)

Includes:

Letter from Cork Operative Society of Masons, Bricklayers and Paviers, Mechanics Hall, Grattan Street re. use of hall (2 Jul 1930)

Various thank-you letters

Letter from Hon. Sec. of Irish Labour Party re. flour milling (21 Mar 1932)

Letter from Sec. of Cork Industrial Development Association re. opening of a local brick works (5 Oct 1932)

Letter from P McCarthy, Irish Labour Party Cork Branch re. financial support for municipal election candidates (11 Jun 1933)

3/3 June – August 1946

File, Cork Workers Council incoming correspondence and other loose items. (16 items)

Includes:

Circular letter from Irish Trade Union Congress re. Industrial relations Bill. (31 Jul 1946)

Letter from Lord Mayor Michael Sheehan to FO'Sullivan, Secretary, Cork Workers Council, re. Loughheed memorial fund (26 Jul 1946)

Letter from Acting Manager, Employment Exchange re. Cork Court of Referees, with details of affiliated unions and numbers of members (3 Jul 1946)