## John Wheatley, Catholic Socialism, and Irish Labour in the West of Scotland 1906

John Wheatley (1869-1930) was a prominent Scottish socialist, trade unionist, and politician. He was a leading figure in the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the Labour Party, and served as the first Minister for Health in the first Labour government in 1924. Wheatley was also a devout Catholic, and he played a significant role in the development of Catholic socialism in the West of Scotland.



John Wheatley, Catholic Socialism, and Irish Labour in the West of Scotland, 1906-1924 (Routledge Library

Editions: The Labour Movement) by Gerry C. Gunnin



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Catholic socialism is a form of socialism that is based on the social teachings of the Catholic Church. It emphasizes the importance of social justice, workers' rights, and the common good. Catholic socialists believe that the state has a role to play in promoting social justice and improving the lives of the working class.

Wheatley was first introduced to Catholic socialism by his friend and mentor, Father Francis Joseph Campling. Campling was a priest in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, and he was a leading advocate for social justice. He founded the Catholic Socialist Society in 1898, and he played a significant role in the development of the Catholic Labour Party in Scotland.

Wheatley was a strong supporter of Campling's work, and he became a prominent member of the Catholic Socialist Society. He wrote extensively on Catholic socialism, and he gave many lectures on the subject. Wheatley's writings and speeches helped to spread the message of Catholic socialism to a wider audience, and he played a significant role in the growth of the movement.

In 1906, Wheatley was elected to the Glasgow City Council. He was the first Catholic to be elected to the council, and he quickly became a leading figure in the Labour group. Wheatley used his position on the council to promote social justice and improve the lives of the working class. He campaigned for better housing, healthcare, and education, and he was a strong supporter of trade unions.

Wheatley's work on the Glasgow City Council brought him to national attention, and he was soon recognized as one of the leading figures in the British Labour movement. In 1918, he was elected to the House of Commons, and he served as the Member of Parliament for Shettleston until his death in 1930.

As a member of Parliament, Wheatley continued to promote social justice and workers' rights. He was a strong supporter of the Labour Party, and he served as the party's chairman from 1922 to 1924. In 1924, Wheatley was

appointed Minister for Health in the first Labour government. As Minister for Health, Wheatley introduced a number of important reforms, including the Wheatley Housing Act, which provided funding for the construction of new council houses.

Wheatley's work as Minister for Health was cut short by his death in 1930. He was just 60 years old. However, his legacy continues to live on. Wheatley was a pioneer of Catholic socialism, and he played a significant role in the development of the Labour Party. He was a passionate advocate for social justice, and he dedicated his life to improving the lives of the working class.

John Wheatley was a complex and fascinating figure. He was a devout Catholic, a committed socialist, and a passionate advocate for workers' rights. He played a significant role in the development of Catholic socialism in the West of Scotland, and he was a leading figure in the British Labour movement. Wheatley's work and legacy continue to inspire people today, and he remains an important figure in the history of social justice.

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