

Liberty

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Hidden hospitality
shame survey



Page 3

Early Years
Professionals' Survey

page 7



SIPTU Biennial Delegate
Conference

Page 17



Wins for SIPTU members

by Frank Connolly

In recent weeks, more than 7,000 SIPTU members working as health support staff for the Health Service Executive won pay increases of 13% following the largest day of strike action conducted by the union in many years.

The pay rises for healthcare assistants, laboratory aides, CSSD technicians and theatre porters were recommended by the Labour Court following a dispute that centred on a job evaluation scheme which their employer had refused to implement.

Speaking to Liberty SIPTU Health member and shop steward in Tallaght Hospital, Jacqueline Cooke, said: "We could not have won this dispute without the support of our colleagues in the hospitals. The public support when we were on the picket line on our day of action in June was unbelievable. It filled us with confidence and is a lesson to all workers that if you stand in solidarity together you can get results."

SIPTU members across the public service will seek further advances in wages and conditions when discussions commence with the Government on a successor to the Public Service Stability Agreement later in the new year.

As SIPTU delegates prepare for the union's biennial conference in Cork from 7th - 10th October, it is evident that the past two years has seen a significant recovery of lost ground across the public service and private sector. Wage increases for union members in manufacturing, construction, services and other private sectors have been running at between 2.5% - 3% over the past two years.

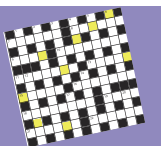
Continued on page 2



SIPTU Health members in Cork University Hospital whose day of strike action won significant pay increases of 13% for up to 7,000 health support staff. Photo Graham Seely

Liberty Hall Theatre
Event Guide Page 22

Crossword
Page 31



WORKERS RIGHTS CENTRE

1890 747 881

8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.,
Monday - Friday
wrc@siptu.ie

Carbon Tax
Q&A
Page 6



Big Start
Campaign
Page 10



Liberty View
Page 12



Housing
Page 13



Supporting
Quality
Page 18-20



Christopher Poole
Commemoration
Page 28



Sport
Page 30



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Join the Raise the Roof protest at Leinster House 12.30 p.m. on Wednesday 2nd October. The protest has been called to remind the Government that these demands were supported in a Dáil motion that was passed in October 2018.

GoSafe dispute could escalate

SIPTU members employed by GoSafe, the operator of speed camera vans on behalf of the State, are considering the escalation of their dispute following a successful 24-hour work stoppage on 28th-29th September.

SIPTU Organiser, Brendan Carr, said: "Our members were left with no option other than to conduct a work stoppage. They are currently

considering the escalation of their industrial action if there is no positive response from management relating to their concerns."

The dispute results from conditions of employment at the company. A Labour Court recommendation calling on the employer to recognise SIPTU as the representative of its employees who are union members has been completely ignored by man-

agement. Carr added: "SIPTU wrote to the Minister for Justice and Equality, Charlie Flanagan, in relation to our members' concerns. Union representatives asked to meet with the Minister to discuss this dispute and seek his assistance in resolving it prior to any industrial action. Unfortunately, the Minister has declined to intervene."

Revised construction industry SEO has pay rises and extra protections for workers

SIPTU has called for the strict enforcement of the terms of a new Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) for the construction industry which comes into effect on Tuesday, 1st October.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, John Regan, said: "Workers in the construction industry will be receiving the first phase of the pay rises in-

cluded in the SEO with a 2.7% increase on Tuesday, 1st October. The second phase will come into effect on 1st October 2020 with another 2.7% rise. This amounts to a 5.4% pay increase over two years.

In addition, the working week is now legally enshrined in the SEO at 39-hours with overtime premium rates applying after 39-hours. The Construction Workers Pension

Scheme (CWPS) contribution will increase in line with pay increases which, for the first-time, brings it in line with pension schemes in other employment sectors.

He added: "The Minister must also provide the resources for a robust enforcement structure to ensure that all construction workers will receive the full terms of the SEO."

Pay Agreement at Mondelez in Coolock

A new pay deal was accepted by SIPTU members at the Mondelez plant in Coolock, Dublin, following a ballot in late September. The deal includes a pay rise of 2% back-

dated to 1st November 2018, a further 2% increase on 1st November 2019 and a final 2.75% pay rise from 1st November 2020.

The agreement also includes a package for 60 voluntary redundancies which will take place at the company.

Continued from page 1 — Wins for SIPTU members

A Sectoral Employment Agreement negotiated by SIPTU members in the construction industry in 2017 delivered a 10% wage increase and a recent review will deliver further pay rises of 5.4%.

The number of workers joining the union is greater than at any time since the financial collapse ten years ago. The unique SIPTU Workers Rights Centre has helped to deliver over €5 million in compensation and other payments to members it has successfully advised and represented at the various employment tribunals and other appeals bodies over the past

two years.

The establishment of District Councils and Welcome Centres across the island has brought the union into the heart of communities across the country and assisted with the campaigns by SIPTU members for social justice and workers rights. Over recent years, union members have also campaigned against precarious work and low pay, against the privatisation of public services and for increased investment in public housing.

The conference logo "Respect at Work – Dignity in Life" reflects the

union's campaigns including those for women's rights, decent health care and proper pay for early years educators and teachers in third level colleges.

Clearly membership of a trade union provides workers and their families across the economy with vital protection. Delegates at conference will discuss the gains made by the union over recent times as well as the challenges posed by Brexit, global trade wars and climate change in the months and years ahead.

Ireland's hidden hospitality shame

Survey reveals appalling levels of abuse in hospitality industry

By Frank Connolly

WORKERS in the hospitality industry who participated in the research are subject to appalling levels of verbal and psychological abuse, according to a new survey by NUI Galway researcher, Dr Deirdre Curran.

The survey carried out in recent months found that 64% of respondents suffered psychological abuse while a shocking 76% reported verbal abuse by managers or owners in their workplaces.

The level of physical abuse (15%) was less severe within the sector but 63% witnessed or experienced bullying while harassment of staff (55%) was also widely reported.

The survey found that most workers in the industry are women (62%), a similar number are over 25 (60%) and more than half are permanent employees (56%). The survey found that 16% of those who responded were not born in Ireland.

According to Dr Curran, this latter figure may be an under-representation of the numbers of non-Irish nationals employed in the hospitality sector as language and other barriers may have hindered their wider participation in the survey.

While 88% said that they earned "at least the minimum wage", many complained that they are not fully paid for the hours and over-time they work.

Most (52%) did not get break entitlements while 16% said that they received no regular wage slips or, when they did, they lacked important details. A total of 43% did not receive a written statement setting out their



Quotes from survey respondents...

"I myself was very badly bullied by my boss in my workplace... I was ignored, not given rest breaks, but worst of all his wife would come in with little notes of things she had seen or heard happening, accuse us of them, and make us sign off on the answers we gave... All this from a guy who would not allow me to go home the day my partner had a miscarriage as 'he had nobody to cover me'."

"There is no respect in the industry. It's a dog-eat-dog environment and you will be kicked out the door faster than you walked in – with no pay, holidays etc."

"Once a manager in a hotel I was working in made us get down on our hands and knees and 'clean' the legs of the tables when it was quiet and no one was in the place. Very intimidating and degrading as he stood over us."

"The general manager was a complete tyrant where he'd regularly physically and verbally abuse his staff. One example I personally experienced was where I couldn't find a water jug and he grabbed me by my arm and forcefully dragged me across the kitchen, yelling 'If I pulled my head out of my arse and actually looked for one, I'd find it; (There were no jugs).'"

terms of employment when they commenced the job.

The respondents covered various roles within the hospitality industry across the Republic, including house-keeping, reception, waiter, manager, chef and bartender etc. and most (73%) had more than three years work experience.

Responses were anonymous although many agreed to engage directly with the research team and gave interviews or brief statements.

These testimonials also revealed some shocking practices within the €5 billion – and largely non-unionised – hotel, restaurant and catering industry.

Industry's huge profits not being passed on to workers



Dr Deirdre Curran: carried out research

NUIG lecturer and researcher, Dr Deirdre Curran, is a long-time SIPTU member and has been a campaigner with the One Galway Movement and Galway Hospitality group.

She was recently involved in the campaign for legislation to ensure that workers in hotels and restaurants receive the tips from customers that are intended for them.

The tipping bill was introduced by Senator Paul Gavan, a former SIPTU organiser, and passed all stages of the Seanad in June. She has recently carried out important, independent research into conditions of workers in the hospitality industry which has revealed

shocking findings (report above) and confirms the urgent need for trade union organisation in the sector.

Employers in the multi-billion euro industry have resisted the introduction of a Sector Employment Order (SEO) or a Registered Employment Agreement (REA) which could protect workers by setting a living wage across the industry and ensure decent working conditions for workers.

Dr Curran told *Liberty*: "One of the reasons I was motivated to investigate conditions and to carry out this research into the hospitality industry was the experience of a young chef in Dublin some years

ago. Leanne McDowell was employed by the restaurateur Jay Bourke and was suddenly fired after she was forced by a serious chest infection to take sick leave. She was called back into work after just two days of rest ordered by her doctor and fired.

"In 2011, her complaint to the Employment Appeals Tribunal was upheld and she was awarded damages of €50,000. However, the company which employed her was put into liquidation soon after and she never received her award or any other compensation.

"Other workers and creditors also suffered as a consequence of

the liquidation. It was an absolute disgrace," she added.

Dr Curran continued: "I hope this new independent research which we have carried out at NUIG over the past few months will lead to greater protection, including trade union organisation, for vulnerable workers across the hospitality industry.

"Many hotels and restaurants, particularly in cities such as Dublin, Cork and Galway, have enjoyed huge profits in recent years which have not been passed on to those who provide the services, make and serve the food, clean the rooms and maintain the operations."

All Bord na Móna jobs now under threat

The crisis in Bord na Móna has reached a critical stage, according to the GOU (Group of Unions: SIPTU, CONNECT, UNITE) which represents workers in the semi-state company.

At a meeting on Thursday (26th September) with the Chief Executive Officer of the company, Tom Donnellan, the GOU was informed that unless a sense of urgency was injected into the concept of a "Just Transition" accompanied by real support from all stakeholders, the future of Bord Na Móna appears "dire". According to Willie Noone, SIPTU organiser and secretary of the GOU, Mr Donnellan said that if nothing changes within the next

month a "seismic decision" will have to be made and it will not be "good news" for workers.

"For the past number of weeks, the GOU has been working tirelessly to protect the conditions and jobs of almost 2000 workers who currently work in the company and to ensure that those who wish to voluntarily leave can do so with dignity and respect," Willie Noone said.

"Although the GOU has insisted that recent threats to make workers compulsorily redundant will not be accepted, the company has said that it is now in a financially precarious position and will have no option but to take unpopular and decisive action, probably within a month.



Protesters came out to support the Bord na Móna workers in Lanesboro, Co. Longford, July 2019.

"The GOU is actively re-engaging with politicians of all parties as it is clear that a resolution to

the crisis is in the political arena and, if not resolved, will have devastating consequences for

thousands of current employees as well as former workers who depend on Bord na Móna pensions.

"Concrete and real solutions are now required while the Government must urgently establish its promised national 'Just Transition' taskforce to deal with the issues affecting Bord na Móna workers and their communities and to avoid catastrophic job losses at the company."

The alarming warning from the CEO of Bord Na Móna comes just over a week after a meeting between representatives of the ICTU and the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, during which the establishment of a Just Transition taskforce was discussed.

Jobseeker's Allowance for Artists and Performers

PROFESSIONAL artists can avail of an expansion in the categories of those eligible to claim Jobseeker's Allowance while they focus on their artistic work and develop their portfolio.

SIPTU Services Division Organiser, Karan O' Loughlin, said: "Vi-

sual artists and writers have since September been joined by artists such as screenwriters, film directors and film actors in being able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance under this scheme."

Those eligible for the scheme also includes those involved in the theatre art form, specifically ac-

tors, costume designers, theatre directors, set designers and stage designers. Musicians, dancers, choreographers, opera composers and circus and street performers complete the list of artists who are now included in the scheme.

O'Loughlin added: "This development should greatly benefit

artists, many of whom are in precarious working positions and due to the nature of their work have periods when lack of earnings is a serious problem.

"That the Government has recognised that specific and special measures are needed to assist these workers is positive.

"We also need a broader discussion about the working lives of artists and their capacity to have longevity and dignity in their careers. The way to truly value artists is to ensure they can make a secure living from their work and that means the development of a basic income scheme for them."

DAA Gain Sharing Scheme 'significant step forward'

A GAIN Sharing Scheme Agreement brokered in August marks a major advance for DAA workers at Dublin and Cork Airports.

The new scheme, which commences with effect from 1st January 2019, will generate a payment in May 2020 and each year thereafter. The agreement also sees workers receive retrospective payments of up to €2,000.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Neil McGowan, told *Liberty*: "This agreement is a significant step forward for our members in Dublin and Cork Airports.

"Our members' hard work has enabled the airports to [generate] record passenger numbers and this scheme gives them an opportunity to share in this success now and into the future."

Meanwhile, members who work with passengers with reduced mobility in the facilities company GCS in Dublin Airport have agreed locally a 4% increase from 1st March 2019 and a further 4% from 1st July 2020 in a pay agreement which concludes on 31st December 2021.



Passengers at Dublin Airport

New Rights Centre in Carlow

OVER the summer a new Workers' Rights Centre opened in Barrack Street, Carlow.

The centre is staffed by local SIPTU representatives Jimmy Brennan, formerly of St Dymphna's Hospital, and Pat McCarthy, formerly of Irish Sugar. Both activists have vast experience at local and national level in dealing with workplace issues.

"We're offering workers a focal point to access information on their rights. Even if you haven't started your job yet and want information on contract law, we have access to the legal department in Liberty Hall, Dublin,"

Jimmy said.

The centre will operate every Tuesday from 2.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and every Wednesday from 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. People who are experiencing problems in the workplace are encouraged to use the centre and avail of the advice available on their rights in the workplace in strict confidence.

Pat and Jimmy are giving their services to the information centre for free and are optimistic that the venture will help to inform workers of their rights.

"Hopefully, it'll be fruitful for those who need it," concluded Jimmy.

Port and Docks safety record slammed by Unions

UNION representatives have spoken to the Government about the need to improve safety at the country's ports and docks. It follows a spate of fatal accidents at maritime facilities in recent years.

SIPTU representatives, along with the International Transport Workers' Federation, met with

Minister of State in the Department of Trade, Employment and Business, Pat Breen, on 10th September to discuss the issue.

SIPTU TEAC Division Organiser, Greg Ennis, told Liberty: "Our constructive meeting with the minister and officials from the Health and Safety Authority follows a tragic sequence of seven deaths

due to workplace accidents at ports and docks over the last three years.

"This is a completely unacceptable situation which we strongly believe would not have occurred if an adequate standardised safety regime was in place in shared workspaces within the environs of Irish ports and docks."

SIPTU Ports, Docks and Harbour

Organiser, Jerry Brennan, said: "What we are seeking are safety training schemes, similar to those within the construction industry, to be introduced at our ports and docks. These include the national safe pass certificate and Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS). Both schemes focus on ensuring high levels of compliance

with health and safety. In the case of the CSCS it involves training in safety measures around the use of heavy machinery of a type present in ports and docks throughout the country."

Following the meeting, SIPTU wrote to the Minister outlining union proposals over new safety schemes at the on-shore facilities.

Pay campaign success

THERE have been several important pay agreements at companies across the private sector in August and September, marking the continued success of the SIPTU pay campaign.

SIPTU Private Sector Deputy General Secretary, Gerry McCormack, said: "These agreements focus on basic pay rises but many also include changes to

work patterns and other benefits which advance the conditions of our members.

"It is important in local level negotiations for shop stewards and members to consider what benefits they may wish to see included in wider pay agreements. Such imaginative thinking can ensure that members get the full reward from their work."



HRI workers agree 8% rise

SIPTU members in Horse Racing Ireland (HRI) have agreed an 8% pay increase over 33 months, from 1st March. Based in the Curragh, county Kildare, HRI is the governing body of horse racing on the island of Ireland.

Living Wage won at Momentum IBM

A PAY deal at Momentum IBM in Blanchardstown, Dublin, saw the Living Wage secured for SIPTU members.

A pay increase of 68 cent per

hour, backdated to December 2018, was agreed for eight members who are paid an hourly rate above the minimum ERO rate with their rate now increased to

€11.85 hour. SIPTU members negotiated a 3% pay increase at XPO Logistics in Ballymount, Dublin, backdated to 1st January 2019 until 31st December 2019.

Wexford drinks workers agree deal

SIPTU members in the Donohoe Drinks Company Plant in Enniscorthy, county Wexford, have balloted to accept an 8% pay agreement spread over three years.

The deal includes a 3% basic pay increase from 1st April 2019, a 2.5% basic pay increase from 1st

April 2020 and a 2.5% basic pay increase from 1st April 2021. The agreement expires on 31st March 2022.

SIPTU members accepted a one-year basic pay increase of 2.5% backdated from 1st March 2019 in Ball Beverage Packaging, county Waterford. Other clauses within

this agreement included an increase in manning levels from 23 to 26 per shift, overtime reintroduced for leave and training as well as a 3% per year contribution for three years to the Defined Benefit pension scheme from the company.

Pay hikes in the South West

A ONE-YEAR basic pay increase of 2.75%, backdated from 1st January 2019, was secured by members in TRS Global, a specialised repairs company based in the IDA Business and Technology Park, Carrigtohill, county Cork.

Also, in Cork, members in the plastic pipe manufacturer, Pipelife Ireland Ltd, secured two annual basic pay increases of 2.25% in an agreement which also includes additional leave days based on length of service.

The deal also includes a guaranteed non-cash bonus of €500 to employees who have com-

pleted probation. In county Kerry, workers at Temmler Ireland Ltd in Killorglin negotiated an agreement on pay which includes a 2% increase in basic pay from 1st January 2019 to 31st December, 2019 and a 2% increase in basic pay from 1st January 2020 to 31st March, 2021.

At the Ballingowan-based Kerry Motor Works a 3% pay increase effective from 1st January to 31st March 2020 was agreed, along with a contribution of €65 for the purchase of work boots and an increase in the subsistence allowance in line with revenue guidelines for absences in excess of 10 hours from base.

Job Fair 'great opportunity' for migrant workers

SIPTU took part in a Job Fair focusing on migrant workers at the Trim Castle Hotel, county Meath, on Wednesday, 11th September.

The event, which was organised by Meath-based community work organisation Cultúr, was part of the two-year Net-WORK Project that has provided training for more than 115 female refugees and migrants.

Cultúr Officer Reuben Ham-

bakachere said the Job Fair was a "great opportunity" for recruitment agencies and companies to meet with "skilled, multilingual migrant professionals" from different sectors "who are actively looking for a job".

He added: "We are really pleased we can offer that opportunity to our community here."

Some 14 employers, eight agencies and 10 new businesses



Photo from left: SIPTU Organisers Lenka Halouzskova and Joanna Ozdarska at the SIPTU stall at the jobs fair.

as well as SIPTU representatives, Joanna Ozdarska and Lenka Halouzskova, were at the event, and it gave attendees an opportunity to learn about different services and organisations across the county.

"Such events are a great opportunity for SIPTU to present our services to potential employees. Once again it shows that there is a huge need to educate our communi-

ties," Joanna Ozdarska told Liberty. "Visitors who engaged with us were asking about SIPTU, our services and some expressed their wish to be part of the union."

Lenka Halouzskova added: "It is crucial to educate people within different communities as there is still a huge need for the information. We found that workers want to know more about SIPTU and the services we offer."

Global climate strikers call for action



By Yvonne O'Callaghan

ON 20th September, hundreds of thousands environmentalists, NGOs, community groups and trade unions united across the world in support for the student-led climate strike calling for 'Climate Justice Now'.

Rallies and demonstrations took place in scores of cities and towns across Ireland as part the international initiative, which saw the largest ever worldwide mobilisation for action on the climate crisis. Locally, SIPTU activists throughout the country took part in the mobilisation.

In Dublin and Cork alone, almost 30,000 people took part. Spearheaded by Irish students from Fridays for Future Ireland, Schools Climate Action Network and SchoolStrikes4climate Ireland, the protests were part of an international campaign of strikes and actions planned as a week of global action to coincide with the emergency UN Climate Summit, which took place in New York on 23rd September.

Speaking ahead of the global climate

Protesters outside Leinster House in Dublin, 20th September 2019. Photo: RollingNews



mate strike, Gráinne O'Sullivan, a student from North Wicklow Educate Together, said: "I will always protest for climate action and will always support those who do. But I hope that I won't have to, and that the Government will act soon. For that to happen we need everyone's support, no matter what age they are."

As part of the mobilisation for the protest, Congress General Secretary, Patricia King said: "Young people are demanding that their governments recognise the urgency and severity of the climate crisis and take appropriate action."

"Congress and its affiliated unions salute them for the leadership they have shown on this issue, and we stand with them to send an unequivocal message that climate action is needed now."

"We will continue to work for a just and lasting global transition to environmental sustainability, built on social dialogue."

The next climate strike will take place prior to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2019.

Carbon Tax Q&A

Why we need a real Just Transition



By Michael Taft

What is a carbon tax?

It is a tax on fossil fuels (oil, coal, petrol, natural gas, etc). It taxes the carbon content of fuels which make up the greenhouse gases that are heating up the planet. This is the main driver of the climate emergency.

What is being proposed?

We currently have a carbon tax, set at €20 per tonne. It is proposed to increase this to €80 (or possibly higher) by 2030.

What will this achieve?

Proponents hope this will reduce the subsidy that oil and other fossil-fuel companies receive since the current price of their product doesn't reflect the damage they are doing to the environment (in other words, those who profit from fossil fuels don't pay for the climate damage they cause). Proponents hope that higher prices will redirect consumption and investment away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy which will then become relatively cheaper. The ultimate goal is to eliminate fossil fuels and put those companies out of business.

But wouldn't a carbon tax be regressive?

Yes. While low and average income groups use less fossil fuel than higher income groups, their spending on electricity, heating and petrol makes up a higher proportion of their income. A tax would drive up this cost. Those on higher incomes would be easily able to afford the tax since their spending on fossil fuels is much smaller as a proportion of their income. So the effect would be socially unjust unless low and average income groups were compensated.

How would this compensation work?

There are two ways. The first is to increase social protection payments and tax credits. This appears to be the Government's preference. The problem is that many low-paid workers – whose income is too high for welfare payments but too low for tax credits – would lose out. And average income groups might not get enough compensation.

The second method is called a 'Carbon Dividend'. This would ring-fence the revenue from an



increased carbon tax and be returned to every man, woman and child through an annual payment, or 'dividend'. However, the Government claims there would be administrative difficulties in paying a dividend.

The ESRI and NERI have estimated that full compensation (i.e. all the revenue from the carbon tax being returned to households) would boost the incomes of most people even when increased energy costs are factored in. The biggest losers would be the top 10% income group. The net effect of compensation would be to reduce inequality as the burden of the carbon tax would fall on those who can afford to pay.

Is carbon tax the solution to the climate emergency?

No. We have to reduce use of fossil fuels and drive investment towards renewables but this is not nearly enough.

We need to increase the supply of renewables through promoting wind, solar and ocean/wave energy.

We need to make home retrofitting and electric cars accessible to everyone.

We need more investment in public transport and radically cut fares (many European cities have free bus transport).

And we need to protect the living standards and life-chances of workers and communities who will be negatively impacted by the transition to renewable energy. Workers affected need their incomes protected and have the opportunity to draw up alternative plans in their workplaces while communities need alternative employment.

We need real Just Transition policies, not ambiguous promises, vague aspirations, or targets on paper.

New inquests into Stardust death announced

By Frank Connolly

Families of the victims and survivors of the Stardust disaster have welcomed the decision by the Attorney General, Seamus Woulfe, to hold a fresh inquest into the deaths of 48 young people in the February 1981 fire.

After decades of campaigning, the Dublin City Coroner will be asked to convene an inquest into the circumstances leading to the tragic deaths of those who attended a disco in the Stardust night club in Artane Dublin on Valentines' night, 14th February, 1981.

According to solicitor, Darragh Mackin, of Phoenix Law, who represents



Campaigners for the Stardust victims in Dublin earlier this year. Photo: RollingNews

resents the families the inquest will allow his clients to present long-established evidence as to where the fire started on the night. For many years, it has been argued by the families that the fire started in a first floor storeroom containing combustible materials, including cooking oils, polishes and other flammable materials.

Witnesses who saw flames in the roof of the building before the fire engulfed the young people downstairs have also come forward. These include Brenda Kelly, now 85, who said she called 999 on the night of the fire from her nearby home when she saw the fire on the roof of the Stardust.

The call was not recorded in the 1982 report by former Supreme

Court judge, Ronan Keane, who chaired a tribunal of inquiry into the disaster and concluded that the fire was probably the result of a person setting fire to a seat in an alcove of the nightclub. Doors of the nightclub were chained which prevented the escape of those killed and injured.

This finding of 'probable arson' was overturned following an investigation by Paul Coffey SC in 2009 which led to a decision by the Oireachtas to remove it from the report of the Stardust tribunal published by Judge Keane in 1982.

"The reality is there are people who must be held accountable for what happened that night," said Darragh Mackin.

Survey confirms Early Years crisis

An alarming 90% of educators are questioning future in sector

THE results are in for the Early Years Professionals' Survey 2019 – which examined the lives and everyday struggles of workers in the sector – and they are deeply troubling.

It reveals the picture of a profession mired in poverty and where low pay and a lack of basic entitlements predominate.

The survey was carried out in June this year by Dr Amy Greer Murphy, a social scientist who uses qualitative research to understand inequality and the impact of public policy on social and health outcomes.

A wide cross-section of workers were invited to take part. And more than 3,200 responded to the survey which equates to 12% of those employed in the sector.

Those who responded included educators, room leaders, owner-managers, managers and assistant managers.

Among the key findings of the survey include the fact that 90% of Early Years educators are questioning their future in the sector, with



Educating the young is a worthy profession but survey findings reveal a sector mired in poverty

Disturbingly in a sector which overwhelmingly employs women, only 11% have paid maternity leave.

The impact of this situation is threefold. Educators struggle to make ends meet undermining their quality of life; providers struggle to attract and retain staff, undermining their sustainability; and quality for children is undermined as staff turnover rates stand at 25% per year.

This survey will be repeated annually and, if the results do not improve, the current childcare model will have failed educators, providers and – most importantly – children.

94% of childcare workers stated that they could not make ends meet on their pay

90% of Early Years educators are questioning their future in the sector, with 86% citing low pay as the biggest problem with their job

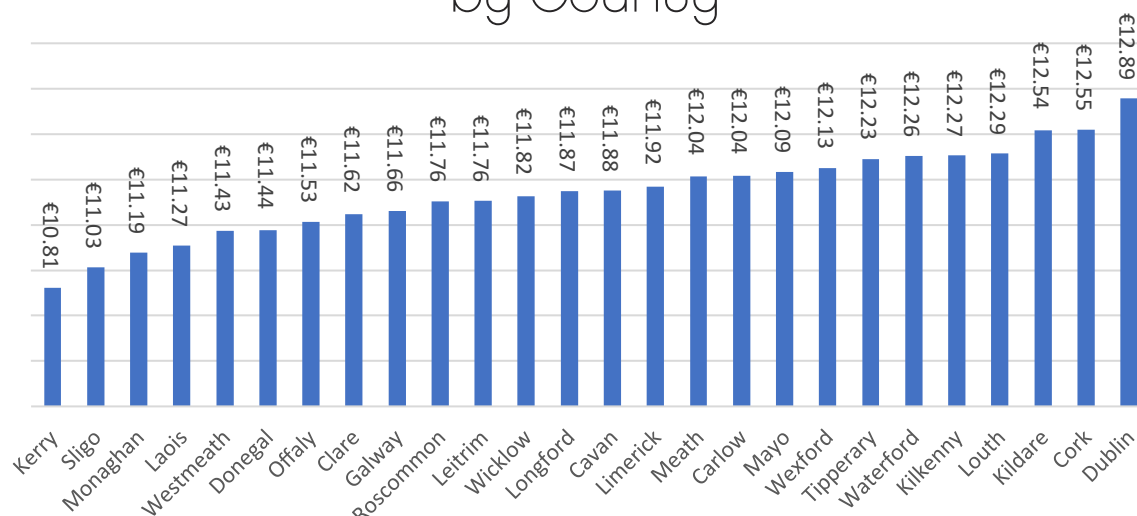
86% citing low pay as the biggest problem with their job.

Added to that, some 94% of childcare workers stated that they could not make ends meet on their pay.

A large number of respondents also claimed they frequently had to buy supplies out of their own pockets while many had to train for the job on their own time.

Currently, more than half of all those working in the childcare sector are actively looking for a different job.

Average of Hourly Rate by County



"In the upcoming budget, the Government has an opportunity to establish a threshold of decency by supporting a Living Wage for all Early Years educators and to address the staffing crisis that is undermining quality.

"To retain highly-skilled, hard-working and caring staff in this sector, the conditions of workers need to be improved. Workers require security in their contracts. They should be paid for training and reimbursed for materials, and they deserve to be paid a fair wage.

"They need adequate time to prepare, train and carry out administrative and support tasks. They also want to be respected by society and valued for the important work they do.

"The future health of the sector is at stake – so many employees indicating a desire to move job or leave the sector entirely is a poor indicator of the sustainability of the current model of Early Years service provision in Ireland." Head of SIPTU Campaigns Darragh O'Connor said.

Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon

In Early Years education, failure can't be contemplated

"WE need to carry on the fight for all of the children of the nation, for the many not the few."

Collette Coleman, the recently-elected President of Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon District Council, made the comments during her address to the third annual Markievicz/Partridge Summer School in Efrinagh, county Leitrim, in late July.

Speaking at the memorial to renowned Leitrim socialist Jimmy Gralton in the village, she said he had been aware of the failure of the state to provide an education for all but had shown the "determination" to do something about it. It was Gralton's wish to educate



Collette Coleman, President of Sligo, Leitrim and Roscommon District Council

neighbours and friends, she added, and that brought "the wrath of Church and state down upon him".

"Gralton provided the books, the hall in which to study, and the educators, but his attempts were thwarted and eventually he was deported for his efforts."

Coleman called for the same "fighting spirit" displayed by Gralton to be an inspiration to SIPTU members today.

Underlining the vital importance of Early Years learning, she continued: "What happens in the formative years determines what type of citizens we will have, what type of society we will have."

She asked: "What will that soci-

ety be if we fail? When will Gralton's dream be fulfilled? When will we mature as a nation?"

"I believe that our nation has not moved on that much since Gralton's time. Everything we have we had to fight for and anything that is worth having is worth fighting for." Emphasising the need to fight for equality in education and to support Early Years educators, she said: "We don't have a choice as failure cannot be contemplated."

"We have only to look to our near neighbours and our friends across the Atlantic to see what ignorance and apathy breeds. It breeds hatred and oppression like never before."

Limerick

District Council backs climate protests

AT A recent meeting of the SIPTU Limerick District Council, local Fridays for Future student climate change activist Saoirse Exton spoke to members about the importance of SIPTU support for climate action.

Saoirse's powerful contribution



SIPTU members supporting the Schools Strike for Climate

led to the members of the Limerick District Council playing an active part in supporting the schools for climate action protest in the city on Friday 20th September.

The debate and discussion on the night also featured a presentation from Big Start Organiser, Yvonne McGrath on the Early Years sector in the city and county.



Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley receives special certificate from Limerick District Council Chair Breffini Monaghan

The night was sealed with SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley receiving a special SIPTU Limerick Soviet 100 year celebration certificate from SIPTU Limer-

ick District Council Chair, Breffini Monaghan in recognition of her pivotal role supporting members in hosting a memorable events throughout the centenary.

Northern Ireland

Acclaimed union actors perform Connolly drama in Belfast

THERE was standing room only at a packed Duncairn Arts Centre, Belfast, on Saturday, 7th September for a performance of James Connolly's play *Under Which Flag?*

The special event was staged by the Shared History Interpretative Project (SHIP) in conjunction with SIPTU Northern Ireland District Council, Irish Equity, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the James Connolly Visitors Centre. SIPTU Deputy General Sec-

retary, Ethel Buckley introduced the play while labour historian and Musicians Union of Ireland executive member, Francis Devine, spoke at the end of the performance.

The production featured a cast of acclaimed Irish Equity actors, led by Sabina Coyne-Higgins and including Brendan Conroy, Donna Anita Nikolaisen, Frank O'Sullivan, John Cronin and Steve Gunn.

Direction and production was by Equity President, Pdraig Murray. Narration was by Bryan Murray.



The *Under Which Flag?* cast, led by Sabina Coyne-Higgins, second left

Dublin

SIPTU opposes 'unfair' tax on workers

CALLS for a charge to be placed on employees' car parking spaces have been challenged by the Dublin District Council which claimed such a move would amount to an attempt to impose a new and unfair tax on workers in the city.

SIPTU Dublin District Council Joint Secretary, Brendan Carr de-

bated the issue with Dublin Town CEO Richard Guiney on the Newstalk Breakfast show on 23rd August. Brendan Carr told *Liberty*: "The business group, Dublin Town, called for a levy to be placed on car parking spaces provided for employees. It claimed that this would encourage more workers to avail of public transport and highlighted a similar scheme in the UK.

"What such a levy would amount to is a new tax on workers, many of whom are already in receipt of state subsidies because of their low wages."

He added: "It is ironic that the group which is calling for the imposition of such a charge is one that strongly opposed the concept of a Living Wage for all workers in Dublin."

Waterford

Precarious work data released at seminar



Photo from left: Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan, University of Limerick, Waterford Mayor Cllr John Pratt, Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley and SIPTU Organiser David Lane at the Waterford District Council Seminar.

NEW data showing the extent and impact of precarious work practices in Waterford county was released at a District Council seminar in the Tower Hotel, Waterford city, on Friday 30th August.

Speakers at the seminar included Mayor of the City and County of Waterford, Councillor John Pratt; Metropolitan Mayor of Waterford, Councillor Breda Brennan; SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley; and University of Limerick Lecturer, Dr. Michelle O'Sullivan.

SIPTU Waterford District Council Secretary, David Lane, said: "The new statistics on precarious work in Waterford city and county, compiled by

SIPTU researchers, indicate that nearly one-in-three workers in Waterford – that is approximately 12,800 people – cannot afford to meet an unexpected expense. Of these workers, 4,800 suffer multiple deprivation experiences."

SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley said: "Our members are seeking solutions as to how we can effectively counter the spread of precarious work. To this end, the seminar discussed the SIPTU campaign to tackle precarious work in Waterford city and county.

"This campaign will see SIPTU Waterford District Council take a leading role alongside civic and community groups to fight for better working lives across the city and county."

Kerry

Brexit challenge and health service debated

MEMBERS of the SIPTU Kerry District Council discussed Brexit and the challenges facing the health service at a seminar in the Brandon Hotel in Tralee, county Kerry, on Wednesday 25th September.

The seminar was attended by shop stewards from private and public sector workplaces across the county.

Discussing the possible impact of Brexit on workers in Ireland, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Gerry McCormack said: "The longer the Brexit crisis drags out the more workers in Ireland are subject to uncertainty and the more cautious businesses will become about investment and spending.

"There is a real threat to the jobs of tens of thousands of these workers, including SIPTU members, working in the agri-food sector if there is a no-deal Brexit.

"Workers in Ireland are contributing to productivity and performance gains across the Irish economy and they should be rewarded accordingly, without the shadow of Brexit hanging over them."

Following a lively discussion on Brexit, SIPTU Honorary President, Padraig Peyton addressed the meeting on challenges facing the health service.

He said: "This weekend, more people awaiting cataract surgery will make the six-hour journey from Kerry to Belfast, joining 2,234 Irish patients who have had to travel outside of the state for healthcare last year. This is unacceptable."

He added: "The current system also fails and frustrates the thousands of dedicated health workers who do their jobs under massive pressures, within these cumbersome and often contradictory structures on a daily basis."



SIPTU Kerry District Council showing their support for the GoSafe workers.



Photo left: Prof Mary Horgan, RCPI President speaking at the Kathleen Lynn commemoration.

Kathleen Lynn commemoration

Professor Mary Horgan the first female president of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland spoke at the Kathleen Lynn commemoration in Deans Grange cemetery on Saturday 14th September.

Dr Horgan recalled how Kathleen Lynn, who fought with the ICA at City Hall in 1916 and was a founder of the first children's hospital in Dublin, was a friend of her grandmother and an inspiration to her. She said she is committed to the campaign to have the National Children's Hospital, currently under

construction, named after Dr Lynn. Aisling Cassidy, the grandniece of ITGWU activist, Winnie Carney sang 'A Song for Ireland' at the commemoration. Ethel Buckley laid a wreath at the grave on behalf of SIPTU members while Sabina Higgins also spoke at the graveside.

Clare TDs support Living Wage for Early Years educators



BIG Start campaign activists recently met with Clare TDs Timmy Dooley, Joe Carey and Dr. Michael Harty while seeking support for their Pre-Budget submission containing a demand for a Living Wage for all Early Years educators.

SIPTU Organiser Yvonne McGrath, said: "Early Years educators nationally are paid on average €1.12 per hour below the Living Wage. This means that qualified and skilled educators are struggling to make ends meet and sim-

ply cannot afford to stay in a job they love." She added: "We are calling on the Government to make a real difference in Budget 2020 and ensure all workers earn at least the Living Wage of €12.30 per hour. This investment will cost €32 million."

At the meeting several points were discussed including the lack of professional recognition for Early Years educators and how increased investment in pay is to the benefit of all children, especially those from disadvantaged areas

SIPTU activist, Claire Casey, told *Liberty*: "Until the low pay of Early Years educators is addressed, we will still rightly feel we are not adequately recognised or valued."

Louise Commame, who is also a

SIPTU activist, said: "Providers, educators and parents are all struggling. Unless we start working together nothing is going to change."

"If we want affordable, high quality childcare we need to build a strong childcare union that can fight for educators, providers and parents. That is why I joined SIPTU."

"Every day, I see the difference that high-quality Early Years education and care makes to the lives of children. However, across our sector, low pay is undermining the drive for quality."

The Clare TDs all pledged their support for the Big Start campaign and its call for greater government investment in childcare.

Working group on Early Education professional body

THE Association of Childhood Professionals (ACP), SIPTU, and PLE, the Irish Association of Academics in Early Childhood Education and Care in Higher Education, have formed a working group to explore setting up a professional body for the Early Childhood Education and Care sector.

ACP chairperson Marion Quinn said: "We are delighted to be a

partner in this important initiative. This collaboration will harness expertise from all elements of the Early Childhood Education and Care profession, to inform and influence policy and practice, from inception to implementation."

PLE chairperson, Dr Mary Moloney, told *Liberty*: "Each of our three organisations represents a significant part of the workforce. Coming together to form a professional body will support having a collective voice and shared profes-

sional identity among all those working in Early Childhood Education and Care."

"Educating and caring for young children is a profession and needs to be valued and rewarded."

"As such, SIPTU is delighted to be a founding partner in the development of the professional body for the Early Childhood Education and Care sector," said SIPTU Head of Organising and Campaigns, Darragh O'Connor.



Politicians and academics show their backing for boosting wages in the Early Childhood Care and Education sector

Limerick academics and politicians support Living Wage call

CHILDCARE academics and elected representatives attended the Big Start Limerick Committee launch of the SIPTU Pre-Budget Submission on Early Childhood Care and Education at Our Lady of Lourdes Creche, in Limerick, on 15th July.

Mary Immaculate College lecturer, Mary Moloney, said: "The issues facing a predominately female sector is one of not being able to afford mortgages or car loans as their salaries won't sustain them."

"They can't afford to live independently and leave home."

"If we lose these dedicated and

passionate educators at this stage due to paying them just above the minimum wage and don't look after our staff, quality in the sector is going to fall and we will be building up huge problems in later years for our children, which isn't good enough."

Political representatives from across parties including Mayor of

the City and County of Limerick, Michael Sheahan; Senator Paul Gavan; Maurice Quinlivan TD; Willie O'Dea TD and Senator Kieran O'Donnell attended the event to support the call for increased funding.

Fianna Fail TD, Willie O'Dea, said: "National expenditure in Early Childhood Care and Educa-

tion is only 25% of the European average and that is something that needs to be rectified."

"In our budget negotiations, Fianna Fáil will be advancing increased funding for Early Childhood Education and will be doing so in a very forceable manner."



SIPTU Nursing Sector members Rosie Condra and Juris Matusalem at the Pink & Blue Power campaign launch. Photo: Jimmy Weldon

SIPTU launches cancer assessment service

SIPTU Nursing Sector has launched the Pink & Blue Power campaign, a potentially life-saving breast and prostate assessment service for members of the SIPTU Nurse & Midwife Income Continuance Plan with Cornmarket.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Kevin Figgis, told *Liberty*: "Breast Cancer is the most common cancer in women in Ireland with one in nine women diagnosed at some stage in their lives.

"Prostate Cancer is the second most common cancer in men in Ireland with one in seven men diagnosed during their lifetime. Fol-

lowing a high level of cancer claims in the plan, SIPTU Nursing & Midwifery Sector, together with Cornmarket, negotiated this benefit on behalf of members.

As a result, in 2019/2020, eligible members can avail of this service as an added benefit of their SIPTU Nursing & Midwifery Income Continuance policy.

96% back Labour Court Support Staff recommendations



By Paddy Cole

EARLIER this month, SIPTU members working as health service support staff voted by nearly 96% in favour of a Labour Court recommendation aimed at resolving a dispute over a HSE job evaluation scheme.

In a separate ballot, chefs working for the Health Service Executive (HSE) also voted overwhelmingly to accept a Labour Court recommendation over a dispute related to a grading process that could see an improvement to their payment and conditions.

SIPTU Health Division Organiser, Paul Bell told *Liberty*: "It was never our members' desire to engage in strike action, but after months of obstruction they were left with no option but to express themselves and their frustrations.

"Their strength and resolve is the reason we this emphatic result and a mandate to pursue phases 3 and 4 of the job evaluation scheme for support grades and a satisfactory conclusion to an agreed process for chef members."

He added: "We expect that the Government will respond positively and quickly to these ballot results and that our members will receive the payments due to them without any unnecessary delay."

In June, 10,000 health workers in 38 hospitals and health facilities went on strike to force the Government to act over its failure to implement a job evaluation scheme.



SIPTU members making their voices heard in Limerick. Pictures: Paddy Cole, Graham Seely, Tim Gannon



SIPTU members at Tallaght Hospital defiant and strong



The picket lines outside Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda.

St Vincent's workers 'deserve better' as SIPTU justice campaign steps up

SIPTU members in St Vincent's Centre in Cork are set to take their campaign for justice directly to the Office of the Revenue Commissioners on 7th October.

SIPTU Industrial Organiser, Sharon Cregan, said: "We plan on

taking our campaign directly to the Revenue offices in an effort to highlight this injustice.

"It is unacceptable that loyal workers who provide such a vital community service should be left to remain in employment limbo while management and Govern-

ment can ignore us. Despite the fact that our members pay PRSI they are being denied vital access to basic social welfare entitlements, such as dental and optical benefits.

"It is not right and it is not fair. These workers deserve better."

St Vincent's, a Section 39 organisation, was previously governed by the Sisters of Charity. A proposal for the workers to be transferred to the COPE Foundation was put forward in the autumn of 2018 following an interim arrangement with the HSE.

PSSA delivering for all public sector workers

FROM 1st September, SIPTU members working in the public service received a 1.75% pay boost.

The increase was negotiated by SIPTU and other unions as part of the Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA).

This is the second pay adjustment to be implemented this year.

The pay of public servants who earn less than €30,000 a year went up by 1% in January, while those earning more than €30,000 benefited from a reduced contribution to the 'additional superannuation contribution', which replaced the

so-called 'pension levy' under the PSSA. There were also two increases – each worth 1% – in 2018.

Next year will see a further adjustment to the additional superannuation contribution in January, while a 2% increase is due in October 2020.

Income improvements under PSSA

- 1st January 2018: 1% pay adjustment
- 1st October 2018: 1% pay adjustment
- 1st January 2019: Additional superannuation contribution threshold up from €28,750 to €32,000 (worth €325 a year). 1% pay increase for those who don't benefit (i.e. those earning less than €30,000 a year)
- 1st September 2019: 1.75% pay adjustment
- 1st January 2020: Additional superannuation contribution threshold increased to €34,500 (worth €250 a year). 0.5% pay increase for those who don't benefit (i.e. those earning less than €32,000 a year)
- 1st October 2020: 2% pay adjustment
- 31st December 2020: PSSA scheduled to conclude.

Liberty View

Budget 2020 needs to Brexit proof economy

With less than a month to go before Britain leaves the EU, there is deep uncertainty over the impact a 'no-deal' Brexit will have on the Irish economy. Tens of thousands of jobs, including members of SIPTU many in the agri-food industry, are under threat. Exports to Britain and to Europe across the UK land bridge could face severe disruption while the return of any form of hard border will jeopardise the had won peace settlement and cross border co-operation on the island.

According to the ESRI and the Central Bank growth, employment and wages will slow and prices will rise due to Brexit and particularly a no-deal Brexit. In fact, the Central Bank is predicting we could be flirting with recession. The Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, is hinting at tax cuts with an eye to an election next Spring and has ruled out an emergency budget in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit. It is almost as if there is no housing or crisis, not to mind the emergencies in health, elder care and early years education.

Of course, no one can predict the impact of Brexit – deal or no-deal. This is a once-in-a-lifetime event. There is no past experience

This would not only help maintain people's living standards, it would help maintain their spending power so that other sectors (retail, hospitality) don't suffer a fall in consumer spending

which can guide projections. Therefore, it is proper that the Government is basing Budget 2020 on a worst-case scenario.

However, there are already some ominous kites being flown about. For example, pension payments will be frozen with only secondary benefits rising. That would mean a real cut to pensions (factoring in inflation). This could be extended to all social protection payments. This would amount to below-the-radar austerity – letting inflation do the dirty work while saving the Government money.

Therefore, we need to be vigilant to the fine print. Even before new budget measures, the Government intends to freeze current spending per capita in real terms over the next few years – spending on public service and social protection. It wouldn't take much of a budgetary adjustment to turn that freeze into real cuts.

Whatever about the implications for below-the-radar austerity, what is the Government proposing to pro-actively counter a Brexit slowdown? So far there is a Brexit fund to support enterprises and sectors that are hard hit.

Employees and their trade union should be directly involved in the design, monitoring and evaluation of resources spent and supports for firms to minimise the impact. After all, it is workers and their livelihoods at stake. However, the Government doesn't seem interested, which means they will forgo the experience, ideas and innovation that workers in these enterprises can bring.

The Government could strengthen the economy through a Short-Time Work Scheme. Instead of laying workers off, this scheme would allow businesses to introduce work-sharing for their workforce with top-ups from the Government to maintain workers' incomes as was done successfully in Germany after the 2008 financial crash.

Another measure would be to adjust pay-related unemployment benefit. If people lose their jobs, unemployment benefit would be pegged at 60% to 75% of their wage rather than fall to a flat-rate €203 per week. This would not only help maintain people's living standards, it would help maintain their spending power so that other sectors (retail, hospitality) don't suffer a fall in consumer spending.

And what about a little redistribution? The ICTU has called for a net assets tax (wealth tax) to raise nearly €400 million. This could be used for social investment such as affordable childcare which would raise wages in the sector and reduce fees. This would put money into the pockets of workers and parents

without any negative impact on borrowing and deficits.

Another instrument to combat a downturn would be to take the 'surplus' which NAMA is promising to transfer to the Government (some €4 billion over the next two years) and build public housing – to reduce rents and house prices.

Not only would this boost economic activity, it would divert money away from landlords and developers and into the productive economy. Building houses is a win-win proposition.

A Brexit slowdown should not be used as an excuse to defer necessary action on the

If these and other progressive proposals don't appear in Budget 2020, SIPTU members will continue campaigning for their introduction

climate emergency. The carbon tax should go ahead but only on condition of a Carbon Dividend – returning the revenue to households through a flat-rate payment. This would benefit low-average income households and reduce income inequality, an excellent instrument during a downturn.

These are just some of the steps that are necessary to Brexit-proof the economy. Indeed, these measures should be taken regardless of a slowdown. These steps would increase productivity, economic efficiency and social stability.

Unfortunately, early signals from government leaks are not encouraging. If these and other progressive proposals don't appear in Budget 2020, SIPTU members will continue campaigning for their introduction.



By Michael Taft

SOME commentators are cheering the fact that Dublin house prices are 'moderating', 'slowing down', 'levelling off' or some such. Such cheers may be premature.

In Dublin, demand may be slowing for two reasons: one, an affordability ceiling has been hit with fewer and fewer people able to afford an average-priced €400,000 house. Second, more people are becoming nervous about committing to a long-term expenditure with all this Brexit uncertainty about.

The problem is that if demand starts to weaken, developers could reduce supply, leaving prices high. Sound strange? That's how markets work.

And outside Dublin, house price growth is still outstripping inflation and wage growth.

And rents are still rising.

And homelessness remains at more than 10,000 for the sixth month in a row.

And, of course, the Minister for Housing still maintains government policies are working!

Yet, while all the failures of Government housing policy are well-known, housing struggles to move up the political agenda. This is despite the fact that, according to the Eurobarometer, housing is the biggest issue of concern apart from the healthcare system.

The key question is how to generate political traction from the high level of concern. There are two key points here. First, there is a substantial number of people in housing need – but those needs impact in different ways. The needs of a homeless family are different from the needs of those facing high rents or attempting to buy a home.

Second, the crisis is not experienced uniformly across the country and age groups. Nearly 70% of people live in owner-occupied houses. Though they may experience vicarious need through their children or relatives, they are not homeless, are not renting on the private market, and seeking to buy a house.

Even the issue of affordability is not experienced equally throughout the country. In the Midlands, rent for a one-bedroom house/apartment averages less than €600 per month – half the level of Dublin rents (though Midland rents can still be a burden on the low-paid). In much of the country outside the main urban areas, house prices are much more affordable.

This suggests we should give additional focus to critical constituencies – young workers (under 35s) in the main urban areas who are at ground zero in the

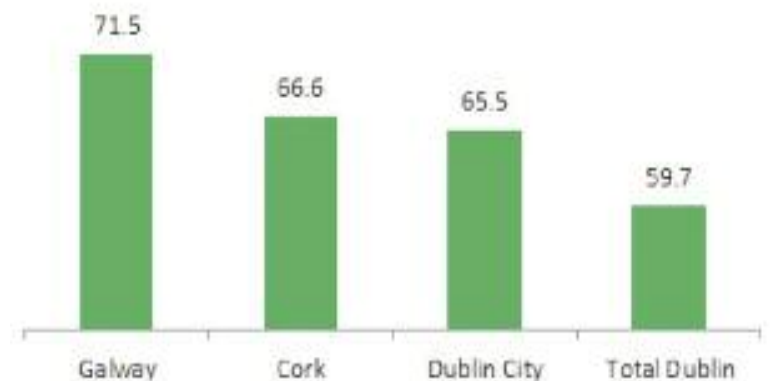
Building an alliance for public housing



Pictures: RollingNews.ie



% of under-35s in the private rental sector, according to the 2016 Census



private rental sector or are trying to save up to buy a house. More than 50% of under-35s are in the private rental sector, while only 11% of over-35s are renting privately.

In urban areas facing the rent crisis, this figure is even higher. Nearly two-thirds of under-35s rent in Dublin city, rising to over

high rents, which has implications for environmental sustainability and life quality. To rehabilitate the image of public housing, to show that public housing is not for 'the poor' but for all – this could help mobilise younger workers behind a new programme of cost-rental and cost-purchase housing.

This is not to downplay the issues of homelessness and waiting lists – just the opposite. Those in extreme housing need have the least political and economic power. They need allies to get public housing on the agenda. To win over young workers (along with their families and peer group) to public housing would be a great boost to all those in need.

And most of all it could help combat that most pernicious of ideas – that high rents and high house prices are the new norm, that they are somehow 'natural', and that political action is futile.

The housing crisis arose out of national policies put in place by national politicians. It can be ended – by building the broadest possible alliance of those in housing need.

Young workers are key to this fightback. The trade union led Raise the Roof campaign is best placed to mobilise this group.

The trade union led Raise the Roof campaign is best placed to mobilise this group

70% in Galway. And it is within the under-35s that we will find the highest proportion of those seeking to buy a house for the first time. Statistics won't capture the full picture. More young people are remaining at home because they can't afford the rents or are saving up for a house. And many of those renting outside Dublin are actually working in Dublin. They have moved out because of

Halloween Brexit: fear of the unknown



By Vic
Duggan

After the UK Supreme Court unanimously ruled that Prime Minister Johnson's prorogation of parliament was unlawful, the range of potential Brexit outcomes remains shockingly wide.

More than three years have passed since the UK people voted narrowly to exit the European Union, yet it is still possible that there will be a no-deal Brexit at Halloween, that there will be no Brexit at all, or that sooner or later they will leave with a deal.

Yogi Berra is known not only for his baseball exploits for the New York Yankees around the middle of the 20th century, but also for his way with words. He famously asserted that, "It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future."

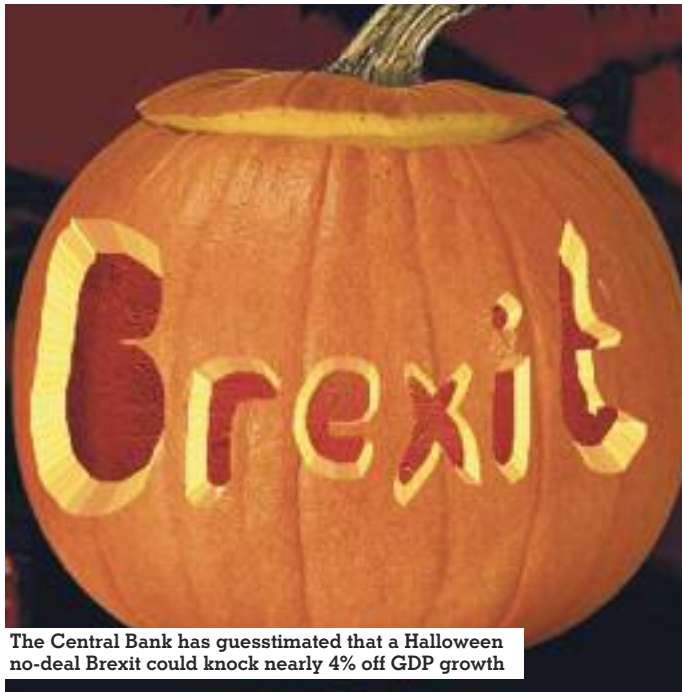
At the best of times, economists often convey a false sense of certainty about their own forecasts. What economists do is make certain assumptions, such as how they expect a "shock" will impact on variables such as trade, investment and consumer behaviour. At times like these, facing an unprecedented event such as Brexit, even making accurate short-term forecasts becomes next to impossible.

What we can say with a degree of certainty is that Brexit – if and when it comes – will hurt the Irish economy. There will be less growth, smaller tax revenues and fewer jobs than would be the case if the UK were to remain in the EU.

Because we are relatively smaller and more trade-dependent, Ireland is likely to suffer even more than the UK. Within the UK, however, Northern Ireland is likely to be hit worst of all, and could take a bigger hit even than the more prosperous Republic.

Any outcome that sees the UK leave the customs union, whether immediately (in the case of no deal) or after a transition period (as would have been the case with Theresa May's thrice-rejected deal)

Any outcome that sees the UK leave the customs union, whether immediately or after a transition will have the greatest impact around the border



The Central Bank has guesstimated that a Halloween no-deal Brexit could knock nearly 4% off GDP growth



Brexiting: Boris Johnson



Exchange rate fluctuations after Brexit could impact on southern traders as customers head north for bargains

will have the greatest geographic impact around the border and the greatest economic impact on the agri-food sector, which stands to face high WTO tariffs (averaging

more than 35% for dairy products, for example) on exports to what is still its single most important market. Some sectors will become financially unviable overnight.



Mushroom growers in the Republic have already been hit by Brexit

A Halloween no-deal Brexit is the worst-case scenario, and one that has become increasingly likely over the course of 2019

These will need government support to transition to the new normal.

In fact, uncertainties around Brexit have already led to lower investment and growth in the UK and a fall in the value of sterling. This has already had a knock-on effect on Ireland – with fewer UK-based tourists, lower export levels to the UK, and therefore less growth and fewer jobs in some sectors than would have been the case had there been no referendum in 2016.

First, this is the tip of the iceberg, since Brexit hasn't happened yet. Second, driven forward by a dynamic multinational sector, an uptick in construction activity and continued post-crisis recovery, the economy has been growing so strongly that the Brexit impact thus far has been hardly felt.

Irish mushroom farmers were among the early victims, and shopping in Newry is resurgent. But overall, the economy has surged ahead.

A Halloween no-deal Brexit is the worst-case scenario, and one that has become increasingly likely over the course of 2019. Far from a forgone conclusion, I would put

the probability is not far from 50/50.

Although preparations for no-deal are more advanced in both jurisdictions than they were in March, there is still likely to be chaos in early November. Whether at or away from the border, checks on goods will become inevitable, even if temporary forbearance is forthcoming from the EU and WTO.

Such checks would be inevitable even if Northern Ireland was to remain in the customs union but was to exit and pursue regulatory differentiation to the Single Market.

For what it's worth, the Central Bank has guesstimated that a no-deal Brexit would knock nearly 4% off GDP growth, nearly 2% off job growth, nearly 1% (of GDP) off the exchequer balance next year. But, GDP and job growth would still remain in positive territory and the budget balance only modestly negative: a big deal, but not the end of the world.

Whether during October, or later, it is still quite possible that the UK leaves with a deal. This is likely to be a tweaked version of May's deal, with a backstop in all but name, and possibly with more Northern Ireland-specific arrangements now that the DUP's parliamentary support is no longer pivotal.

Even then, however, it would not be impossible, for example, that a newly-elected Labour government under Jeremy Corbyn would seek to amend the political declaration and pursue a closer post-Brexit relationship with the EU.

If Johnson wins an overall majority, however, one can expect a much more distant arrangement. Even if a Johnson-delivered deal were to minimise the visibility, intrusiveness and political cost of any checks on goods in Ireland, the reality is the economic cost would be delayed, but essentially unchanged compared to a no-deal scenario.

In the relatively unlikely event that Brexit is permanently cancelled, of course, one would expect a modest improvement in Irish economic prospects, since the baseline of most forecasters is still that the UK leaves with a deal this year.

However, damage to the British constitutional framework and to diplomatic relations between Ireland and the UK may prove more challenging to undo.

PICTURE: Young European Movement UK

PICTURES: RollingNews.ie

PICTURE: green thumbs (CC BY-NC 2.0)

SIPTU members caught in farmers' protests

HUNDREDS of SIPTU members were caught in the middle of the recent dispute between beef farmers and processors, with many experiencing periods of lay-off and an associated loss in earnings.

During the dispute, SIPTU organisers successfully lobbied some processors to implement an interest-free loan scheme to help workers pay for rent, mortgages and to cover living expenses. The union also called on all sides involved in the dispute to negotiate a sustainable solution.

SIPTU Organiser, Terry Bryan, said: "Our members support the right of others to peacefully protest. However, the issues at the core of the dispute, such as a decline in profits for farmers and concerns over increased US imports into the European market, were nothing to do with the workers in the beef processing plants,



Protesters outside Dawn Meats, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo.

but they were the people whose livelihoods were threatened."

SIPTU Shop Steward and Migrant Workers Network activist, Juris Belousovs, who works in the abattoir at Slaney Foods in Bun-

clody, was laid off three times during August and September.

He said: "Some people were mad with the farmers. Some had been OK with them, and some supported them. If what they say is

true and they lost so much for the value of their cattle, I think their actions were understandable."

SIPTU member, Loneda Curma said she found it nearly impossible to survive financially when she

was laid off from her job at a pet food packaging plant due to a blockade.

"It was madness," she told *Liberty*. "People didn't know what to do and when they would get some pay. I hoped that the farmers would get what they wanted so we could go back to work."

SIPTU Shop Steward Oliver Kelly, who has worked at Dawn Meats, Ballyhaunis, for 30 years, felt that workers were the "hidden" element in the dispute. However, he said that most did not resent the farmers' actions.

"Most of the lads would be from farming stock anyway and understand their plight," he said.

The farmers' protests eventually ended in late September following agreement between the processors and farming organisations over new payment rates for animals.

SIPTU welcomes Supreme Court discrimination ruling

IN JULY, the Supreme Court granted an appeal by union member, Marie Daly, against a Court of Appeal decision last year over allegations that she had been discriminated against by her employer due to her disability.

Marie Daly, assisted and advised by SIPTU representatives, had unsuccessfully argued her case against the Nano Nagle School in Killarney, county Kerry, before the Equality Tribunal in 2013.

However, with further union assistance, she won a decision at the Labour Court, and subsequently at the High Court in 2018.

Both courts ruled that Ms Daly's employer had breached equality legislation by failing to consult with her before refusing to allow her to continue as a Special Needs Assistant after she incurred a disability following an accident.

The school successfully



Courage: Marie Daly

appealed this decision to the Court of Appeal last year. However, this ruling has now been overturned by the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court stated: "The issues which arise are, undoubtedly, of significant importance, not

only to the appellant, but in the broader field of disability law."

However, in issuing its judgment the Court went on to direct Ms Daly's case back to the Labour Court to allow it to assess the implications of the Supreme Court decision including the manner in which it dealt with her original claim of discrimination and the evidence before it.

SIPTU Head of Legal Rights Unit, Rachael Ryan told *Liberty*: "We welcome this decision. It comes nine years after Marie Daly had her accident which left her with a disability, and some six years after the original hearing before the Equality Tribunal which found she could not continue in her role as a Special Needs Assistant.

"She courageously fought this unjust treatment all the way to the Supreme Court with the assistance of her family, friends and colleagues in SIPTU."

10% pay hike for new starts at Cliffs of Moher Centre

SIPTU members working in the Cliffs of Moher Centre in county Clare negotiated comprehensive improvements to their existing collective agreement.

These include a new starter rate of €10.80, an increase of 10% on the previous wage.

Other improvements include an increase in the employer's

pension contribution from 5% to 6% which increases to 10% after 10 years, along with a rise in sick pay from ten to 12 days certified sick leave.

BOOK LAUNCH & GALA CONCERT

WALK WITH GANDHI: BÓTHAR NA SAOIRSE

Text by the Irish poet and haiku master, Gabriel Rosenstock, illustrations by the Kashmiri artist, Masood Hussain.

Sunday, 6th October 2019
Liberty Hall Theatre, Dublin
6.30 pm

Followed at 8.00pm with a Gala night of Indian and Irish traditional music, songs & poetry to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of the global human rights and peace activist, Mahatma Gandhi.

Featuring artists including Liam O'Connor, Saileog Ní Cheannabháin, Yameema Mitha and Peter Browne.

Tickets available from www.eventbrite.ie or at <http://bit.ly/150iegandhi>

Tickets cost: €12

Event organised by: **GANDHI 150**
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS



Robust measures for hard times ahead

Congress General Secretary Patricia King on Brexit, Budget 2020, housing, climate and collective bargaining



By Patricia King

THE spectre of Brexit is hanging over North and South with major implications for tens of thousands of jobs. Of course there may be an element of brinkmanship in terms of political manoeuvres by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his pro-Brexit MPs; however, we need to prepare for what may happen at the end of October if a deal is not possible.

Workers will face serious challenges and there may be devastating consequences for employment in the coming weeks and months if Johnson follows through with his threat to exit the EU with no deal.

There are also issues of vital importance coming down the line in the months ahead: the collective bargaining campaign, Just Transition, the threat to jobs of workers at Bord na Móna and RTE, and the current government policy of under-investment in the public sector.

While we have had some success reflected in recent legislation on curtailing zero-hour contracts and access to banded-hour contracts, thousands of workers remain in insecure employment on low incomes and in many cases are bogusly self-employed.

For all these reasons, at our recent biennial conference, it was agreed that Congress would lead a campaign to achieve collective bargaining across all economic sectors and a guarantee of legislative measures to copper-fasten trade union rights at work.

The social chaos inflicted by the housing crisis remains the single greatest issue facing this society and it appears that we are no nearer a resolution than we were five years ago.

An entire generation of young workers is now effectively locked out of the housing market, tens of thousands are forced into insecure and expensive rental accommodation and the number of homeless is at record levels.

In October 2018, the Dáil overwhelmingly passed a motion proposed by the Raise the Roof campaign to help tackle and resolve the crisis. It included a commitment to investment in public housing, measures to end



British PM Boris Johnson's high-risk negotiating strategy could very well lead to a no-deal Brexit



A no-deal Brexit would have a serious – possibly devastating – impact on jobs North and South

Pictures: RollingNews.ie

evictions into homelessness and ensure greater tenant security, along with the creation of a legal right to housing.

To date, not one single measure from that motion has been implemented.

In terms of Budget 2020, an ICTU delegation that met recently with Minister Paschal Donohoe stressed that cutting taxes in the forthcoming budget would be entirely inappropriate given the totally inadequate level of public expenditure and investment in Ireland compared to other high-income European countries, and of the numerous challenges now facing the Irish economy and society.

The delegation urged the Government to introduce additional revenue-raising measures, such as the introduction of a net wealth tax and reforms to capital taxation and to PRSI, in order to provide some of the additional resources that are needed to overcome in-

An entire generation of young workers is now effectively locked out of the housing market, tens of thousands are forced into insecure and expensive rental accommodation and the number of homeless is at record levels



An entire generation of young workers are effectively locked out of the housing market

frastructural deficits in housing, health and education as well as to prepare for Brexit and to ensure the sustainability of the Social Insurance Fund.

If jobs are threatened due to Brexit the Government needs to roll out a number of measures to protect jobs and soften the blow.

Though we acknowledge that the Government has put in place a raft of measures to help business minimise the impact of Brexit, Congress has put forward four proposals to support jobs and build resilience.

Among our proposals are: Bud-

If jobs are threatened due to Brexit the Government needs to roll out measures to protect jobs and soften the blow

get 2020 should introduce an exceptional Short-Time Work Scheme to preserve jobs in firms that temporarily experience low demand due to Brexit by encouraging work-sharing, while also providing income support to workers.

And ICTU is calling on the Government to introduce a Brexit Adjustment Assistance Fund to upskill workers at risk while they are still at work, particularly those taking part in short-time work schemes.

Honorary President election candidates

Bernie Casey

SINCE kickstarting her career of trade union activism in 1979, with a strike in McDonalds which successfully secured union recognition for workers in the fast food company, Bernie has been continually involved in the union.

A member of the Contract Services Sector and the Services Division for the last seven years she has worked in catering. Prior to this, she worked for 22 years in the hotel industry.

Elected SIPTU Honorary Vice-President in 2017, Bernie maintained her focus on areas that have long been a concern including campaigns on issues such as low pay, precarious work, pensions, housing and childcare.

She has actively campaigned for a Living Wage and to promote a decent living standard for all work-



ers. As a shop steward at Baxter-Storey, she is currently in negotiations at the Workplace Relations Commission to achieve the Living Wage for all employees.

From 2011 to 2016, Bernie was a member of the National Executive Council (NEC). She has also served on various other committees of the NEC, including Finance and Administration, Policy, Industrial and Rules Revision.

The candidate for Honorary Vice-President

Michele Monahan

A RADIOGRAPHER in the public health service, Michele joined the union in 1990. She initially served as a local shop steward and soon became a member of the Radiographers and Radiation Therapists National Committee.

She became chairperson of the Committee in 2000 and has remained in that position since, campaigning vigorously for the rights of patients and staff.

In 2000, Michele also became a member of the union's Allied Health Professional Sector. She



became president of the sector in 2007 and has been re-elected to that position since.

If elected, her priorities as SIPTU Honorary Vice-President will include the redevelopment of organising structures that will be at the centre of the union.

This would involve a more inclusive role for all SIPTU members through 'on the ground' co-operation between all divisions, sectors and other units of the union and a strong enhancement of the District Committees.

She will also seek to focus on the development of women, young and migrant union activists.

Joint Labour Committee (JLC) to establish legal minimum pay and conditions for the industry.

In the Services Division, he was centrally involved in the political campaign to have the JLC system re-introduced after it was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2011.

Christy is focused on the creation a strong, vibrant and active SIPTU, campaigning and organising workers on the key issues of low pay, precarious employment contracts and income inequalities across the private, public and community sectors of our economy.

Padraig Peyton

A NATIVE of county Mayo, Padraig started work in the Sligo mental health services in 1979 and became a member of the ITGWU. Soon after joining the union he became active in his local branch committee.

Following the creation of SIPTU in 1990, he served as an Honorary Assistant Branch Secretary for several years and was elected as Honorary Branch Secretary in 2001.

He currently serves as an honorary organiser representing health service workers of various grades in counties Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon and Donegal. In this position, he has gained much experience in industrial relations and has been involved in both organising and participating in industrial action.

In 2010, he was elected President of the Health Divisional Com-



mittee. Padraig served on the Steering Committee that fed into the review of the union, which led to the Development Plan adopted by a Special Delegate Conference of the union in 2017.

He was elected the first Honorary President of SIPTU in October 2017. In this role, he has focused on the development of the District Councils and ensuring the proper recognition of the work of shop stewards.

Christy Waters

CHRISTY joined the FWUI in 1973 when he took up work in Lenehans Hardware Store in Capel Street, Dublin city. He was elected shop steward in 1978 and has continued to represent union members ever since.

After being made redundant from Lenehans, Christy took up work in the security industry in 1989 going from a fully-unionised company with good pay, terms and conditions to an industry that was low paid, with poor terms and conditions and very low union den-



sity. In SIPTU, the security sector of which Christy was chair developed a successful organising plan to convince employers to agree a

From Brexit to workers' tips...

Wide range of issues slated for debate at Biennial Conference

MORE THAN 350 delegates attending this year's SIPTU Biennial Delegate Conference in City Hall, Cork, will debate 53 motions dealing with a wide range of issues of concern to members.

The Northern Ireland District Council has submitted a motion on Brexit and its impact on the region which is likely to be at the centre of much interest and debate.

Other District Councils have tabled motions of intense concern in their areas, with Dublin introducing debate on housing and the Raise the Roof Campaign; Mayo on halting the demise of rural Ireland; and Galway on the tips campaign initiated by the One Galway Movement.

Other debates will centre on climate change and the just transition which is a matter of global concern as well as on precarious work and pension eligibility.

Motions of interest to sectors are also a feature including the protection of self-employed status for taxation purposes for artists and the dangers of silica dust to construction workers.

Among the prominent speakers who will address the conference are ICTU General



Secretary Patricia King, the recently-elected ETUC Deputy General Secretary, Esther Lynch and Dr Deirdre Curran, of NUI Galway and the Galway Hospitality Group, who will outline the findings of new research on precarious work in the hotel sector.



Delegates at the Biennial Delegate Conference in Cork City Hall in October 2017.

Read more about our brands of the month in our featured articles on **me2you gift cards, Batchelor's and Irish Distillers**



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Vouchers are not just for Christmas!



VOUCHERS are the Revenue approved tax effective way in which SIPTU members can receive payments from employers such as Christmas gifts and long service awards or they can be included as part of packages in pay agreements.

SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Gerry McCormack has emphasised the importance of such tax-free vouchers as particularly attractive and significant for lower paid workers.

Me2You is the only nationwide multi-store voucher provider which recognises SIPTU and is a member of the union-backed Supporting

Quality campaign. Among the Me2You team is Pat Daly, who was formerly a long-serving SIPTU shop steward in a large multinational company.

Pat said: "If a shop steward is in negotiations, I would encourage them to consider seeking reward and recognition payments as vouchers rather than cash, where you will pay up to half of it back in tax. It is a way to ensure you get up to €500 tax free each year into the hands of your members."

Me2You Head of Corporate Sales John Paul L'Estrange said: "The employee gets it all tax free. We are the company which organised

the lobbying of the Government to get the tax exemption on such vouchers increased from €250 to €500 per year. We are also the only voucher which can be used in a nationwide grocery chain."

Members can also ask for shops in their local area to become members of the scheme.

He continued: "Members should contact Me2You by emailing sales@me2you.ie or Tel: 01 5542000 or ask the shop they are interested in encouraging to join the scheme to contact us. This means that members can have an input into where they can use the vouchers.

"Me2You is already used by a lot of unionised companies. Shop stewards can ring Me2You and talk to me or John Paul during pay talks if they want advice on how to get the maximum benefit from incorporating vouchers into any agreement.

"Shop stewards should also talk to their HR officials during talks and ask them to try Me2You. Once they have started utilising them, I think they will want to stay with it."



Photo from left to right: Beatriz Medeiros and Pat Daly.



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The Financial Benefits are clear

Scenario	Reward Value	Income Tax @ 40%	USC @ 8%	PRSI @ 4%	Income Taxes paid by employer	Taxes paid by employee	Net Reward (Received by employee)	Employer PRSI @ 10.75%	Total Cost to Employer
Reward paid with Me2You Gift Card	€ 500.00	€ -	€ -	€ -		€ -	€ 240.00	€ -	€ 500.00
Net reward paid through payroll	€ 500.00	€ 416.67	€ 83.33	€ 41.67		€ 541.67	€ 500.00	€ 111.98	€ 1,153.65
Gross reward paid through payroll	€ 500.00	€ 200.00	€ 40.00	€ 20.00		€ 260.00	€ 240.00	€ 53.75	€ 553.75

For information on the Small Benefit Exemption contact Pat Daly on 085-1540673 / pat.daly@me2you.ie or contact 01-5542000 / sales@me2you.ie

Batchelors launch Fuss-Free Fuel For School

BACK to school time can be hectic – that's why Batchelors is on hand to provide Fuss-Free Fuel For School.

Baked beans are one of life's most versatile

foods – delicious and satisfying. They are the perfect go-to meal for busy families.

To support Batchelors baked beans during the key back to school period they have launched their Fuel for School campaign. As

part of the campaign, they have developed new Fuel for School packaging for the three to four pack standard and no added sugar beans. This new packaging also highlights the fact the products are produced in Batchelors factory in

Cabra, Dublin by SIPTU organised workers.

SIPTU Organiser, Colm Casserly, who represents members in the Batchelors factory in Cabra, told *Liberty*: "In choosing Irish brands such as Batchelors, the Irish public

are showing in a practical way not only their preference for sustainable quality products, but also supporting quality trade union jobs in Ireland. This has never been more important than in the current economic climate."

Batchelors has been producing delicious beans and peas, which provide the basis for creating nutritious fuss-free meals, for 80 years. Its range of baked beans, peas and pulses are the perfect addition to any meal time, helping to create hearty and warming meals that the whole family will enjoy. It is food that Ireland loves – straightforward, wholesome, delicious and proudly down to earth.

Batchelors is very proud of their unique recipes, including the famous 'secret' Batchelors baked beans sauce. Developed in its factory in Cabra, Dublin, Batchelors continues to be Ireland's favourite baked beans. Passionate about quality, they ensure that only the very best ingredients go into every Batchelors tin.

Anna Maire McQuillan, who is Head of Human Resources at Valeo Foods, Batchelors parent company, said: "We are very proud that since 1935, we've been making Ireland's favourite baked beans in Cabra, Dublin. This means our legendary beans never have far to travel to get to Irish plates."



Phelim Drew & Friends

Sunday 6th October 2019



for All In a Row supporting the  and 

A concert by Phelim Drew and friends in the Heart of Dublin to help raise much needed funds for the RNLI and the Irish Underwater Search and Recovery Unit

Sunday 6th October 2019.

St. Patrick's Church, Ringsend Village (Raytown)
Doors Open 7.30pm - Begins 8.00pm

Price €10.00 (100% of funds going to the charity)

Special Thanks to Fr. Ivan Tonge and The Dublin Port Company.



WRC calls all sides in to discuss Sligo IT cleaners' dispute

A 48-hour work stoppage by SIPTU members employed as cleaners in Sligo Institute of Technology (IT), due to begin on Monday, 30th September, was suspended to allow talks facilitated by the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC).

The dispute results from the transfer of the cleaners' work from one private contract cleaning company to another, Allpro Services. Under the conditions of the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) legislation the workers' terms and conditions should have remained the same. However, the cleaners were informed in August that the time for them to carry out their work was being reduced by 200 hours per week.

Among those invited to attend the talks are representatives of the management of Sligo IT. As the contracting body, Sligo IT must adhere to commitments within the Public Services Stability Agreement relating to the outsourcing of work and the maintenance of workers' terms and conditions of the employment.

Presentation to Irish Distillers



SIPTU Manufacturing Division Organiser, Teresa Hannick presenting Support Quality certificate to Liam Donegan of Irish Distillers (IDL)

Photo from left to right: Declan Rooney, SIPTU shop steward, Mick Browne, SIPTU Organiser, Teresa Hannick, SIPTU Manufacturing Division Organiser, Liam Donegan IDL, Michael Kelly, SIPTU shop steward, George Murphy IDL.

Photo: Aoife Ní Shúilleabháin.

Kildare Council of Unions & SIPTU Meath District Council Present



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'Recalling labour's role in the Struggle for Irish Independence'

1919 2019

A celebration of 100 years in Talks, Poetry & Music

Heather Laird, Denise Curtin, Fintan Walsh, Joe Supple, Ken O Duffy, Francis Devine, Adrian Kane, Conor Kostick, Donal Hasset, Tommy See? Dan O'Neill

Refreshments served through out the day

Athy Community Library
Noon 5th of October 2019

'Supported by the Department of Culture and the Gaeltacht under the Decade of Centenaries'

An Roinn Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

LABOUR, GENDER, AND CLASS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR IRISH INDEPENDENCE
c. 1918-24

NUI Galway
7th - 9th November 2019

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Irish Centre for the Histories of Labour and Class at NUI Galway are holding a major three day conference from 7th - 9th November, under the auspices of the Irish Government's Decades of Centenaries programme.

The focus of the Conference will be on the roles played by cultural, feminist, international, labour and socialist movements in the Struggle for Independence and it's impact on people's lives.

Speakers include Síobhra Aiken, Anne Boran, John Boronovo, Sarah-Anne Buckley, Susan Byrne, Liam Cahill, Elaine Callinan, Shay Cody, Peter Connell, Linda Connolly, Olivier Coquelin, John Cunningham, Seán Donnelly, Patrick Doyle, Terry Dunne, Donal Fallon, Tommy Graham, Brian Hanley, Mary Harris, Dominic Haugh, Liam Alex Heffron, Brian Hughes, Paul Hughes, Kieran McNulty, Mark Loughrey, Gerard Madden, Eoin Magennis, Martin Maguire, Mary McAuliffe Charlie McGuire, Patrick McCarthy, Kieran McNulty, Lesa Ní Mhughhaile, Theresa Moriarty, Catherine Morris, Peter Murray, Emmet O'Connor, Martin O'Donoghue, Donal O'Kelly, Geraldine O'Neill, Ceri Owen, Niamh Púirséil, Niamh Reilly, Tony Varley, Margaret Ward, Noel Ward, Gerry Watts, Pádraig Yeates.




CONGRESS
Irish Congress of Trade Unions

DECADE OF CENTENARIES

THE SCHOOL OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK
in conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Cork Council of Trade Unions presents:

LABOUR IN THE 'WAR ZONE'

Class, Gender and the Independence Struggle in Munster, 1916-21



Saturday, 19 October, 2019 | **Boole 1 Lecture Theatre,**
9.30am - 4.30pm | University College Cork

9.30 Theresa Moriarty: 'Underpaid, underfed, hard-driven' women workers in revolutionary Munster'	11.25 Dominic Haugh: 'The Revolt of the Bottom Dog: labour, the Soviet and revolutionary struggle in Limerick, 1917-21'	2.30 Luke Dineen: 'The Cork Trades Council, 1916-21: republicanism and revolution'
9.55 John Boronovo: 'The 1918 Food Crisis: unrest and militancy in Munster'	11.50 Mary McAuliffe: 'Gender and Militancy: Cumann na mBan volunteers as combatants in Munster, 1919-21'	2.55 Mary Muldowney: 'Class and gender relations during the independence struggle in Munster: evidence from the Military Service Pension files'
10.35 Pádraig Yeates: 'Advocating and Practising Rem Novam in Revolutionary Cork: Fr Thomas OSFC'	12.30 Heather Laird: 'Radical Remembrance: revolution, commemoration and the roads untaken'	3.35 Emmet O'Connor: 'Munster labour and the independence struggle: a regional exception?'

Coffee | Lunch

All are welcome (to the entire conference or individual sessions) Admission free
For enquiries or further information, contact **Donal Ó Drisceoil** at d.driscoll@ucc.ie or **Colleen Minihane** at cminihane@siptu.ie

Labour, Gender and Class in the Struggle for Independence

ICTU, Ulster University, Belfast Trades Council and Mesinas Fellowship present a major conference on

Labour and Northern Ireland: Foundation and Development

Saturday 5 October 2019
Venue: The Mac, 10 Exchange Street West, Belfast, BT1 2NJ

RSVP: john.ofarrell@ictuni.org or padraigyeates@gmail.com


In partnership with:



09.30am	Registration
10.00	Address of welcome and introduction: Dr Emmet O'Connor, Ulster University
10.45	Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary, ICTU
11.15	Theresa Moriarty, 'Female labour in Belfast'
12.00	Dr Christopher Loughlin, 'Labour politics in Ulster, 1918-24'
12.45	Panel Discussion
13.15	Lunch
14.15	Henry Patterson, Professor Emeritus, Ulster University, 'The shipyard expulsions of 1920'
15.00	Eliza McKee, 'Clothing the working class in Ulster, c.1920'
15.45	Coffee Break
16.00	Frances O'Grady, General Secretary, British TUC, 'Challenges for the Labour Movement: Past and Present across these islands'
16.45	Panel Discussion involving all speakers

Commemorating A Century of Struggle 1919-2019

Dublin Council of Trade Unions



Liberty Hall - November 1st and 2nd

Dublin Council of Trade Unions is hosting a major commemoration of the role of organised labour in Dublin during the struggle for Irish Independence. The Dublin Trades Council, founded in 1886, played a significant part in events of the time.


The Conference will explore the involvement of organised labour in the capital city during 1919 and the years immediately before and after. The event is open to the public, trade union members and activists are particularly welcome.

A new film, *The Parliament of Labour*, dealing with significant events in which the Dublin Council of Trade Unions was involved, will be premiered at the Conference.

A number of themes will be covered by speakers who specialise in their fields. They include the following:

- The Dockers of Dublin during the Munitions and Transport Strikes
- The significant part played by Organised Women Workers
- Dublin's Garment Workers and the Radical Legacy of the Jewish Union
- Women's Intelligence Role in the War of Independence
- Trade Union Influences in drawing up the 1919 Democratic Programme
- The History and Development of Dublin Council of Trade Unions
- The Limerick Soviet
- The 1919 Engineering Strike in Glasgow and Belfast and its influence in Dublin

Contact us: dctforum@gmail.com, Facebook: Dublin Council of Trade Unions



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JOE LAMAL &
Glasshouse Orchestra
BKIT Choir

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INDIGO GIRLS

FRI. 25th OCTOBER 2019
LIBERTY HALL THEATRE, DUBLIN

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Phil Coulter

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Ronnie Drew

"... a very honest approach to the songs"
Peggy Seeger

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Sunday 24th November
LIBERTY HALL THEATRE

Tickets €22 (incl. fees) available from: www.pateganmtie.com and www.libertyhalltheatre.ie
Liberty Hall Theatre, Eden Quay, Dublin 1

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E-mail : lwoods@siptu.ie or Tel: 01 858 6354 for more information.

Oil supplies to Cuba under pressure from US sanctions

■ By Frank Connolly

The Foreign Minister of Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, has condemned the United States for tightening its economic blockade on the Caribbean island through "criminal, non-conventional measures".

Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday (28th September), Rodríguez Parrilla presented a stark picture of the impact of trade, banking and financial restrictions on Cuban society. He said the US blockade continues to be the main obstacle to his country's ability to meet its sustainable development goals.

The failure of the US to depose the Venezuelan government led by Nicolás Maduro, a staunch ally of Cuba, has resulted in it imposing new restrictions on trade between the Latin American neighbours. In January last, the US imposed sanctions on Venezuela's state-run oil firm, PDVSA, which has made it harder for it to ship oil to Cuba.



President of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel.

Cuba and Venezuela's joint company, Transalpa, which leases and operates vessels covering the route between the two nations, is experiencing difficulties finding tankers, captains and crew due to the increasing sanctions on those assisting trade between the two countries.

This pressure on the main source of its energy has been so severe that it has forced the Cuban government to adopt temporary emergency measures including the reorganisation of energy consumption in the public

and industrial sector. In a recent television address, Cuban leader, President Miguel Díaz-Canel announced that his government have purchased two vessels which will transport urgently needed oil supplies from Venezuela in the coming weeks and alleviate the current shortages.

Even under the present circumstances, Rodríguez Parrilla said Cuba will not renounce its determination to develop civilised relations with the US. At the same time, the foreign minister cautioned that "economic aggression, no matter how hard the threats and blackmail might be, will not extract a single concession from us."

Despite the economic blockade, the 2018 World Food Policy Report found that Cuba is the fifth country in the world to eliminate hunger and malnutrition among its people. Cuba has also eradicated illiteracy and has the lowest infant mortality rate in the Latin American and the Caribbean regions, the report stated.

NOURA ERAKAT

© dublin // 15.10.2019

Join us as Sadaka and Academics for Palestine celebrate the Irish launch of Noura Erakat's bestselling new book, *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine*



Noura Erakat is professor at Rutgers University, New Jersey, and one of the leading critical Palestinian voices of our time

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Migranci i kryzys mieszkaniowy



By Barnaba Donda

Pomimo tego, że migrantów można znaleźć w każdym zakątku Irlandii, to największe ich skupiska są w Irlandii to Dublin, Cork, Limerick i Waterford. Tuż przed wakacjami opublikowano badania dotyczące miejsc zamieszkania migrantów na Zielonej Wyspie. Znakomita większość mieszka w wynajmowanych mieszkaniach.

Raport przygotowany przez Economic Social Research Institute wskazuje, że cały czas liczba migrantów w Irlandii nie zmienia się i utrzymuje się na mniej więcej stałym poziomie 12%. Niemniej, prawdopodobnie proporcje te się zwiększą, bo bezrobocie spadło poniżej 5% i Irlandia znowu jest dla migrantów atrakcyjnym miejscem docelowym. Ostatnie dane irlandzkiego Urzędu

Statystycznego pokazują, że zdecydowanie więcej migrantów przyjeżdża do Irlandii niż z niej wyjeżdża. Niemniej niepokojące jest to, że migranci w zdecydowanej większości zamieszkują rejony w których dominuje rynek wynajmu mieszkań. Wraz z rosnącymi cenami wynajmu i rosnącą liczbą osób bezdomnych taka sytuacja może stanowić barierę dla procesów integracyjnych, zwłaszcza że migranci są częściej zatrudniani w niskopłatnych pracach, częściej podatni na dyskryminację i mają mniejsze szanse na rozwój kariery.

Niedawno dublińska organizacja Cross Care zwróciła uwagę, że jedna trzecia osób ubiegająca się o mieszkanie socjalne w Dublinie to migranci (z czego ponad połowa to osoby z krajów Unii Europejskiej, wśród których Polacy to największa grupa). To dramatyczny wzrost o jedną czwartą w porównaniu z 2016

rokiem. Organizacja podkreśla, że dodatkowo migranci są w szczególności narażeni na dyskryminację z uwagi na częstą niezajomość swoich praw i brak biegłości w języku angielskim.

Niedawno Irish Commission of Human Rights zwróciła uwagę na wzrost skarg kierowanych do Workplace Relations Commission w 2018 dotyczących równego traktowania w dostępie do usług aż o 40%. IHREC planuje w szczególności monitorować rynek wynajmu mieszkań. W marcu tego roku szerokim echem odbiła się głośna sprawa czarnoskórej Amerykanki, która została zwyżowana przez swojego landlorda, kiedy zaczęła domagać się swoich praw. WRC zasądził na jej rzecz €12000 odszkodowania.

Związki zawodowe SIPTU stoją na stanowisku, że sytuacji na rynku mieszkaniowym w Irlandii nie można pozostawić mitycznej niewidzialnej ręce



Protesters from Raise the Roof Housing Rally in Dublin, May 2019. Photo: www.rollingnews.ie

rynku i potrzeba konkretnych działań żeby przeciwdziałać temu kryzysowi, a także problemom, które z niego wynikają. SIPTU zaangażowane są w Kampanię Rise the Roof, której celem jest przekonanie polityków irlandzkich do racjonalnej interwencji na rynku mieszkaniowym poprzez inwestycje w budowę domów

socjalnych, przystępnych celowo mieszkań, zakazu przymusowych eksmisji i zagwarantowania w Konstytucji irlandzkiej prawa do mieszkania. Z efekty takich racjonalnych działań na rynku nieruchomości skorzystają też migranci.

Abolish Direct Provision call by asylum rights group

The Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI) is to hold its inaugural conference in SIPTU's Liberty Hall, Dublin, on 5th October 2019.

The conference will bring together activists from across the country who have been campaigning for a more humane system for asylum seekers and refugees.

Currently there are more than 7,000 people in Direct Provision, including over 2,000 children.

More than 1,000 people have also been placed in 'emergency accommodation' hotels, B&Bs and guest-houses across the country.

Many of these people – vulnerable and in need of protection – are left without any information, access to vital services, or even the basic necessities for day-to-day living such as nappies, baby formula, medical services, schools, laundry facilities, or enough food to eat.

Speaking ahead of the conference Lucky Khambule, co-

founder of MASI, called on the Irish government to work with civil society to begin making plans to phase out the abhorrent and inhumane system of Direct Provision.

He emphasised that the process of phasing out Direct Provision starts with broadening access to the labour market, supporting asylum seekers to live independently and ending their exclusion in our communities.



Senator Black with Iván Flores, President of the Lower House of the Chilean Parliament



11.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

OCTOBER 5TH

LIBERTY HALL



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FACEBOOK: MASI-MOVEMENT-OF-ASYLUM-SEEKERS-IN-IRELAND

Occupied Territories Bill faces last hurdle



By Yvonne
O'Callaghan



Briefings: Senator Frances Black with Sergio Gahon, of the Chilean/Palestine inter-parliamentary committee

Benjamin Netanyahu recently committed to formally annexing large parts of Palestinian territory which Israel has occupied for more than 52 years.

In sharp contrast, Ireland stands on the cusp of taking the biggest step ever taken by any individual Western country against Israel's illegal colonisation of Palestinian land.

The Occupied Territories Bill, which seeks to ban trade with illegal settlements, has been passed by the Seanad and has an overwhelming majority of support in the Dáil. There is now only one hurdle that stands in the way of this Bill becoming law.

In an attempt to block the Occupied Territories Bill, the Government has sought to rely on a device called the 'Money Message'. This effectively means that they are vetoing the Bill's enactment on the absurd basis that the Irish State cannot afford the costs of implementing it.

Over the last number of months, the campaign has been working hard in the background to find a way around this hurdle. It is expected that amendments being proposed by opposition parties to the standing orders of the

Dáil will be approved in the coming weeks, which will enable the bill to pass through to the final legislative stage before being passed into law.

As part of the campaign, Senator Frances Black visited both Chile and Norway during September to discuss with parliamentarians, trade unions and civil society the impact the Occupied Territories Bill will have.

In November 2018, the Chilean Parliament voted 99-7 in favour of a resolution calling for a ban on goods from Israeli settlements illegally in occupied Palestine.

Work has now begun on legislation – similar to the Occupied Territories Bill – to implement this resolution.

The Bill has been drafted and is to be tabled in the Chilean Parliament for a vote in October.

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15th OCTOBER, 2019
(FOR AWARDS
2019/2020)**



A member, applying on his/her own behalf or on behalf of his/her child/children, must have at least one year's membership of the Union and be in benefit when both the application and the payments are made.

Liberty Hall drama: a tall storey with a plot twist!

STRANDED on one of the top floors of Liberty Hall, with Dublin destroyed by flood waters below them, is the tricky situation in which the protagonists of the Fringe Theatre Festival play, 'Afloat', find themselves.

Part disaster movie, part girls' buddy story and part environmentalist polemical this new play written by Eva O'Connor and Hildegard Ryan provided an enjoyable 60 minutes of informative entertainment in Smock Alley theatre, in Dublin.

While the main thrust of the drama is environmental, the interaction of friends Bláthnaid (Eva

O'Connor) and Debs (Annette O'Shea) as they discuss the struggles of twenty-somethings in modern Dublin is equally rewarding.

Liberty readers will be pleased that the history of our union also

features, with Bláthnaid noting James Connolly's role and that the old Liberty Hall had been "an arms factory" in the lead up to the Easter Rising.

However, the dialogue is not all

plain sailing for our movement. Debs, forced to survive on a diet of biscuits stored left behind in a filing cabinet notes that "no wonder the unions were in such a mess, they didn't even have any Java Cakes".

The scenes of the two women dealing with life before and post the cataclysmic deluge are interspersed with moments of audience interaction hosted by what would seem to be an environmentally-conscious talk show presenter played by Michael-David McKernan.

Who is he in reality and how do the women escape their predicament? All is revealed in a plot twist at the end.

Scott Millar



Eva O'Connor and Hildegard Ryan as Bláthnaid and Debs stranded in the upper floors of Liberty Hall in *Afloat*



Starring role: Liberty Hall



IRISH LABOUR HISTORY SOCIETY

An Cumann Staire Lucht Saothar na hÉireann

ILHS Autumn Conference 2019

ICTU 1959-2019

Friday 18th October

Fórsa Nerney's Court

Registration at 6.15 pm

For more information contact:

The Irish Labour History Society
Beggars Bush
Haddington Road
Dublin 4

info@irishlabourhistorysociety.com

Tel: 01 6681071

www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com

Walker biog launch at ILHS conference

THE Irish Labour History Society's autumn conference will feature the launch of a new biography of William Walker, one of the most significant - if later marginalised - figures in early 20th century Irish labour history.

Dr Mike Mecham's book, *William Walker, Social Activist & Belfast Labourist*, charts the life of the social activist who started out as a joiner in Harland and Wolff shipyard, became a founding member of the Independent Labour Party and subsequently served as President of the Irish Trades Union Congress. He later clashed with James Connolly.

Prof Alvin Jackson, who wrote the foreword to the book published by Umiskin Press, describes the new biography as "original, judicious and unsentimental" and praises Dr Mecham for having "patiently and tellingly reconstructed Walker's entire life and career using an impressive range of new or neglected source materials."



GAZA will be shown in Liberty Hall Theatre on Monday, 25th November, at 7.00 p.m. Tickets: €5.

For tickets Tel: 01 8588217 or email: khackett@siptu.ie

Fitting tribute to a wonderful life, well lived



Reviews
by Michael
Halpenny

The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken 1770-1866 – A Belfast Panorama
By Mary McNeill
Published by
Irish Academic Press 2019

PASSENGERS boarding transatlantic ships at Belfast port in the 1860s would no doubt have been surprised to be met at their gangway to the 'New World' by an elderly woman handing out leaflets against slavery in America.

Better known to some as the devoted sister of the United Irishmen leader, Henry Joy McCracken, that woman, Mary Ann McCracken was a lifelong anti-slavery campaigner, women's rights activist, and champion of the poor – particularly the young. She was a supporter of Catholic Emancipation, a social reformer and a promoter of the revival of Irish music and language.

This book tells the story of her

life through contemporary correspondence and writings and was originally published in 1960. Its author, Mary McNeill, was cut from the same broadcloth of independence and humanitarian service as her subject.

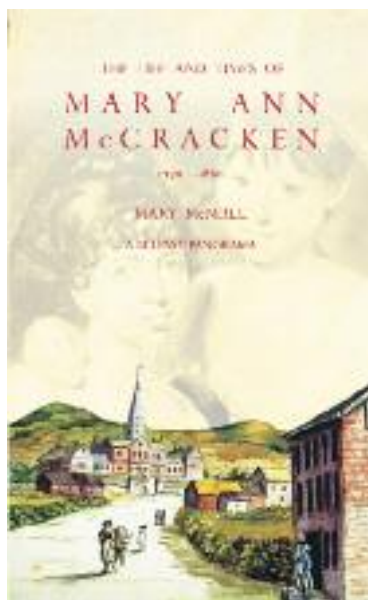
Where Mary Ann helped set up a nursery school in the Belfast Poorhouse in the 1830s, she (McNeill) set up one for disadvantaged children in the city in 1928.

Her independence and sense of mission was underlined by her refusal to accept an MBE for what she regarded as her duty.

Mary Ann McCracken came from liberal philanthropic Presbyterian stock. Her maternal grandfather, Francis Joy, founded the *Belfast Newsletter* in 1737 (then a liberal paper), while the McCrackens were regarded as caring and enterprising employers.

Her early political formation took place in the Belfast of the 1790s, where, in the words of Professor Marianne Elliot's foreword to the book, the city "was leading Ireland in advanced social and political thinking".

It was a world turned upside down, first by the American Revolution and then by the French,



Mary Ann McCracken's grave in Clifton Street cemetery, Belfast

both of which provided inspiration to the new movement of the United Irishmen. Among its members was her beloved brother, Harry.

However, Mary held her own with her more famous sibling and his friend, the former British Army officer, Thomas Russell (*The Man From God Knows Where*). Then when the United Irishmen's rebel-

lion failed in 1798, she "walked to the gallows" with her brother to his place of execution.

On his death she devoted her life to his memory and to ensure his story and that of his comrades was kept for future generations in the work of Dr R. R. Madden, the 19th century historian of the United Irishmen.

However, in the 68 years after

his death, she found her own towering vocation in a life of service to the poor of her native city and country, to the enslaved of the Americas and to women everywhere. She was a true hero who served until she was in her 90s preferring, in her own words, "to wear out rather than rust out".

This book is a fitting tribute to her wonderful life.

Imagining a Republic of the People

Liam Mellows
Soldier of the
Irish Republic
Selected Writings
1914 – 1922
By Conor McNamara
Published by
Irish Academic Press, 2019

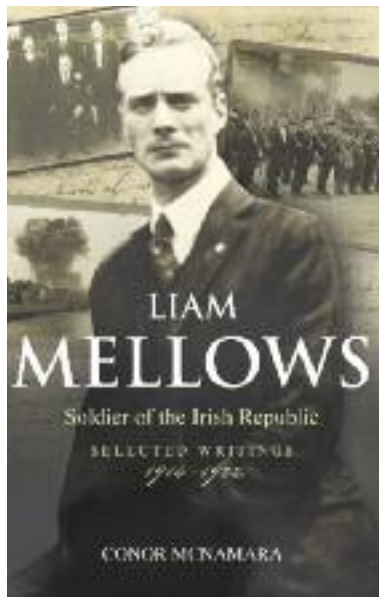
IF YOU like your heroes "enshrined for ever behind some glass pane" then this may not be the one for you.

If, on the other hand, you like your history a little shaken, even stirred, then Conor McNamara's selected writing of Liam Mellows may be well worth the read.

Like his later mentor, the 1916 leader Tom Clarke, Mellows was born in England into a British Army family but grew up in barracks in Cork and in Dublin.

He joined the Fianna, then later the Irish Volunteers and played a prominent role in the 1916 Easter Rising as the leader of 500 rebels who rose in Galway.

The author criticises Mellows' later version of Galway's part in the Rising as romanticised. However, in fairness, it is important to note this was published following



Mellow's escape to New York for the Irish-American readers of the *Gaelic American* shortly after he escaped there after the failure of the Rising and should be judged in that light. With others such as Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, he championed the cause of Irish Freedom to the wider American audience. At a clandestine level he tried less successfully to organise shipments of arms to the Volun-

teers as they reorganised after 1916.

After a fractious four years in America, where his relations with the US arm of the republican movement, Clann na Gael, soured considerably, he returned to Ireland to become Director of Purchase in charge of arms procurement on the IRA Executive.

It was a role he chaffed at and for which the author argues, probably correctly, he was ill suited.

He was vehemently opposed to the Treaty and was one of the leaders in the Four Courts whose occupation by Anti-Treaty forces and subsequent bombardment by the new National Army marked the beginning of the Civil War.

At his core a physical force republican and of deep religious faith, his thinking nevertheless developed, particularly in prison, on what kind of Ireland they were fighting for.

His writings such as *Notes from Mountjoy* and *The Irish Republic is a People's Republic* made a deep impression on fellow Anti-Treatyites such as Peadar O'Donnell for whom Mellows became a cornerstone of the republican socialist critique of the Free State.



Mellows in uniform

Those same works convinced the Free State that Mellows intended to set up a "communistic state".

In truth, however, it was not his left-leaning republicanism that motivated the Free State to order his execution. Rather it was a vicious and savage reprisal for the killing by Anti-Treaty forces of Pro-Treaty TD Sean Hales.

Because of those writings and his steadfastness to the cause, Mellows is revered in the pantheon of left republicanism.

This new appraisal seeks to reveal a more complex, even frail figure, picking his way through the fog of war and revolution.

Most importantly, it tries to explain why, following his execution in 1922, in the authors view he achieved "in death something he did not seek in life... the unlikely figurehead of a lost socialist revolution."

Despite this Mellows' call for a "Peoples Republic" is one that resonates more than ever today, imagining a New Ireland with working people and the dispossessed at its core."

All the single ladies... the Marriage Bar and its impact on women's lives

The Marriage Bar required single women in the public service and elsewhere to resign from their job upon getting married and disqualified married women from applying for vacancies and was in common use until the 1970s. ICTU's *Dr Laura Bambrick* explains the Marriage Bar and how Congress would like to hear from women whose contracts ended on marriage, in order to record their memories of this important part of labour history.



By Dr Laura Bambrick

WOMEN first became public servants on 5th February 1870, when the Post Office took over the telegraph system from private companies.

Five years later, 30 women were employed as clerks in the Postal Saving Banks, and as a rule married women were ineligible to be hired on permanent contracts and single women on such contracts were required to resign on marriage.

In 1890 women entered the civil service, as typists, on a trial basis. Within two years they were successfully employed in seven government departments. When, in 1893, the women typists campaigned to be made permanent this was agreed, but also that their contract would terminate on marriage.

In place of their pension and to reduce the temptation not to marry, they would be paid a 'marriage gratuity' of one month's salary for each year worked, up to a maximum of 12 months.

For the government, the Marriage Bar was primarily a cost saving initiative – if women were forced to retire on marriage, they would not remain in the service long enough to rise very high in the salary scale.

The Bar also reflected social attitudes that it was a husband's duty to support his wife and a married woman's place was in the home.

Female civil servants differed in opinion on the Marriage Bar. Those employed in routine and low paid work were generally in favour whereas those employed in the higher ranks, as clerks and factory inspectors, were more likely to resent it.

During the First World War the total number of women employed in the civil service increased from 65,000, 90% of whom were in the Post Office non-clerical grades, to 170,000, in most departments performing every type of work.

Despite this, at the end of the War the government strengthened the Marriage Bar by putting into law what had been a departmental regulation.

Irish women's access to employment and equal treatment at work



Women at work in the typing pool in the early 1950s

Picture: Archives New Zealand from New Zealand (CC BY-SA 2.0), via Wikimedia Commons



Guinness was one of several major Irish employers that had Marriage Bars

Picture: RollingNews.ie

Irish women's access to employment and equal treatment at work worsened following Independence

worsened following Independence in December 1922. Within the first year, legislation removed a widow's right to get back her civil service job on the death of her husband.

From 1926, the Minister for Finance was given discretionary power to hire married women to the civil service, but only in exceptional circumstances and only on a

temporary, non-pensionable contract.

As in Britain, there was no formal Marriage Bar on temporary staff. In spite of this, resignation on marriage and the non-recruitment of married women was common practice in temporary posts, with the exception of office cleaners. In 1941 the Local Government Act gave the Minister for Local Government the power to make regulations disqualifying married women from applying for vacancies in local authority services. Although it had been practice since Independence that in order to qualify for jobs women had to be unmarried or widowed, it was only when a loophole was found in the Marriage Bar that the policy was made official to prevent a recurrence.

female civil servants had been forced to resign from their jobs on marriage in each of the preceding three years. They, along with all other former public sector workers affected by the Marriage Bar, now had the right to get back their previous jobs, but only if she could show she was no longer supported by her husband by reason of desertion, separation or ill-health!

Marriage Bars in the private sector were finally abolished in 1977, when European law made it illegal to discriminate in employment on the grounds of sex and marital status.

While Marriage Bars were commonplace throughout Europe, America and beyond from the late 1800s, Ireland was one of the last countries to lift bans on hiring married women and dismissing

Marriage Bars in the private sector were abolished in 1977, when European law made it illegal...

Back in 1936, Vera Carey was appointed Leitrim County Librarian. When she married four years later she submitted her letter of resignation as required in her contract. On the request of her employer she remained in the post until her replacement was found.

In the meantime, Vera sought legal advice. Her solicitor discovered that while the 1924 Civil Service Regulation Act required women in the public service to resign from marriage it, mistakenly, did not disqualify married women from applying for such posts.

Vera applied and, being the most qualified candidate, was reappointed as County Librarian, despite local opposition. She continued in her job until her retirement in 1974.

While private and semi-state employers were not legally obliged to apply a Marriage Bar, it was widespread practice to include a clause in letters of appointment to female workers that their employment ended once they married. For example, CIE, Aer Lingus, banks and two of the largest employers, Jacobs Biscuits and Guinness Brewers all had Marriage Bars.

The ban on the employment of married women in the civil service and wider public and semi-state sectors was not lifted until 1973, on foot of a recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women and a shift in public opinion on working wives. Around 700

women on marriage. This puts us in the unusual position of having women alive today who were personally affected by the Marriage Bar.

Congress is eager that these women's first-hand accounts of this important episode in labour history are documented for future generations.

Together with RTE we would like to hear from women who had to leave a job because of the Marriage Bar. RTE will record a series of television interviews to broadcast a special programme from within its existing scheduled programmes if there is sufficient interest from women willing to share their experiences and memories of the Marriage Bar.

If you or someone you know would like to participate or would like to discuss the project, you can email me at laura.bambrick@ictu.ie or phone 01 889 77 77 or email Christopher McKeivitt of RTE at chris.mckeivitt@rte.ie

All correspondence will be treated with absolute confidence.

Citizen Army's Captain 'Kit' Poole honoured at Glasnevin unveiling



By Padraig Yeates

CAPTAIN Christopher 'Kit' Poole of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) was commemorated on Sunday, 25th August at a moving ceremony in Glasnevin Cemetery attended by his family and friends.

The Irish Army's colour party was joined by additional colour parties supplied by the ICA and Irish Volunteers commemorative organisations, while SIPTU Deputy General Secretary Ethel Buckley laid a wreath on behalf of the union.

Capt. Poole's granddaughter, Marie Frances said it had been her life's ambition to see her grandfather's grave properly marked and his memory preserved for all he had done for Ireland, the labour movement and his own family.

Dublin's Lord Mayor Paul McAuliffe told those gathered for the event that it was a "great honour" to stand at the grave of this "great Irish patriot".

"I thank his granddaughter Marie Frances Poole for inviting me here today to unveil this headstone."

He said that, like others who took part in the 1916 Rising, Capt. Poole had "fought, not for victory, but for freedom", adding that he was literally one of a "band of brothers" as the "whole family of Pooles fought in the Easter Rising and beyond, seeking freedom and equality for all".

Historian Micheál Ó Diobhlín recalled Capt Poole's older step-brother Joe, a Fenian framed and executed for a crime he did not commit. Capt. Poole had also been sentenced to death in the aftermath of the Rising for his leading role in the defence of Stephen's Green – a sentence that was later commuted to 10 years penal servitude.

Ann Mathews spoke about the Irish Citizen Army and Pádraig Yeates outlined the Poole family's involvement in the Irish Transport and General Workers Union over four generations.

He noted that the family "had never left the ITGWU or its successor SIPTU," and that "the union had never left the Poole family," as seen by the Ethel Buckley's presence at the unveiling.

Like many working class Dubliners of his generation, Christopher



March through Dublin in 1956 honouring ICA veterans, inset, and right, Kit's grave



Marie Frances Poole with Michael Mallin's granddaughter Una NiCallanain



From left: Christopher Poole's great grandson Michael Hall with author and historian Micheál Ó Doibhlín, Marie Frances Poole and the Lord Mayor Frank McAuliffe



SIPTU's Ethel Buckley lays wreath on Capt Poole's grave

Poole joined the British army as a young man and served in Afghanistan and South Africa.

On returning home he became an early member of the ITGWU, served on the No 1 branch committee – which acted as the union's executive in its early years – and was a personal friend of Jim Larkin. He also helped organise the ICA as a workers' defence force in

the 1913 Lockout and was elected to its first Army Council.

Blacklisted with his brother John for their role in the Lockout, it was a fellow ICA officer, ITGWU organiser and Labour Councillor, William Partridge, who fought successfully to end the employment ban and secure them jobs with Dublin Corporation.

As a result, both men were able

to provide James Connolly with detailed information on the city's sewerage system for movement underground. This was of limited value in the Rising but was later put to good use when another brother and ICA officer, Vincent Poole, transferred to the IRA during the War of Independence.

Christopher's son, Vincent, named after his uncle, was an ITGWU shop steward and member of the No 16 Branch for 15 years, when he worked as a machine minder in the Irish Press.

His brother Gerry, also a machine minder, was another shop steward in No 16 branch, when he worked at Smurfit Webpress and other printing companies in Dublin.

His sister, the late Anne McMullen, was yet another member to serve as an ITGWU shop steward, in her case at the Jeyes Fluid plant.

Marie Poole, who has played a key role in ensuring her grandfather was commemorated in Glasnevin, was an ITGWU shop steward and led a successful strike for better conditions in Hanna's sewing factory on the Finglas Road.

Veronica Poole served as an ITGWU shop steward representing supermarket staff for many years and Michael Poole was an activist in both the ITGWU and AUEW.

In 2016, when President Michael D Higgins, yet another SIPTU member, attended the state commemoration of the Irish Citizen Army at Liberty Hall, he inspected an exhibition of artefacts from the period, many of which were provided by the Poole family.

Family members had retrieved these items, including James Connolly's wooden tea tray, from the wreckage of Liberty Hall for safe keeping.

TRIBUTE Dermot Doolan

Renowned for his talent, wit and camaraderie

WORDS cannot adequately express the contribution that Dermot Doolan made, not only to Irish Equity and SIPTU, but to the Arts world in general.

If it hadn't been for Dermot Doolan, our performance union (embracing actors, directors, designers, technicians, stage management and interpretive artists) would never have existed and, the standards we take for granted today, would not have been so high; the fact that it is, being due to his tireless work for the protection of its members.

Dermot was born in Reubens Street, in Dolphins Barn in 1926. Brought up in a family of nine, he was a born survivor and soon became aware of the dreadful conditions in Irish Theatre.

By 1939, he had his heart set on a career in journalism and changing the world was not high on his agenda. However, he seemed to stumble into trade unionism as a livelihood.

As he said himself, he "was only minding the office" of a fledgling union for theatre practitioners, but finished up running a strong organisation with great success by 1947 when Equity was eventually founded due to his organisational talents.

In order to further strengthen



Dermot Doolan's vision of seeing Irish Actors' Equity as a cultural division of SIPTU was finally realised in 2013

the new union, Dermot was instrumental in changing affiliation from the TUC to the new Congress of Irish Trade Unions, to be under the umbrella of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, despite the opposition of the TUC.

In the 1950s, he still found time to successfully write radio comedy scripts for Radio Éireann, helping to create *Pottering About* for the great Maureen Potter and *Living with Lynch* for Joe Lynch. These ventures increased his understanding of performers' ethos and needs, and Dermot's superb strategies led to historic union battles with two great 'giants'.

By 1964, the contract and conditions for actors in the Abbey Theatre had become so desperate that, on behalf of Equity, he served strike notice on the National Theatre and asked Todd Andrews to successfully arbitrate.

Dermot was also instrumental in Irish Equity being accepted as a member of the world-wide International Federation of Actors (FIA) again, adding strength, knowledge and respect for Irish Equity. Dermot was much revered by the organisation for his talent, wit and camaraderie and was deservedly honoured by them.

In 1978, Dermot supported the RTE Players' plans to strike for better working conditions and for parity with the Abbey Theatre. With

the backing of the ITGWU, Irish Equity was now able to bring a huge organisation to its knees and conciliation ensued.

For many years Dermot Doolan's dream was to eventually have Irish Actors' Equity as a cultural division of SIPTU and to remain Irish. This was fulfilled in 2013 when SIPTU provided funding to create an Arts and Culture Branch, of which, Irish Actors' Equity is now part.

Dermot had built the solid platform, and his life's work had been achieved. In 2015, he was suitably honoured by SIPTU/Equity with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Dublin FIA Conference.

By considering putting theatre practitioners actors above all else, Dermot Doolan contributed so much to our beleaguered profession. More than that, he ensured status and esteem and high union standards for the future. His contribution will never be forgotten.

What distinguished Dermot from most other performers was that he nearly always delivered lines that he had written himself.

We will all miss his wonderful company, his enduring friendship and his impish humour, but, above all, his great compassion for human rights.

"Entirely and whole, the perfect Service!" – Cecil Spring-Rice.

Laurence Foster

Des Bonass celebrated in Glasnevin

Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral of trade unionist and political activist, Des Bonass, at Glasnevin crematorium on Monday 30th September. A former official with the ATGWU, now UNITE, and past president of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, Des Bonass died peacefully at home on Thursday, 26th September.

He is survived by his wife Eileen and his children Mairéad, Deirdre

and Ciarán each of whom gave moving tributes to their father during the celebration of his life at Glasnevin.

His long-time trade union comrade in the ATGWU, Mick O'Reilly, also addressed the gathering and recalled the important role played by Des in raising financial support for the National Union of Miners during their strike against the British government in 1984. His solidarity trips to Cuba and his support for

Dublin GAA were also mentioned while the songs included 'Joe Hill' and 'Ordinary Man'.

"Des was a central figure of militant trade unionism and socialism in Dublin from the 1960's to the very end. He was indefatigable, direct, open, fearless, challenging and humorous in his lifelong work to end exploitation and repression," Des Derwin, another friend and SIPTU activist, told Liberty.





Seán Hoare soars high as he celebrates scoring the opener against Shamrock Rovers at Oriel Park
Photo courtesy Dundalk FC

Different paths to success

■ By Scott Millar

The team which has dominated League of Ireland football in recent years will clash with the most successful club in its history, on Sunday 3rd November when Dundalk FC meet Shamrock Rovers in the final of the FAI Cup. Dundalk beat Rovers to win the League at Oriel Park in September.

The game will round off a good season for domestic football, which has seen growing attendances and a real buzz developing around some clubs that have focused on re-invigorating the connection with their local community.

The largest league attendance of the year was 7,021 in August at Tallaght Stadium to see Rovers finally defeat their bitter cross city rivals Bohemian FC in a league fixture for the first time in nine attempts.

Many other games around the country have seen the 3,000-attendance mark broken, indicating a growth of interest in a league that five years ago was only seeing attendances of just over 1,000 even at some of the larger clubs.

The turnaround in terms of support for the two old Dublin clubs, whose attendances have both considerably grown over the last three years, has been brought about by two different models of growth.

The backroom management at Rovers have focused on presenting a professional image of its club, with investment in the first team squad and resulting success on the pitch utilised to reconnect with arguably the country's biggest fan base. Rovers' rivals in the FAI Cup Final, Dundalk, are similarly a testament to how professionalisation and success on the pitch can build a football club.

Dundalk F.C. is owned by US investment company Peak6, who until very recently also owned the

English Premiership side, Bournemouth. The money from this source has allowed for serious investment in playing staff which in turn has seen Dundalk win the last two league titles.

In contrast, Bohemians has adopted a very different model of community-based development, which has seen attendances grow while on-pitch success has been more measured. Bohemian FC Commercial Manager, Daniel Lambert, said: "Bohs has always been a member owned club. For many years this made them quite a conservative institution in some ways, such as not having a professional team until the 1970s.

"The 1990s/2000s saw this change with a group of people with banking and business backgrounds becoming prominent in the running of the club. A number of unsuccessful property plays undertaken by this group, albeit with the required member approval, promised to build it into a multi-

million euro enterprise but in reality threatened the club's very existence."

Lambert likens the state of the club when he and the current crop of directors came to the fore "as like someone sitting in a big old country house and it is falling apart around you".

Their response was reinvigorating the club's links with communities in Dublin 7 through growth in their youth teams, both boys and girls, becoming all volunteer staffed and other overtly political stances such as taking a stand in support of the Equality Referendum in 2015.

"We're essentially/structurally a GAA club that plays football", says Lambert, "No one is paid. It is all committees and subcommittees. We have taken on an unashamedly progressive position with initiatives that have included support for gay rights, murals celebrating working class culture and a fan funded scheme which pays for asy-

lum seekers in direct provision to attend every home game. A similar scheme has now been adopted by Shamrock Rovers."

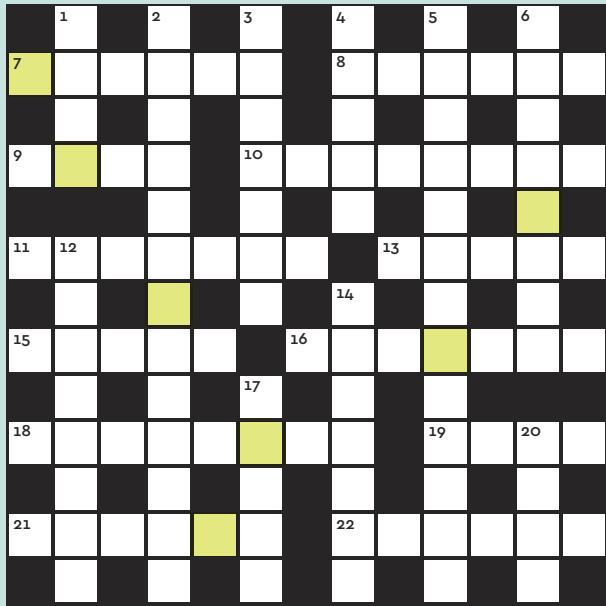
Lambert added: "I see this approach stemming directly from the way the club is member owned and has no capacity in its structure for personal profit. It's in my view inherently left wing and totally against what football has become globally in terms of big business."

While other League of Ireland clubs such as Sligo rovers have also succeeded by developing their community links, the current fate of Cork City FC is a more cautionary tale. It is a member owned enterprise which both solidified its community links while also investing big on the pitch. In a case of overreach the club had to cut back and after several years at the top battling Dundalk for League and Cup titles, it now lies below mid-table with attendances nearly half what they were in recent seasons.

Liberty Crossword

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ACROSS

- 7 Gunpowder using weapon (6)
- 8 Not a star or character actor (6)
- 9 What is more (4)
- 10 Rodent native to Syria (8)
- 11 Double (7)
- 13 Major port in Japan (5)
- 15 Sharleen Spiteri's band (5)
- 16 A french artist (7)
- 18 Type of heels that can kill (8)
- 19 To join (4)
- 21 Cargo pants feature (6)
- 22 Big Turkish city (6)

DOWN

- 1 A western celt (4)
- 2 Badly done or made (13)
- 3 Not at sea (7)
- 4 League members (5)
- 5 An ability in directing the affairs of a government (13)
- 6 A rowdy Australian (8)
- 12 Strength used (8)
- 14 On The Road author (surname) (7)
- 17 Put down in words (5)
- 20 What's expected as a standard (4)

*Correctly fill in the crossword to reveal the hidden word, contained by reading the letters in the shaded squares from top to bottom.

Email the hidden word to communications@siptu.ie or post to Communications Dept., Liberty Hall, Dublin 1 along with your name and address and you will be entered into a prize draw to win a €200 One4All voucher. The winner of the crossword quiz will be published in the next edition of Liberty.

*Terms and conditions apply.

The winner of the crossword competition in the June issue was Joe O'Donovan, Co. Clare. The answer was: Stoppages.



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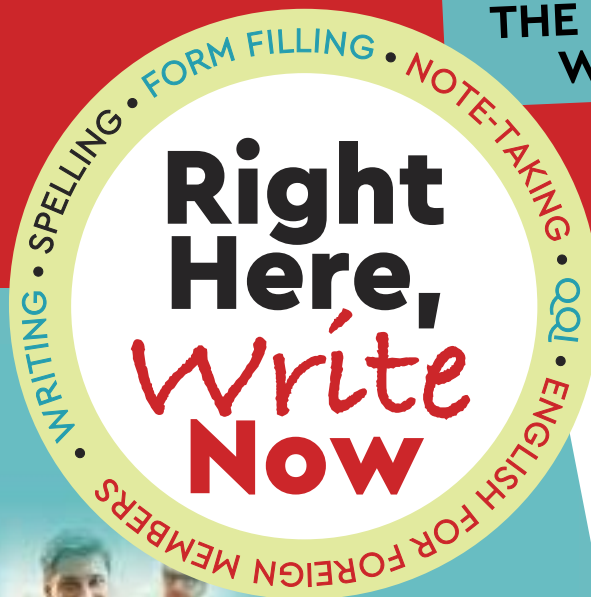
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