Social Catholicism Engages the American State: The Contribution of Archbishop Edward J. Hanna

RICHARD GRIBBLE, C.S.C.

American Catholic history during the second quarter of the twentieth century, a period described by the historian David O’Brien as the era of “Social Catholicism,” was a period when many church leaders sought to rectify the evils of society. Deriving their beliefs and inspiration from the precepts articulated in such seminal papal encyclicals as *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), the “Bishop’s Program for Social Reconstruction” (1919), issued by the National Catholic Welfare Council (Conference after 1922—NCWC), and the militant perspective of the message of Jesus Christ as expressed by disciples of the Protestant Social Gospel Movement, groups and individuals sought to remedy human suffering and correct systemic injustice under the banner of Catholic Action. The Catholic Worker Movement, started by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, Friendship House, the genius of Baroness Catherine de Hueck Doherty, and Young Christian Workers (YCW), founded by the Belgium priest (later Cardinal) Joseph Cardijn, were three groups that brought relief to the marginalized of society and challenged American Catholics to rethink the basic Christian call to discipleship and holiness. Labor priests such as Peter Yorke, Charles Owen Rice, and Peter Dietz advocated workers’ rights through the promotion of trade unions. Monsignor John Ryan, with the assistance of Fr. Raymond McGowan, directed the Social Action

---

2. In 1922, Pope Pius XI issued his encyclical *Ubi Arcano* that inaugurated the idea of Catholic Action, which was defined as the assistance of the laity in the work of the bishops.
Department of the NCWC for over twenty years in numerous efforts to generate church-sponsored programs to better the lives of American Catholics, especially those in greatest need.

While most socially conscious Catholic reformers worked independently or within the framework of well-established or new institutional church organizations, some notable figures sought to achieve justice and right wrongs within the civic structures of local, state, and national governments. The priest historian Thomas Blantz, CSC, has described Francis Haas, who worked tirelessly as a labor negotiator and government servant as "a priest in public service."3 Archbishop Robert Lucey of San Antonio applied Catholic social teaching in his advocacy of Mexican-Americans and their struggle to achieve justice as migrant workers. Bishop Bernard Sheil of Chicago fully backed the labor policy of Franklin Roosevelt and the efforts of John L. Lewis and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).4 Edward Hanna, Archbishop of San Francisco from 1915 to 1935, served the church as local ordinary and administrative chairman of the NCWC during its tumultuous early years (1919-1935), but his outstanding contribution through service in the public sector on local, state, and national levels provides an example of an episcopal career directed toward the application of Catholic social teaching to the civic arena.

BACKGROUND—DEVELOPMENT OF EDWARD HANNA’S SOCIAL MINDSET

Edward Joseph Hanna was born in Rochester, New York on 21 July 1860, the first of three children of Edward Hanna Sr. and Anne Clark, both Irish immigrants from Ulster.5 Hanna was a brilliant student who

5. No complete biography of Edward Hanna exists. However, Father Robert McNamara, a priest of the diocese of Rochester, has spent much of his career studying the archbishop. An excellent summary of his career, including his early years in Rochester can be found in "Archbishop Hanna, Rochesterian," Rochester History 25 (April 1963): 1-23. The story of Edward Hanna’s brush with modernism, delation to the Vatican because of his writings, and consequent loss of episcopal appointment in 1907 is described in several places. A complete analysis of these events is provided in Richard Gribble, CSC, "A Rough Road to San Francisco: The Case of Edward Hanna, 1907-1915," Southern California Quarterly 78, no. 3 (1996): 225-42; and James Gaffey, Citizen of No Mean City: Archbishop Patrick Riordan of San Francisco (Wilmington, Del.: Consortium Books, 1976), 275-318. Specific aspects of
graduated from Rochester Free Academy in 1879, along with his classmate and friend Walter Rauschenbusch, who would later distinguish himself as a Baptist pastor, scholar, and the best-known proponent of the Social Gospel Movement. As a youth, Hanna came to the attention of his local bishop, Bernard McQuaid, who was happy to receive him as a candidate for the priesthood. He was educated at the Urban College in Rome and ordained to the priesthood there in 1885.

Returning to Rochester in 1887, Hanna's first assignments as a priest brought him experiences that helped form his social perspective, centered around the belief that the common good of all could best be achieved by promoting the dignity of each person, an attitude consistent with traditional Catholic social teaching as articulated in Rerum Novarum, which reenergized Roman Catholic social thought upon its publication in 1891. Trained to be a professor of dogmatic theology, Hanna was first assigned to St. Andrew's Preparatory School for six years before Bishop McQuaid's dream, the seminary of St. Bernard's, opened in 1893. Hanna quickly endeared himself to students and faculty alike through not only his academic acumen, but equally importantly through his pastoral sense in responding to people.

His intellectual gifts provided the technical background to more effectively minister to less academically oriented people, especially the local Italian-immigrant population. Hanna quickly became acutely aware of the needs of this community in the city that numbered approximately 2000 people. While teaching at St. Andrew's Seminary, Hanna "undertook successfully a campaign of education among the Italian residents of the city," served as their spiritual leader, and strongly encouraged local pastors to promote Catholic education for Italian children. His complete command of the language was certainly part of his appeal to the people, but his pastoral sense was even more important in endearing him to this community. Hanna was well known in the city as one who went out of his way to assist Italians in every possible way. As a result, Hanna transformed the general indifference demonstrated by many Italian males toward the organized church. The young priest broke the clerical stereotype held by many Italians that

---


portrayed the priesthood as an adversary. On a personal level, Hanna worked to prepare many for the celebration of the sacraments, aided Italians in obtaining jobs, solved labor disputes, and defended those who became entangled in the meshes of the law. Local Rochester papers commented on how “his work among these people [the Italians] had been productive of wonderful results.” Hanna respected Italians and considered them excellent material for citizenship, despite the growing opposition from nativists to southern and eastern Europeans who were flooding into the country after the turn of the century.

Hanna gained additional knowledge of the plight of immigrants and the poor in general through regular assisting at the Cathedral Parish of St. Patrick. The national church system, which had effectively met the needs of immigrant Catholics since the mid-nineteenth century, was active in Rochester during Hanna’s tenure as a young priest. He brought his experience with Italians to his ministry of preaching and presence with the Irish at St. Patrick’s. He integrated the intellectual insight he gained from teaching and scholarship with his pastoral experience in an effort to break down barriers between various national and ethnic groups. Hanna’s work directly applied Catholic social teaching to the needs of ordinary people who daily struggled to make ends meet and keep their families intact. The local community observed his sensitivity to those whom he served, making him an even more attractive figure to those in need. Thus, at the time of his appointment as auxiliary bishop of San Francisco in December 1912, Edward Hanna under-

---

7. The risorgimento movement of nineteenth-century Italy turned many national-minded Italians against the Papacy. Pope Pius IX’s staunch stand against the unification movement was transformed in many areas, including the United States, into anticlericalism. This situation was part of the so-called “Italian Problem,” a term coined by the historian Henry Browne in a seminal study, “The Italian Problem in the United States 1880-1900,” *Historical Records and Studies* 35 (1946): 46-72. The “problem,” described by Archbishop Henry Elder in a report prepared for the 1884 Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, was present in three areas: (1) Italians (mainly men) rarely attend church or receive the sacraments; (2) people live widely dispersed in cities; and (3) people give little money for church support.

8. Clippings from Rochester *Union Advertiser*, 4 December 1912; Rochester *Evening Times*, 20 December 1912, Hanna Papers, ADR.

9. Philip P. McGuire, ed., “Events in the Life of His Excellency, Edward Joseph Hanna,” 139, Archives Archdiocese of Los Angeles (hereafter AALA); Clipping NCWC News Service,” (n.d.) [1922], Hanna Papers, Archives Archdiocese of San Francisco (hereafter AASF). Years later, while serving as archbishop of San Francisco, Hanna was recognized by the Italian government for his work with immigrants. In October 1922, he was awarded the “Commander of the Crown of Italy” by King Victor Emanuel III in recognition for his services toward and sympathy for the people of Italy, especially immigrants. The citation read in part, “The Archbishop has helped tremendously the [Italian] immigrants who have come here, intending to become American citizens.” In response to this award Hanna conveyed his thanks, speaking of Italy and Italians as “a land and people I have always loved and admired.”
stood, through years of ministerial experience, the plight of many American Catholics and the need for justice for all. These views would make him attractive as a public servant at the local, state, and national levels.

**HANNA AS PUBLIC SERVANT IN CALIFORNIA**

Following the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, events transformed California from a sleepy territory inhabited largely by native Indians and Californios (descendants of the seventeenth-century Spanish settlers of the region) into a land of opportunity. The discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill near Sacramento in 1848 made California the land of promise and San Francisco a boom city almost overnight. The arrival of fortune hunters, families, and workers, many of whom were recent immigrants to the United States created a cosmopolitan atmosphere in the region. Besides European immigrants from Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, Mexican, Filipino, and especially Chinese workers flooded into California, which became the thirty-first state in September 1850.

The local citizens initially greeted the rapid influx of immigrants to the state favorably. The historian Moses Rischin says that nativist attitudes toward all non-whites, combined with the Mexican-Catholics prominent in the region, made the state’s general reception of European immigrants, many of whom were Catholic, “remarkably benign.”

In line with national trends, most of California’s immigrants were urban dwellers, but the state’s rich agricultural industry also attracted many migrant workers. In 1914, Italians, Spanish, and Portuguese workers comprised almost 16 percent of those in California’s labor camps. After the turn of the century, but especially after World War I, Mexicans began to arrive in great numbers, totaling 32.5 percent of workers in the camps by 1933.

The ugly head of nativism, however, arose quite forcefully in reaction to some immigrant groups, most especially the Chinese. In the 1880s, Bernette Haskell, an attorney, journalist, and editor of *Truth*, a San Francisco weekly, railed against the “hordes of ignorant, barbarous, incompetent, incapable, intractable slaves from the Mediterranean.”

Denis Kearney, an Irish immigrant himself, led the charge against the

---

Chinese by organizing the Workingmen’s Party and leading its campaign to remove the Chinese from local jobs. Kearney’s fiery speeches were the catalyst to a media blitz against the Chinese, led by Haskell, who in 1882 challenged the presence of the Chinese: “Query, which is best, to allow unlimited importation of the cheapest labor; then to educate that labor up to its duty, and so in the end to civilize the world all at once; or to shut the door against degraded and uneducated men in every land, then educate in each land for itself and win the battle country by country?” Later that same year the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, abolishing Chinese emigration to the United States for ten years. After an extension in 1892 the ban was made permanent in 1902.

PART I: SERVICE TO THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

In 1916, one year after Edward Hanna assumed leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in San Francisco upon the death of Archbishop Patrick Riordan in December 1914, tensions in the city’s labor force began to mount through a series of strikes. The city’s longshoremen and culinary and steel workers initiated strikes that in themselves were not of great significance. However, the tripartite labor action was a direct catalyst to the formation of the Law and Order Committee, a group of five prominent San Francisco employers and attorneys who would be influential for many years as a voice opposed to organized labor. The disruption of commerce and some city services led the Monitor, San Francisco’s archdiocesan weekly newspaper, to editorialize a possible solution to the disagreement: “The differences between employers and employees should be settled by some body or commission of big men of unimpeachable character and integrity.” Because of possible violence in the culinary and steel strikes, James Rolph, Jr., mayor of San Francisco, called for a board to arbitrate the disputes:

As Mayor of San Francisco, and to prevent such industrial warfare, I request the Chamber of Commerce to appoint five representatives of the employers, and the Presidents of the three central labor bodies, namely the San Francisco Labor Council, the Building Trades Council and the Waterfront Workers’ Federation, jointly, to appoint five representatives of the employees; the ten representatives of the employers and employees so chosen to be members of a General Arbitration Board to be composed of fifteen members, of which the other five members shall be the Most Reverend Archbishop Edward J. Hanna, and four clergymen of various denominations, to be selected by the Archbishop.15

13. Ibid., 274-75.
15. Letter from James Rolph to Chamber of Commerce, SFLC, BTC and Waterfront Workers’ Federation, 10 August 1916, Rolph Papers, California Historical Society (hereafter CHS), San Francisco, California.
The appointment of Hanna to the board was not as unusual a move as it might seem on the surface. As head of the Irish-dominated Catholic Church in San Francisco, Hanna, the son of Irish immigrants, held the respect of most all church members, but his appeal was more widespread, including the business and labor communities. In a short span of years, Hanna had endeared himself through his pastoral sensitivity to most all constituencies of the city. Rolph accurately summarized the archbishop’s appeal in a letter convoking the arbitration board: “There is no other member of the community who possesses, in such a unique degree, the confidence of all classes.”16

Resolution of the strike combined with the refusal of the Law and Order Committee, acting on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, to appoint representatives to the arbitration board, doomed it from the outset. However, Hanna made it clear that he supported organized labor in a letter to Frederick Koster, president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce: “I will spare no pains to assist the rightly organized forces of labor to make battles against their greatest foes.”17

The archbishop’s support for trade unions, a position drawn from and consistent with Roman Catholic social teaching, as presented in *Rerum Novarum*,18 and held by other prelates, such as the American primate, Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore,19 was made crystal clear in his Labor Day address of 4 September 1916. Speaking of the progress of labor over the past fifty years, Hanna proclaimed, “These are labor’s triumphs, and in large measure these victories are due to unionism more than to aught else.”20 Hanna also commended unions for their ability to produce leaders capable of staunchly defending workers’ rights:

That labor organizations have in fifty years been able to rear a race of men out of their own ranks who have brought labor’s cause to the present high standing in the esteem of the community seems to me little short of wonderful.

16. Ibid.
18. *Rerum Novarum*, an encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII, inaugurated contemporary Roman Catholic social thought. In the letter, Leo spoke strongly in favor of workers’ rights, just wages, private property, and trade unions. Paragraph 38 of the encyclical reads, “For to enter into a ‘society’ [trade union] of this kind is the natural right of man; and the State must protect natural rights, not destroy them; and if it forbids its citizens to form associations, it contradicts the very principle of its own existence.”
19. Aaron Abell, one of the foremost scholars of American Catholic social thought during the mid-twentieth century, called Gibbons “unreservedly, almost belligerently friendly to organized labor.” Gibbons was the primary episcopal supporter of the Knights of Labor, saving them from condemnation in the United States through his intervention with Vatican officials in 1887. See Aaron Abell, *American Catholic Thought on Social Questions* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 143.
Hanna concluded his address by praising those who have supported organized labor's cause: "Our hearts go out to the men who have done so much to better the conditions of the laborer's life—may they grow and wax strong."\textsuperscript{21}

Edward Hanna's service to the city of San Francisco through his promotion of the common good as expressed in Roman Catholic social thought was inaugurated when the archbishop was asked to chair a pair of labor arbitration boards beginning in 1921. An uneasy coexistence between organized labor and employers in the city began to deteriorate in the aftermath of World War I. A series of wage disputes between various trades and management provided the incentive for acting Mayor Philip McLaren (James Rolph was out of the state) to appoint a three-man panel to arbitrate and set basic wages for workers in the city. Archbishop Hanna was selected to chair the board that included Max C. Sloss, a retired justice of the State Supreme Court and George L. Bell, an independent personnel consultant. On 18 January 1921, an agreement was signed between the Building Trades Council (BTC), representing organized labor, and the Builders' Exchange, representing employers, to settle the present wage disputes through arbitration. It was hoped that the board would provide "a permanent method of settling amicably and in a reasonable manner labor disputes in this city affecting building trades."\textsuperscript{22}

Beginning in January 1921, Hanna directed the efforts of two different wage arbitration boards in the city. The first, meeting from January to March 1921, heard arguments from two leading Bay area citizens, Ira B. Cross, an economist and professor at the University of California-Berkeley, who represented organized labor, and John S. Partridge, a San Francisco mayoral candidate in 1905 and 1921 and an established corporate lawyer, who argued for employers. Besides hearing the verbal sparring between these two local giants, the board reviewed reports for individual trades that included salary histories, personnel information, and recommended union wages. On 31 March 1921, in a move that surprised unionists, the board, siding with the arguments of the Builders' Exchange, ordered the wages for nineteen crafts in the city to be cut across the board by 7.5 percent, effective 11 April. The rate was to be set for six months after which it would be reviewed and changed should the cost of living necessitate an alteration. The BTC immediately challenged the decision, asking for reconsideration, but Hanna, speaking for the board and citing the 18 January

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22} Letter from Builders' Exchange of San Francisco to Edward Hanna, Max Sloss, and George Bell, 29 April 1921, Hanna Papers, Archives Archdiocese of San Francisco (hereafter AASF).
agreement between the BTC and Builders' Exchange, responded: "After full consideration and hearing of their [BTC] petition, the members of the Board of Arbitration are unanimously of the opinion that the award should not be withdrawn or reconsidered." Hanna made his opinion more manifest by joining the Committee on Industrial Relations, a body organized by the Chamber of Commerce to publicize and publicly support the board's decision.

The apparent reversal of Hanna's attitude toward organized labor requires further explanation. The archbishop's application of Catholic social teaching was always centered about its principal pillar of the promotion of the common good. While it is clear from his 1916 Labor Day address that he supported organized labor, it is probable, without the aid of extant documentation, to conclude that his advocacy was based on the perception that at the time the common good necessitated the uplifting of the average worker. In the wake of World War I, Hanna most probably viewed the state of the worker as greatly improved. Thus, in his mind the common good could be best promoted by the maintenance of the status quo between workers and employers, or as seen in the 1921 Wage Arbitration decision, a slight reduction in pay in an attempt to best satisfy the rights and needs of all parties.

In June 1922, the Wage Arbitration Board was reformulated with Hanna continuing as chair, but with two new members, Henry U. Brandenstein and C.F. Michaels, both prominent citizens of San Francisco. Hanna set the tone of the Board, which met on 17, 21, 22, and 27 November, in his opening address:

It seems to be the lot of the two gentlemen that are with me, and the Archbishop's lot [.] to undertake a new a task that is both delicate and difficult; delicate because it concerns the wages of men on which their standard of living and upon which their lives and the lives of those that they love depends; delicate also because it touches those who employ labor; delicate also because it touches the community. No man has ever attempted to adjust the wages of men that did not find himself faced with perhaps the most difficult task in life. . . .

I may be wrong (I often am) but it seems to me that a wage board such as faces you to-day [sic] will be the best guarantee to the men that they will have adequate consideration and justice, that kindliness of thought will prevail, and that our aim will be to maintain a standard that will award a decent living. 24

This second formal meeting of the board allowed individual trades who sought increases or adjustments to their wages and/or working hours to petition the Board directly. The board heard testimony from fifty-eight trades as well as the Builders' Exchange. In his comments, the Exchange's new president, W.H. George, offered the panel recom-

23. Hanna, Sloss, and Bell, "Supplementary Wage Award," Hanna Papers, AASF.
mendations on wage rates acceptable to employers, but Hanna rapidly responded to the obvious insinuation as to what the board should decide:

If new conditions of any kind whatsoever have arisen since our last award, it is upon the basis of these new conditions [that] we wish to fix the wages of the future.\(^{25}\)

Despite the testimony from both trade unions and the statement of intention from the Builders' Exchange, the board decided to delay any decision until a more thorough investigation of the situation could be conducted to ascertain whether workers could in fact care for their families on the amount of money they earned on the scale set in 1921.\(^{26}\) After completing its review of the data, the board on 1 January 1923 published its award, concluding that a general raise for all trades was not practicable or necessary based on current economic conditions in San Francisco. Bricklayers, bridge engineers, and reinforced concrete housesmiths were awarded a $1 per day raise. Hodcarriers, cement finishers, glass workers, roofers, and tile setters were awarded a $ .50 per day pay hike. All other trades retained the wages set in 1921.\(^{27}\)

The Impartial Wage Board met one additional time in 1924 but Archbishop Hanna was not involved with its decision. The Board was responsible for setting wages for the bulk of San Francisco's building trades throughout the 1920s. The selection of Hanna to chair the Wage Arbitration Board demonstrated the high level of regard with which he was held in the community while his personal participation demonstrates how important he felt industrial peace was to the advancement of society. Guided by a sense of fairness it is nevertheless obvious that Hanna's thought on labor, unionism, and the rights of workers had evolved since his bout with the Law and Order Committee in 1916. Justice for all and promotion of the common good overrode his earlier partiality toward organized labor and became the basic premise upon which his decisions were made.

**Service to the State of California**

Hanna's service extended beyond the borders of the city of San Francisco. The tensions present in the state due to the immigrant population led in June 1913 to the creation of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, when the state legislature and Governor Hiram Johnson jointly recognized the need for greater atten-

---

26. Letter from Cement Finishers' Union Local No. 580 to Impartial Wage Board, 22 November 1922, Hanna Papers, AASF.
27. "Building Trades Wage Scale," 1 January 1923, Hanna Papers, AASF.
tion to immigrants. President Simon Lubin, a native Californian who had studied immigration at Harvard, led the five-member commission. Edward Hanna was unanimously selected as vice-president and appointed with Paul Scharrenberg to the commission's auditing team.

From the outset Hanna acted as a stabilizing force on the commission. In order that the work of the group could proceed smoothly, he forced commission members to resolve any personal grievances with each other in "face-to-face" confrontation and promoted his belief that the agency should keep partisan politics out of its deliberations and programs. In response to an inquiry by Lubin on what political stance the commission should take, the bishop (he became archbishop in 1915) stated,

To me... the answer to your question is amazingly simple—I do not see how you as an individual can do outhed else than throw yourself whole-heartedly into Governor Johnson's campaign. It is just as clear to me that the Commission as such has no right to take sides in the campaign. It ought to serve the State, not the individual, it ought to serve the interests of the whole people, not the interests of a political party, it ought to shape its politics with no particular reference to any particular administration and then to trust to the work it actually accomplishes for the approval of the people. And the approval of the people will compel any political party to continue our work—any other course would seem to be unjustified and not in keeping with the highest purposes.

Hanna’s philosophy became the policy followed by the commission.

The leadership team of Lubin and Hanna instantly gave the commission status and acceptance on local and state levels. Hanna’s reputation as a well-organized intellectual and a champion for immigrants preceded him to San Francisco and certainly was at least partially responsible for his selection as a charter member of the commission. The fact that Hanna headed the single largest religious denomination in the state must also have been a factor in his appointment. Johnson,

28. Samuel E. Wood, “The California State Commission of Immigration and Housing: a Study of Administrative Organization and the Growth of Function,” Ph.D. Diss., University of California Berkeley, 1942, 104. Wood provides a detailed description of how Simon Lubin worked with Johnson and the legislature in the formation of the Commission. Johnson wrote to Lubin: “I feel that there is great work ahead for this particular commission and that it may be possible for the State of California by virtue of its efforts, to avoid the distress and the horrors of the great problem of congestion of population that confronts our eastern brethren.”

29. Report of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California to Governor Hiram Johnson, 10 July 1914; Simon Lubin, Edward Hanna, et al to Hiram Johnson, 10 July 1914; Meeting Minutes, Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 3 October 1913 and 5 December 1913, Simon Lubin Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley (hereafter BL-UCB). The original members of the commission, who were selected by Lubin and appointed by Governor Johnson, were: Simon J. Lubin, Edward J. Hanna, Mary A. Gibson, Arthur H. Fleming, and Paul Scharrenberg.


31. Edward Hanna to Simon Lubin, 16 January 1914, Simon Lubin Papers, BL-UCB.
a politically astute man, realized that since the commission would serve a high percentage of Catholics, it was appropriate and wise to seek guidance from a church official, especially one known for his previous work with immigrants.

Guided by Lubin and Hanna, the commission started its work in early 1914. Commission members believed that two distinct problems, the welfare of the immigrant and the problem of housing, neither of which had been analyzed by nor standardized in the state, needed to be addressed first. Thus, six preliminary surveys were conducted by the commission to determine the nature and extent of problems in these two areas and obtain recommendations on their resolution. Hearings were initiated addressing (1) the tenement house situation in San Francisco, (2) lodging and cheap hotels in San Francisco, (3) naturalization of aliens, (4) education of immigrants, (5) the alien and the administration of civil and criminal law, and (6) the immigrant and transportation. Hanna regularly attended and made his presence known in commission meetings through his insightful comments and recommendations as the body moved about the state holding local sessions in an effort to establish a baseline for the commission’s future work.

Written by Lubin and Hanna, the commission’s first report to the governor indicted the state for failing to assist immigrants through lack of programs, its negligence in rooting out injustice, and apparent indifference toward crimes perpetrated against immigrants. The commission’s survey of tenements revealed that San Francisco was one of the few large metropolitan areas in the country where no system for the inspection of homes was in place. The housing problem was labeled “as dangerous and demanding an immediate thorough-going program.” The commission estimated that 35,000 to 40,000 immigrants lived in temporary lodging and cheap hotels in San Francisco under inadequate hygienic conditions. Thus, the commission recommended to the governor that rigid health standards be established with a system of licensing and inspection to ensure compliance.

The Commission of Immigration and Housing of California conducted its work under the banner of “Americanization,” thus reflecting national attitudes. However, the commission’s understanding of Americanization was not of the flag raising and patriotic slogan type of “one hundred percent” Americanism and it also encompassed more than simply teaching English to foreigners. Rather, Americanization for the commission was,

32. A tabulation of official meetings of the commission from 3 October 1913, extending to 5 April 1926, the last recorded meeting, indicates the agency convened one hundred times. In those thirteen years Hanna missed twenty-four meetings. See Wood, “California State Commission,” 114.
an interchange of the best in all the world’s national traits: our democracy and freedom and commercial and material skill, in return for whatever they have that has stood the test of centuries. We can build consciously and deliberately a nation that shall unite the best of all cultures, ancient and modern—a result no other nation can attain.33

Commission members believed that nativists and restrictionists who expressed fears about the quality of immigrants coming to America’s shores should first review the present immigrant policy and determine if revision is necessary. The report argued that if immigrants are treated well and afforded equal and fair opportunities with native-born citizens, then those who will come in the future, expecting a fair reception, would be more likely to contribute positively to society. If, on the other hand, immigrants already present do not receive justice or opportunity, then this information will be communicated to future immigrants who, realizing their reception will be poor, may end up producing future problems.

Hanna supported Americanization efforts, emphasizing the benefits brought to the nation by immigrants. He responded to Simon Lubin’s query on the Americanization policy the commission should follow: I feel that these strangers can bring elements to our civilization that are invaluable—a bit of Psychology [sic] and a bit of experience ought to teach our people that if we attempt to destroy absolutely the good and the moral[ic] of these immigrants already here, and then strive to give them the “American spirit” we shall have a rebellion, etc.—We have a great field ahead of us, and I always feel that our greatest task will be to educate our ignorant Americans.34

Lubin was convinced that Hanna’s opinion was sound and thus, as with his understanding of the necessity of a non-partisan stance for the commission, the Archbishop’s Americanization policy became the agency’s consensus standard for operation.

Initiation of a home teacher program for immigrant mothers was the commission’s first initiative designed to promote Americanization. Hanna’s pastoral sense as an ordained priest influenced commission members to view the need for a strong family unit as basic to the promotion of Americanization. Meeting minutes of the commission reveal Hanna’s belief that immigrants would assimilate more rapidly and completely when attention was given to the needs of individuals. In this sense Hanna was in line with mainstream Catholic social thought in the United States, which gained notoriety in theory through the personalism of Paul Hanly Furfey.35 Investigation by the commission had re-

33. California Immigration and Housing Bulletin 1(6) (September 1920), California Immigration and Housing Papers, BL-UCB.
34. Edward Hanna to Simon Lubin, 18 December 1913, Simon Lubin Papers, BL-UCB.
35. See Meeting Minutes Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, January to June 1914, Commission of Immigration and Housing of California Papers, BL-UCB.
vealed that most immigrant men through their daily work and children through school received exposure to American ways and to the English language, but women at home did not have this opportunity. Thus, the commission suggested a home education program that would send visiting teachers to immigrant homes to instruct mothers and pre-school age children in the need for school preparation and attendance, sanitation techniques, and English. Additionally, home teachers gave instruction in the purchase and preparation of certain foods, use of clothing, and the fundamental principles of the American system of government, including the rights and duties of citizenship. The Home Teachers Act of 1915 formally instituted the commission's recommendations.36

The Americanization program next sought to remedy the deplorable conditions, discovered during the commission's initial state-wide hearings, present in many immigrants' homes. This situation was particularly a sensitive one for Hanna, for the majority of immigrant urban dwellers were Catholics who crowded into his see city of San Francisco. The State Federation of Women's Clubs, under the direction of Hanna, formed an immigration committee to address problems of sanitation, especially in many urban tenements. A 1923 report on housing, sponsored by the commission, concluded, "Something must be done, for unless housing conditions . . . are improved there will be no improvement in our civilization."37

Inspection of labor camps, where immigrant men were common workers, was the third prong of the commission's overall Americanization plan.38 Its first report to Governor Hiram Johnson, to which Hanna contributed after making several visits to various labor camps in California's San Joaquin Valley, stated that unsanitary conditions and neglect were the norm for rural labor camps. In the initial survey period

36. Pamphlet, "Americanization of Foreign-Born Women," 1917, 24. Commission of Immigration and Housing of California; Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, First Annual Report [1914], Simon Lubin Papers, BL-UCB. In 1916, the Bureau of Immigrant Education was established with a three-fold program: home education for women, labor camp education, and general citizenship education.


38. In August 1913, a labor dispute at the Wheatland hop ranch owned by Ralph Durst left four men dead. Before the commission was formally organized, it was charged with the task of discovering what precipitated the disturbance. Cletus Daniel claims that this event was the catalyst that transformed the commission into a group seeking reform of inadequate housing and unsanitary conditions, the two things determined to be the cause of the conflict. See Wood, "California State Commission," 184; and Cletus E. Daniel, Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers 1870-1941 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 91.
the commission members, with assistance from the volunteer corps in the commission's satellite offices, inspected 308 camps, housing over 9,300 workers; only 42 received a satisfactory report. Passage of the Labor Camp Sanitation Act of 1913 was a major step toward regulation and standardization of better camp conditions. The Fresno Republican praised the commission: "A monumental work has been done in placing the labor camps in California in a sanitary condition and to generally supervise the welfare of a migratory group of workers who, prior to 1913, were helpless against social and economic errors."\(^3\) In its first nine years of operation, the commission was responsible for the inspection of 12,570 camps that housed over 465,000 men, women, and children. Although the efforts of the commission in general did not achieve permanent solutions for camp problems, the historian Cletus Daniel has concluded, "The Commission established a reputation as a friend and protector of the migratory worker."\(^4\)

From the outset, the complaint department of the commission, which Hanna directed with the assistance of staff, was one of the most active. The department's original purpose was to furnish statistical data to assist in the establishment of programs for immigrant aid and legislative reform. During the commission's initial year, when the six surveys were being conducted, notices, printed in twelve languages, were posted in the regional offices asking that immigrants who believed themselves to be "wronged or defrauded" to write the main office in San Francisco. The department responded in three stages: reception and diagnosis of problems, addressing the complaint either directly or through a cooperating agency, and then seeking to remedy future difficulties by attacking root causes through legislation and the education of public opinion. Careful study of complaints led commission members to conclude that immigrants experienced few problems not common to native-born citizens, but the levels of abuse in the areas of housing, court and police dishonesty, illiteracy, and inadequate education were greater. The commission, therefore, set about to initiate legislation to eliminate discrimination and remove barriers that hindered immigrant efforts to secure justice. Removing handicaps, the commission contended, "gives to the immigrant the chance to work his way toward a contented life here. It also saves our country from the 'menace of the immigrant,' so feared by many who now oppose immigration."\(^4\)

\(^3\) Simon Lubin, Edward Hanna, et al to Hiram Johnson, 10 July 1914; Clipping, Fresno Republican, 3 February 1923, Simon Lubin Papers, BL-UCB.

\(^4\) Daniel, Bitter Harvest, 96.

\(^4\) Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, First Annual Report [1915] and Ninth Annual Report [1923], Simon Lubin Papers, BL-UCB. In its first nine years of
After nine years of operation, Hanna and the commission could proudly claim many accomplishments. While there is no record that Hanna ever lobbied the legislature, his general work for the commission and his specific efforts that championed the immigrant poor, especially his concept of Americanization, were certainly influential in the passage of many acts, including the Labor Camp Sanitation Act (originally enacted in 1913, but strengthened in 1915, 1919, and 1921), The Tenement House and Home Teacher Acts (1915), and the Hotel and Lodging Act (1917). The commission promoted the creation of the State Land Bureau (1917) and issued regulations for private employment agencies (initiated in 1913 and amended in 1915). The commission could be most proud of its work to advance the education of immigrants. Besides the Home Teachers Act, the commission assisted in launching the first normal schools for teachers in California and wrote a manual for home teachers and a primer for immigrant women.42

The commission members' joy in accomplishment was transformed into shock when Governor Friend W. Richardson's proposed 1924 fiscal budget eliminated funding for the commission. Richardson, believing that its duties were being duplicated by other state agencies, recommended "that the functions of this commission be transferred to the state bureau of statistics."43 The commission met privately in February 1923 to formulate a response.

Hanna, having recently led the charge to save the National Catholic Welfare Council from a combined internal and external campaign that sought its demise,44 was considered the proper man to direct the commission's response. In a strongly worded statement, signed by all

operation, the department adjusted over 38,000 complaints. See Wood, "California State Commission," 146.
42. Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, Ninth Annual Report [1923], Simon Lubin Papers, BL-UCB.
43. Richardson's proposed budget cut financing to several state agencies, including the Bureau of Labor Commissioners, Industrial Accident Commission, and the Industrial Welfare Commission. The total planned savings was $583,324. The $182,576 budget of the Immigration and Housing Commission was to be totally eliminated. See Budget Schedule, State of California, 1923, Hanna File, AASF.
44. Hanna, who served as administrative chairman of the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC) from its inception in 1919 until 1935, took the lead in defusing a particularly onerous situation when an effort in 1922, led by Cardinal William O'Connell of Boston and Archbishop Dennis Dougherty of Philadelphia, sought the Council's demise. Hanna led a counter campaign that successfully convinced Pope Pius XI to rescind an order of his predecessor, Benedict XV, who had summarily dismissed the Council on the grounds its existence violated Canon Law. His recent fight made him the logical choice to head the Commission's battle against Governor Richardson. See Douglas Slawson, The Foundation and First Decade of the National Catholic Welfare Council (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 145-78; and John B. Sherrin, Never Look Back: The Career and Con-
members of the commission, the governor was briefed on the agency’s accomplishments and warned that to transfer its work to another agency would jeopardize all that had been previously gained. Moreover, the letter reminded the governor that since the commission members had served without pay, even per diem, and that the budget of the bureau of statistics would have to be increased to cover the extra work it would now carry, the state would not save any money, invalidating the supposition upon which the commission believed the governor had made his proposal.\textsuperscript{45} The local press supported the commission. One representative newspaper, the \textit{Fresno Republican}, commented, “The state commission on immigration and housing has been a valuable arm of the state to prevent abuses where hundreds of thousands of men are employed. Will it be profitable even to the big taxpayers of California to substitute labor deficiency or strikes for the cost this division has been to the public treasury?” Reprinting the entire text of the commission’s response to the governor, the \textit{Sacramento Bee} also praised the commission’s work as “essential” to the welfare of the state.\textsuperscript{46}

The commission’s life-threatening crisis was resolved in rather short order. Hanna and San Francisco financier Herbert Fleishhacker met with Richardson, who on 8 February 1923, less than a week after the proposed budget was published, rescinded his plan to eliminate the commission, but reduced its annual budget to $125,000. Both Hanna and Fleishhacker “were instrumental” in convincing the governor to change his mind on the matter. Hanna’s role in the “rescue” of the commission from extinction gained him even greater respect within the agency. Described as “thoroughly familiar with the immigration question in California,” Hanna in November 1923 was elected president of the commission, a post he held until his retirement in 1935.\textsuperscript{47}

The Commission of Immigration and Housing of California continued to operate under the guidance and leadership of Edward Hanna for the next twelve years. However, the federal policy of legislated immigration restriction, that was reenergized in 1917\textsuperscript{48} and reached its

\textit{cerna of John J. Burke} (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 56-84, for complete descriptions of this affair.

\textsuperscript{45} Edward Hanna, et al to Friend Richardson, n.d. [7 February 1923], Hanna Papers, AASF.

\textsuperscript{46} Clippings, \textit{Fresno Republican}, 3 February 1923; \textit{Sacramento Bee}, 8 February 1923, Simon Lubin Papers, BL-UCB.

\textsuperscript{47} W.J. Barron to J.D. Dermody, 5 May 1921, NCWC General Secretary Files—Burke, Archives The Catholic University of America (hereafter ACUA). When Hanna left San Francisco for retirement in Rome, Mrs. Hattie W. Richards Butler was elected president of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California.

\textsuperscript{48} Restriction legislation had been in process for several decades. The Chinese Exclusion Acts of 1882, 1892, and 1902 were the first. A series of literacy acts were passed in Congress
culmination in the 1924 Johnson-Reed National Origins Act, and the onset of the Great Depression, reduced California's immigrant population growth and minimized the commission's work. Additionally, reorganization of parts of California's governmental structure in 1927 deprived the commission of its independent status, effectively eliminating its power to significantly aid immigrants.49 Hanna's work, however, was not forgotten. In a congratulatory note sent for the archbishop's silver episcopal anniversary, A. E. Monteith, chief of the Division of Immigration and Housing for California stated,

The memory of your generous effort and your lofty ambition for the work of this Division is still an active voice in the humanitarian work of the organization as when your activity helped to guide its destiny. The thought uppermost in the minds and hearts of the Commission and its personnel to-day [sic], as when you left it, is to carry on and perpetuate the splendid and far-reaching work of their one-time beloved friend and leader.50

CALIFORNIA STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

Toward the end of his tenure as a member of the California Commission of Immigration and Housing, Hanna was asked by Governor James Rolph, Jr. to again answer the call to serve as chairman of the California State Unemployment Commission. Hanna served with Rheba Crawford Splivalo of San Francisco, director of the State Department of Social Welfare, Henry J. Bauer, a Los Angeles attorney, O.K. Cushing, a San Francisco attorney, and Will J. French, director of the State Department of Industrial Relations. Mandated under the precepts of a 1931 legislative initiative, the commission was deemed, "immediately necessary in view of the present business depression and unemployment situation . . . which has thrown very large numbers of the citizens of the State out of employment." The commission was authorized to make surveys, studies, and conduct investigations in order to determine the effect and extent of the Depression and the nature and causes of unemployment, and to make recommendations for im-

49. The creation of the California State Department of Industrial Relations in 1927 eliminated the autonomy of several state commissions and agencies, including the Commission of Immigration and Housing. The commission was continued as a policy-making body only. Samuel Wood has commented about these events, "Theoretically, the Commission still existed as a policy-determining body. Actually, however, its power in this regard was nil, since it had no control [in] the execution of such a policy." See Wood, "California State Commission," 114.

50. A. E. Monteith to Edward Hanna, 10 December 1937, Hanna Papers, AASF.
mediate legislation that could bring relief and mitigate similar problems that might arise in the future. 51

From its inception, Hanna directed the efforts of the commission toward the completion of its mandated goals. Statistics compiled at the commission’s behest illustrated the gravity of the state’s economic problems and where corrections might be initiated. In June 1932 unemployment was estimated at 700,000, 28 percent of the state’s workforce, but the distribution of unemployed workers was very uneven. Los Angeles County’s unemployment alone was 344,000 or 49.2 percent of the workforce without jobs. Manufacturing workers were especially hard pressed with employment dropping 41 percent between 1929 and 1932. Payroll fell an even more precipitous 53 percent during the same period. Between 1929 and 1932 California experienced 49 bank failures and exports fell 53.6 percent. 52

After gathering data to more clearly identify the extent of the problem, the commission held hearings throughout the state to hear from those affected by the Depression and unemployment and their recommendations for solutions. A total of eight hearings were held in April and May 1932 in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Oakland, Fresno, and Sacramento. Business and commercial organizations, labor groups, members of the Legislature, and state and county officials were invited to give oral or written testimony to the commission. Over 150 individuals and 74 organizations submitted testimony and about 1,000 attended the sessions. 53 Several generic subjects were raised in the hearings, including the causes and effects of unemployment, methods of unemployment relief, techniques of employment stabilization, need for unemployment insurance, and the establishment of public and private employment agencies. State-specific proposals and problems included the need for a permanent State Economic Council, a description of the function of state labor camps, and the care of transient and other migratory workers, especially those in the agricultural industry. 54 The hearings also generated many ideas for possible legislation in order to remedy the misery experienced by many Californians: emergency unemployment relief (state aid), creation of unemployment insurance,

51. Report and Recommendations of the California State Unemployment Commission, 9 November 1932, 24, BL-UCB.
52. Ibid., 39. Comparison of California against national averages shows similar trends. While the percentage employed in California dropped 41 percent, it only dropped 36 percent nationally. While the average weekly salary dropped 21 percent in California, it plummeted 30 percent nationally.
53. Abstract of Hearings on Unemployment Before California State Unemployment Commission (April-May, 1932), 5-14, BL-UCB.
54. Report and Recommendations of the California State Unemployment Commission, 9 November 1932, 26, BL-UCB.
mandated reductions in daily worker hours, establishment of a state bureau of industrial training, extension of the operation of state labor camps, and automatic adjustment of the minimum wage with increases in the cost of living. The commission’s report to Governor Rolph followed the basic recommendations and suggestions raised in the hearings, with strong emphasis placed on the need to mandate a reduction in the numbers of hours one could work. Hanna articulated the principle followed by the commission in a plea to Rolph:

That “the best cure for unemployment is employment” is a truism which cannot be over-emphasized. The workers of California have been willing to share their work opportunity with their less fortunate brethren, with a spirit of alacrity which betokens the finest kind of altruism and citizenship. Those employees of labor in our state who have not as yet given the most careful consideration to the possibilities of affording more employment by shortening work periods, should be awakened to the responsibilities which devolve upon them as employees and citizens who can and should do everything within their power to alleviate the distress of the unemployed.

The commission recommended that all public workers be placed on a five-day six-hour per day work week “in order that employment may be given to as many employees as possible.” Hanna himself had earlier suggested an even more inclusive program of work hour restrictions, without reducing hourly wage rates, that would include all industrial, commercial, and professional enterprises.

Reduction of work hours was only one of many recommendations made by Hanna in the commission’s final report. In order to meet immediate and emergency needs, it was suggested that the state provide $20 million in loans to counties and municipalities for unemployment relief. A state Department of Industrial Relations was offered as an agency that could oversee public works projects and encourage all businesses to spread work as much as possible in order to maximize employment. The commission recommended the immediate enactment of legislation for a system of compulsory unemployment reserves (insurance) that would be supported by contributions from employers and employees. With the work of the commission completed, the establishment of a state Economic Council was suggested to provide con-

55. Ibid., 28.
56. Edward J. Hanna to James Rolph, Jr., 19 December 1931, Hanna Papers, AASF.
57. Report and Recommendations of the California State Unemployment Commission, 9 November 1932, 54, BL-UCB.
58. Edward J. Hanna to James Rolph, Jr., 19 December 1931, Hanna Papers, AASF.
continuous study and interpretation of all problems relating to unemployment. 59

The California legislature immediately acted on the commission’s recommendations. Emergency funds were allocated for disbursement on the local levels to alleviate harmful effects caused by unemployment. The governor approved $10 million for immediate distribution and another $10 million for fiscal year 1933-34. The State Department of Industrial Relations took on the added responsibility as overseer of the Division of State Unemployment Agencies and advisor to the State Compensation Insurance Fund, originally founded in 1914. The concepts present in the commission’s more general recommendations for employment insurance developed along parallel lines with the vision manifest in Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal, becoming law through the Social Security Act of 1935. Thus, the commission’s work was a significant influence upon the California legislature in its drafting of new laws that stabilized the slide of workers’ prosperity and established a positive footing for the further advancement of the state’s labor force.

CONCLUSION

Edward Hanna crowned his application of Catholic social thought in the public sector as the principal arbitrator of a longshoremen’s strike which paralyzed west coast shipping in 1934. Beginning on 9 May 1934, longshoremen from San Diego to Seattle walked off their jobs in a pay dispute which pitted the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) against the Waterfront Employers’ Union (WEU). On 26 June, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Hanna to chair the National Longshoremen Labor Board, which also included Edward F. McGrady, Assistant Secretary of Labor, and O.K. Cushing, the prominent San Francisco attorney, who had worked with the archbishop on the California Unemployment Commission, to settle the dispute, which was exacerbating the crippling economic effect of the Depression on the nation. 60 A beautiful synthesis of Hanna’s recognized authority was given in a account, published only five days after the strike ceased:

It was a crisis that called for the leadership of Edward J. Hanna, the man, not the prelate. It was his famed sense of fair play, his well known passion to help faltering mankind, that brought him as an arbitrator into this strike. The fact that he was also a shining disciple of the Prince of Peace was quite incidental. And yet it

59. Report and Recommendations of the California State Unemployment Commission, 9 November 1932, 54, BL-UCB.
60. Telegram, Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Edward Hanna, 26 June 1934, Hanna Papers, AASF.
was to be expected that in taking up his role as mediator, he should turn to the law laid down by the teachings of his calling and apply it to the case in point.⁶¹

Workers returned to work on 31 July allowing the board to meet from 8 August to 25 September in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, and Seattle. The published decision was a compromise that raised wages to $1.00 per hour, as the ILA had requested, but raised hours of work to 35 per week, as requested by the WEU.⁶²

In 1935, Edward Hanna resigned his position as ordinary in San Francisco and retired to a quiet villa outside Rome where he died in 1944. For over twenty years, during a period that saw the nation emerge victorious from World War I, only to become mired in the grip of the Great Depression, he served the people of San Francisco, California, and the United States as an administrator of programs that settled labor disputes, assisted immigrants, and aided the unemployed. Hanna’s ability and fairness were recognized by officials in all levels of government, leading to his many invitations to apply Catholic social thought in the public arena, but it was his willingness to minister in a way, although not unprecedented, nevertheless atypical for his day that demonstrates his significant contribution to church and state.

---

⁶¹ Eustace L. Williams, “Padre of the Strike,” Today, 4 August 1934, 5.
⁶² Award and Recommendations of the National Longshoremen’s Strike, #9, Hanna Papers, AASF.