

Liberty

Vol. 12 No.3

April 2013

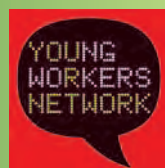
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President Higgins on workers rights



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Gaza: a terrible beauty



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Row looms on public service pay

By Frank Connolly

The Government will face a co-ordinated industrial response across the entire trade union movement if it legislates for pay cuts in the public service, SIPTU General President, Jack O'Connor has warned.

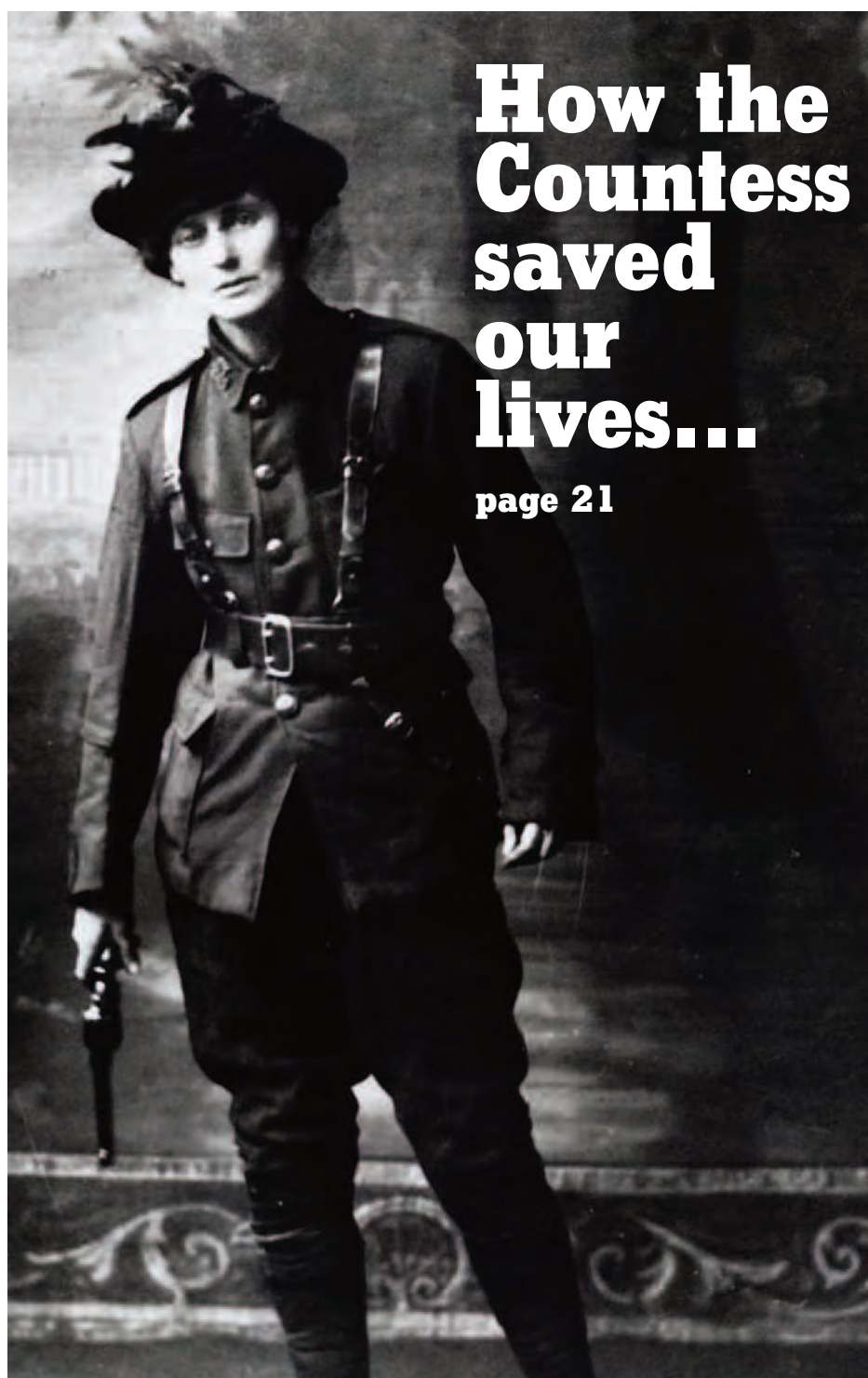
In order to avoid 'an unnecessary and mutually destructive confrontation' the Government should instead negotiate fresh arrangements on pay and reform with public service unions that would retain the protections of the Croke Park Agreement against compulsory redundancy, indiscriminate redeployment and outsourcing of their work, he argued.

He said that the rejection of the Labour Relations Commission proposals on public service reform in mid-April "reflected a deeper resentment among workers generally and public servants, in particular, towards the way in which they have been forced to carry the lion's share of the burden of adjustment while the wealthy have contributed very little."

"It also reflected fatigue with the troika imposed one sided austerity strategy of the last five years, which transparently doesn't work," Jack O'Connor said.

He said that the recent deal on the Anglo-Irish bank promissory notes allows the Government some room for manoeuvre this year which could be used to ease the scale of cuts in the October budget. An investment stimulus package and higher taxes on the rich would lessen the requirement for the proposed €1 bil-

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If you have any ideas for articles or comments please contact: communicationsdepartment@siptu.ie

Liberty is published by the Services, Industrial, Professional & Technical Union, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1

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Produced, designed, edited and printed by trade union labour
Printed and distributed by The Irish Times, City West, Dublin.



May Day in Dublin: 1913-2013 Unfinished Business

The Dublin Council of Trade Unions will be holding its annual May Day demonstration on Wednesday, 1st May.

The event will start in Parnell Square at 7.00 p.m., marching to Liberty Hall for a public meeting at

Beresford Place. Speakers will include young trade unionists, as well as representatives from the National Women's Council Ireland and the Coalition to Protect the Lowest-Paid.

The theme of this year's event is '1913/2013: Unfinished Business'. The 'unfinished business' includes

legislation to ensure recognition of trade unions in all employments and negotiating rights for all members. The demonstration will be followed by a social event in Liberty Hall. There will be music and stalls dealing with various aspects of the 1913 Lockout.

Mine worker buried

Mario Francis, the mine worker killed in an underground rockfall in the Lisheen Mine, Co. Tipperary, was buried in his native Philippines on Wednesday, 16th April.

A large crowd attended the funeral of the SIPTU member in the Catholic Church in Balamban on the island of Cebu. Mario (49) died on the 4th April and before his body was repatriated a large number of his work colleagues attended a Commemoration Mass in the Church of the Assumption, Urlingford.

SIPTU members at the Lisheen Mine have expressed their sympathy to Mario's wife My-Ann, their sons Jomar (9) and Jolrem (5), and his children from a previous marriage in the Philippines, Julemar (22) and Mario Jnr (15).



Trade unionists outside Leinster House on Monday, 22nd April. They handed in a statement for Taoiseach Enda Kenny, calling for legislation on the 'X case'. Pictured (L to R) at front: SIPTU Campaigns and Equality Organiser, Ethel Buckley from SIPTU, Chair of the ICTU Women's Committee, Máire Mulcahy, UNITE Regional Equalities Organiser, Taryn Trainor. Photo: Photocall Ireland

Continued from page 1 - Row looms on public service pay

lion cut in the public service pay and pensions bill over the next three years.

"There is some room for manoeuvre as a result of the promissory note deal which will afford breathing space of €1bn in 2014 and €1.025bn in 2015. Proper use of this accompanied by the launch of a significant off balance sheet stimulus programme as well as a belated tax contribution from the rich would lessen the requirement for a €1bn cut in public service pay and pensions.

He said that capping publicly funded pensions to a maximum of €100,000 per annum and imposing a greater tax on high incomes would help to maintain social co-

hesion and introduce a degree of equity into the adjustment programme.

"The Government should take steps to redress the inequity in the adjustment process to date. A good start could be made by declaring its intention to cap publicly funded pensions to a maximum of €100,000 per annum, even to the extent of promoting a constitutional referendum to do it if necessary.

"The Fine Gael party should give some ground on the taxation of wealth and of those on high incomes. Their insistence on protecting this tiny minority at the top is detrimental to maintaining the social cohesion that is neces-

sary for economic recovery.

"Such an approach would create the context for negotiation of a settlement in two phases entailing interim terms to apply to the end of this year and better terms for 2014 and 2015.

"An unnecessary and mutually destructive confrontation would be avoided. A degree of equality would be introduced into the adjustment process and public service workers would retain the protections of the Croke Park Agreement against compulsory redundancy, indiscriminate redeployment and outsourcing of their work," he said.

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Youth Workers Protest

SIPTU members and supporters staged a rally against further cuts to youth work budgets outside Dáil Eireann on Friday, 19th April. SIPTU Organiser, Paul Hansard, said: "Over the past two weeks, youth projects working in the most disadvantaged areas in Dublin have received their budget allocation for 2013, with most facing a 10% cut. These projects are funded by the Department of Children via the City of Dublin Youth Services Board."



Dublin Port advanced shop stewards

On Thursday, 11th April, shop stewards in Dublin Port received their HETAC certificates. Photo left to right. Front row: Ken Murphy, John Birmingham, Brian Dalton. Back row: James Kennedy, Margaret de Courcey (SIPTU tutor), Ethel Buckley (SIPTU Equality and Campaigns Organiser), Pat Paisley and Maurice O Beirne.



Back Row L to R: Willie Quigley, Eugene Finnegan, Leo Sheridan, Matts Petterson, Jon Mostrom, Mike Lowther, Jack Gordan, Christy Blake. Middle Row L to R: Brendan Ecclestone, Paudric Boyle, Ian Mc Donnell, John Regan, Pat Conlon, Frankie Farrelly. Front Row L to R: Mick Flynn,

Agreement at Tara Mines

SIPTU members at Tara Mines, Co. Meath, have voted to accept proposals aimed at bringing to a conclusion the long running dispute at the company. Among the key clauses contained in the proposed agreement is a commitment by the owners of Tara Mines, multinational Boliden, to provide future capital investment of €110 million which is needed to maintain the mine's operation to 2018 and beyond.



SIPTU school visits

MISC representatives regularly visit schools around the country to explain how trade unions work to students. Pictured is MISC Sector Organiser, Chris Rowland, with Leaving cert. Applied Programme pupils of the Presentation Secondary School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Rowland said: "Young people are very interested in fairness and equality in workplaces. Unions need to develop connections and listen to the concerns of the next generation of employees."

For more information on school visits contact crowland@siptu.ie

Killarney Golf Club workers to strike in May



Golf club workers, Photo L to R: Susan Bowler, Dan Morris, SIPTU Organisers Paula O'Loughlin and Dennis Hynes Front Row: Patrick Fleming, Sean Moynihan

Workers at Killarney Golf Club will begin strike action on Tuesday, 7th May, following a management refusal to engage constructively with the Labour Court in relation to proposed redundancies.

SIPTU members voted overwhelmingly on Thursday, 18th April, in favour of strike action at the golf club.

The management served notice of redundancy on 21 of the 41 staff on 10th April, even though a Labour Court hearing had been set for Monday, 29th April, to discuss ways of minimising job losses at the prestigious golf venue.

SIPTU Organiser, Denis Hynes said: "Unfortunately the workers feel they have been left with no option but to vote for industrial action. The management of Killarney Golf Club has acted in a callous manner in trying to impose job losses without negotiation."

"The workers believe the aggressive behaviour of management in seeking to impose unnecessary redundancies and massive wage cuts is due to the influence of an out-

side consultant, who in the past was controversially involved in a major dispute in Irish Ferries.

"Workers are particularly angered that this consultant's approach is being adopted by a business of which State agency, Fáilte Ireland, owns 77%. In view of this state involvement in the business the workers are requesting that Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton, directly intervenes and ensures that the company

in which they have been treated by the management of a club which they have served well for many years. The attempt to sack the majority of the workforce without negotiation has devastated the workers and the local area. This is clearly an attempt to remove workers so they can be replaced by staff on greatly reduced wages and conditions of employment."

Last year, the union referred the dispute at the Killarney Golf Club to the Labour Relations Commission (LRC). This year the matter was referred to the Labour Court. As part of the LRC process the union engaged an independent assessor to evaluate the club's financial position.

Denis Hynes said: "The assessor's report indicated that management had greatly exaggerated the financial difficulties of the club. The report concluded that a degree of restructuring and some job losses were necessary to ensure the profitability of the business rather than the 35% pay cut and enforced redundancy of the majority of staff which is being sought by management."

complies with a Labour Court recommendation to attend further hearings in order to reach an agreed resolution to this dispute."

Senior SIPTU Shop Steward, Dan Morris, who has worked at the club for 29 years, said: "The workers are very disappointed by the manner



Workers to take strike action Photos: Sean Kelly

Nearly €400,000 paid in consultancy fees

The Killarney Golf Club has engaged four different sets of auditors and consultants in recent months costing €396,000 in fees, company accounts show. The consultants were hired to assist the Golf Club in its "restructuring."

In late April the club was ordered to pay a bar worker redundancy

terms agreed with her last summer.

Margaret Doyle worked in the bar of the club since 1989 and was offered voluntary redundancy last year. Following talks, she accepted over €62,000 in a lump sum payment. However, the money was never paid.

Doyle entered into legal proceedings and the Master of the High Court on Thursday, 18th April, ordered the club to pay the

monies owed together with interest.

Denis Hynes said: "While there have been no problems for the company in paying out large sums in consultancy fees there has been a marked unwillingness shown by it to honour working conditions and redundancy terms agreed with its workers, many of whom have over 20 years service."

SIPTU agreement with University of Limerick on research

THE Pharmaceutical Chemical and Medical Devices Sector has concluded a collaboration agreement with the Jim Kemmy School of Business, University of Limerick.

The agreement will see co-operation on areas of common interest between SIPTU and the Jim Kemmy School including human resources research and the promotion of further education in the field of collective bargaining and workplace negotiation theory.

Sector Organiser, Alan O'Leary, told *Liberty*: "This collaboration agreement arose out of a visit to the college by the Sector Committee in 2010 and talks with the staff of the Department of Personnel and Employee Relations regarding common areas of interest.

"Our agreement provides a very solid foundation for the sector to



From left: Jack O'Connor, Professor Paddy Gunnigle (UL), Jemma Mackey and Alan O'Leary (SIPTU), Tom Turner (UL)

provide part-time and full-time degree and masters students with a positive and an alternative view of trade unions.

"We have held a number of lec-

tures in the Kemmy School to outline our sector's strategy on 2% per annum stability and pay agreements and students have responded very positively."

Talks begin over threat to Waterford brewery jobs

SIPTU representatives have begun talks with management at Diageo Ltd in a bid to minimise job losses after the company's announcement on 11th April that it intends to cease operations at its brewery in Waterford.

SIPTU Organiser, Terry Bryan, told *Liberty*: "SIPTU members understand that the company intends to consolidate its operations at its St. James Gate Brewery in Dublin.

"This is a short-sighted strategy, particularly when it is taken into account that a refurbishment of the Waterford plant, costing €40 million, was only completed in 2004."

He added: "The union's negotiations with the company will be focused on minimising job losses and securing fair and reasonable redundancy packages for any of our members who are made redundant."

SIPTU represents 16 direct employees at the Waterford Brewery and a further six support staff.

Dubliners encouraged to read Strumpet City

James Plunkett's epic novel set during the 1913 Lockout, *Strumpet City*, has been chosen as this year's 'Dublin: One City One Book' by Dublin City Council.

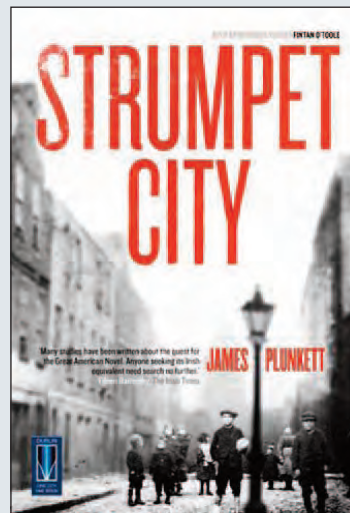
The book recounts the effects of the Lockout on a cast of characters from all walks of Dublin life. A series of events are being held during April to mark the selection of *Strumpet City* by the City Council as the book all Dubliners should read.

The events included a lunchtime songs and story session in the The Church Café & Bar in Dublin on Friday, 12th April. Over 150 people attended this event to hear labour historian Francis Devine give a brief outline of the history of the Lockout and the rendition of contemporary songs by Fergus Whelan and friends.

Commenting on *Strumpet City* at its unveiling as the Dublin: One City One Book, SIPTU President, Jack O'Connor, said he was struck by the parallels between the Dublin of 2013 and that of 100 years ago.

He reflected that Plunkett's seminal book provided a graphic depiction of a major event in a flawed society, which was ultimately a conflict between two sets of values – "the values of the slum, interdependence and collective solidarity versus the values of the quick buck."

The special edition of the book published by Gill & Macmillan can be borrowed from all branches of Dublin City Libraries or bought in bookshops. See page 21 for 1913 events.



Students from St. Louis High School
Photos: Tony Murphy, NCAD

1913 Tapestry pupils receive certificates

MORE than 50 pupils from three Dublin schools received certificates for their work on the 1913 Lockout Commemoration Tapestry at a ceremony in the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) on Tuesday, 9th April.

The pupils from Larkin Community College (Dublin 1), St Louis High School (Rathmines) and Mater Dei Primary School (Dublin 8) have helped embroider some of the 30 multi-media textile panels which combine to tell the story of the 1913 Lockout.

Presenting their certificates of achievement to the pupils SIPTU Campaigns and Equality Organ-

iser, Ethel Buckley said: "The tapestry will probably be the most enduring cultural artefact produced out of this year's commemorations of the Lockout.

"It tells the story of heroism of ordinary working people, men and women, who refused to be bullied by employers into surrendering their rights to belong to the union of their choice and to look for better pay and conditions."

Pupils attending the event said that the project helped them connect with the events of their great grand-parents' time, which helped to shape modern Ireland.

The tapestry is scheduled for completion later this year.



Mater Dei Primary School students



Larkin Community College students

James Connolly Bridge Campaign



Trade union organiser, writer and political activist James Connolly was formally nominated on Friday, 19th April, to be commemorated in the title of a new transport bridge over the Liffey.

The SIPTU supported James Connolly Bridge campaign presented Dublin City Council officials with application papers outlining why the inspirational trade union leader is the figure best suited to be commemorated in the new bridge's name.

Actor Brian Murray, whose famous roles include Fitz in the RTE production of *Strumpet City*, said: "During the early years of the last century James Connolly gave voice to the aspirations and hopes of ordinary men and women in Dublin. He envisioned a city free of tenement slums, a city welcoming to immigrants and one run efficiently for the

benefit of its people.

"His activities during these years speak of the aspirations and desires of working people. His writings on many topics including Irish history, workers rights and economics mark him as one of the nation's leading thinkers. His vocal support of the women's movement have seen him accredited as one of Ireland's first feminist writers."

The other leading cultural figures backing the campaign include singers Imelda May, Christy Moore, Andy Irvine, Mary Black and Frances Black; actors Bryan Murray, Gabriel Byrne and Jer O'Leary; author Irvine Welsh; comedians Brendan Grace and Brendan O'Carroll; poets Theo Dorgan and Paula Meehan, as well as artist Robert Ballagh and Dublin GAA star Alan Brogan.

To sign the petition supporting the James Connolly Bridge campaign visit: www.siptu.ie



SIPTU members in the local authority water services who rallied outside Leinster House on 21st March. Photo: Mark Moloney

1.35m sign water petition

MORE than 1,354,990 people have signed a EU-wide petition calling for water services to remain in public ownership.

The petition calls on the European Commission to "propose legislation implementing the human right to water and sanitation as recognised by the United Nations, and promoting the provision of water and sanitation as essential public services for all."

It also calls for the supply and management of water resources not to be subject to EU 'internal market rules' and their exclusion from so-

called 'market liberalisation'.

"The *Water and Sanitation are a Human Right!*" petition received the vocal backing of more than 100 SIPTU members in the local authority water services who rallied outside Leinster House on 21st March.

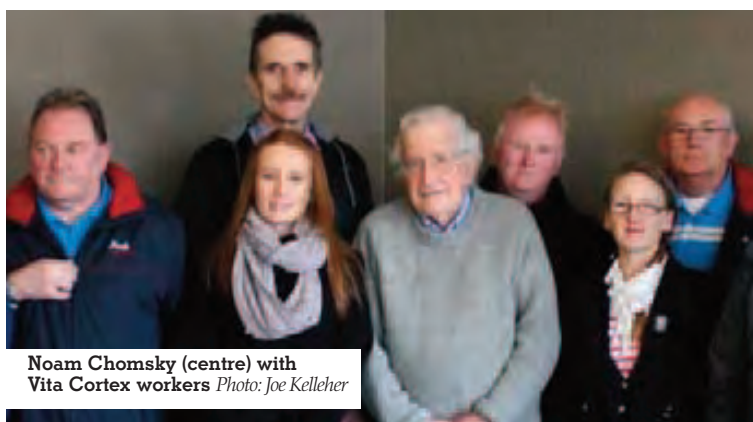
The rally was part of a EU-wide campaign by the European Federation of Public Service Unions, which represents eight million public service workers, focused on highlighting its concern at the liberalisation of EU laws governing the ownership of water resources.

Following the protest, workers and SIPTU representatives held a meeting in the Dáil with TDs and senators from all political parties.

SIPTU Local Authority Chairperson, Matt Henry, told *Liberty*: "With the decision of the Irish Government to establish Irish Water and transfer water assets out of local democratic ownership we have every reason to be concerned.

"The concern in relation to who owns and controls water is the same across Europe and internationally. Major international companies are lining up to pressurise politicians to open up publicly-owned water for private ownership."

To sign the petition and learn more about the threat to public ownership of water resources, visit www.right2water.eu



Noam Chomsky (centre) with Vita Cortex workers Photo: Joe Kelleher

Chomsky meets Vita Cortex workers

Renowned human rights activist and writer, Noam Chomsky discussed their 161 day sit-in with the former Vita Cortex workers in Cork on Thursday (4th April).

During the ninety minute meeting at the Riverside Hotel the workers including SIPTU shop stewards, Sean Kelleher and Jim Power, and other union members discussed the background to the dispute over re-

dundancy payments, the lengthy occupation of the foam manufacturing plant on the Kinsale Road in Cork and the massive solidarity they received from other workers, trade unions and communities in Cork and across the country. A film of the dispute, '161 Days' will be shown at the Jim Connell festival in Kells, county Meath, on Saturday, 4th May.

Suspended Cork council staff in return to work

FOLLOWING discussions with management on Tuesday, 2nd April, three Cork County Council workers suspended in March for carrying out urgent road maintenance in breach of council safety procedures were given the go-ahead to return

to work.

SIPTU Organiser, Con Casey, said: "Following discussions with management the matter was definitively concluded in accordance with the grievance and disciplinary procedures of Cork

County Council to the satisfaction of all the parties involved."

The incident had caused a degree of media controversy with a number of local public figures calling for the men to be reinstated.

Sinn Féin supports right to collective bargaining

Sinn Féin has backed the trade union movement's call for the Government to enact legislation enshrining the right of workers to collective bargaining and trade union recognition.

Delegates at the party's annual Ard Fheis in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, on Saturday, 13th April, voted overwhelmingly to support a motion calling on the Government to "ensure that the centenary of the 1913 Lock-out is marked by enshrining the right to collective bargaining and trade union recognition in law.

Speaking in support of the motion Kilkenny county councillor and SIPTU organiser, Kathleen Funchion, said: "Employers have IBEC, ISME and a whole host of organisations to represent them. Let us give workers the same basic fundamental right. Good and fair employers and business owners should support this as it shows respect for those who are the cornerstone of the enterprise."



SIPTU organiser Kathleen Funchion

Speaking in support of the motion, Kilkenny county councillor and SIPTU organiser Kathleen Funchion.

CS shake-up 'must consider communities and workers'

By Paul Gavan

THE West Cork Development Partnership met with local Labour TD Michael McCarthy on Friday, 5th April, to express its concerns over plans by Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government Phil Hogan to radically alter existing funding and management structures for community services.

The West Cork Development Partnership currently delivers a wide range of essential community, tourism, agri-support, eldercare and employment projects across the west Cork region.

The Government's local government reform document *Putting People First* sets out an "alignment" between local authorities and LDCs that will have major impact for both workers and local community services. This alignment is due to be completed in the coming months.

More than 50 Local Development Companies based throughout every county in the State currently deliver a range of quality community-based services with regard to enterprise, education and training in areas of disadvantage. Under the Minister's plans, close to half of these companies will close.

SIPTU claims proposals to "align" these services within local government structures also put millions of euro of European funding at risk.

Speaking after the meeting SIPTU Organiser, Trevor Quinn, told *Liberty*: "Michael McCarthy expressed support for our view that there should be a worker representative



Changes: Phil Hogan

added to the Implementation Group charged with overseeing this 'alignment'.

"Michael is chair of the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Environment Culture and Gaeltacht, and so his voice should carry some

weight. We welcome his support for SIPTU's position on the Minister's plans."

He added: "If Minister Hogan is intent on making such big decisions about our jobs and our local services the least we would expect is a process of consultation with our union about these plans and their implications for both employees and the communities they work with.

"The bottom-up approach of independent Local Development Companies has been internationally recognised as a best practice model.

"The independent nature of these companies is also a stipulation for continued receipt of millions of euro in European rural development funding.

"Any change must consider the interests of communities and workers."



West Cork Development Partnership's Pat Welsh, Joe Cronin and, far right, Fergal Conlon voiced their concerns about funding changes to Labour TD Michael McCarthy, second from right



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Galway Trades Unions 1913 - 2013

Thursday 2nd May at 7.00 p.m. SIPTU Offices

SIPTU's Galway District Committee is marking the occasion of the Centenary of the 1913 Lockout and celebrating May Day on Thursday 2nd May 2013 at 7.00 p.m. in the Sean Meade Room at the SIPTU offices on Forster Court.

Members of all trade unions are welcome and there is no charge, but for catering purposes, please let us know if you are attending. Tell us your name and your union by Friday 26th April by any of the following means:-

E-mail aoreilly@siptu.ie
Text (087) 6776819 • Tel: (01) 8588285



Medtronic workplace committee members: from left Pat Daly, Marion Walsh, Mary Talbot, Colette McCafferty, Fiona Duane, Una Kilroy, Liz Dolan and Albert O'Loughlin

■ By Scott Millar

WITH 1,400 SIPTU members, the Medtronic medical device manufacturing plant in Ballybrit, county Galway, has one of the largest organised workforces in the country.

The plant, which manufactures stents, catheters and other medical items, has a history which stretches back to the 1970s.

It had two previous owners, before US multinational Medtronic took the business over in 1999.

SIPTU Senior Shop Steward, Pat Daly, has worked at the plant for 37 years. He told *Liberty*: "The union has been organised in the plant since day one. Initially, it was the Federated Workers Union of Ireland then its successor SIPTU.

"I joined the committee after about nine or 10 years working in the plant. I have been on and off the committee ever since. The main reason I got involved was to get better pay and conditions for me and my colleagues."

The workplace committee has 11 elected members with representatives drawn from four of the five buildings, which make up the Medtronic complex.

Day, evening and nightshift workforces are all represented. All committee members are from the associate assembler grade of Medtronic employees with 800 other workers in the plant, including technicians and administrative staff, not organised into a union.

The workplace committee meets

'Some people come to me asking what does the union do. They don't understand they ARE the union...'

twice a month to discuss issues of concern to members. Workplace committee members meet local management once a month, and senior management every two months, after which the outcome of these discussions is relayed to the membership.

Agreements on workers' pay and conditions are concluded on a three-yearly basis with negotiations involving the workplace committee, SIPTU representatives and management.

The system has generally worked well with Pat recalling only one incident going to the Labour Relations Commission during his time working at the plant and there is general satisfaction in the workforce over the pay and conditions secured by

the union in successive agreements.

However, encouraging greater involvement of the entire membership in union activity is a concern of committee member, Liz Dolan.

She said: "Some people come to me asking what does the union do. They don't understand they are the union. Because we have already secured good conditions it can be hard to explain to them that these conditions are only there because of the union.

"They seem to just assume the company has given these things to the workforce."

A lack of understanding of the union's achievements is also of concern to Colette McCafferty. She has worked in the plant for 11 years and served on the workplace committee

for three.

"I joined the committee to speak up for the workers," Colette told *Liberty*. "I meet people on a daily basis and anybody that has a query raises it with me and I bring that to the committee.

"Unfortunately, some people don't understand what the union is about. A lot of people think the union is just something you go to when you get into a bit of bother."

Mary Talbot, who became involved in the workplace committee four years ago as she "wanted to have an input" in the lead up to a new pay agreement, is also concerned with ensuring the SIPTU message reaches the increasingly diverse and young workforce.

She said: "The majority of workers

would be in their 20s or early 30s while some have only recently moved to Ireland. Many do not grasp the importance of organisation in protecting and improving their pay and conditions.

"I joined a union in a previous job unbeknown to my employer, I know the value of union organisation. I have always felt you are better in a union than not.

"What we need to do as a committee and a union is provide more information about what the union does, what it has achieved for workers."

Liz added: "We really need to modernise and appeal to younger people. We need to make the union more attractive.

"There is often a lot of information about where the union started but many people aren't as concerned with the history as what the union is doing now and will do in the future."

One young worker who has got the message is Fiona Duane, who only joined the committee in recent weeks and is also active in the workplace canteen committee.

She said: "I was nominated by some of the work colleagues to take the position. I have an interest in representing people and ensuring things work as well as they can. I'm just learning the ropes at the moment but it's interesting."

The SIPTU Medtronic Workplace Committee and SIPTU Communications Department will be producing a newsletter for members in the company for distribution next month.

President: workers' rights must be at the centre of a rebuilt economy

PRESIDENT Michael D Higgins has called on Irish trade unionists to play their part in "the transition from an economic model that has failed humanity to one that has yet to be fully realised."

Speaking at the official opening of the recently-rebuilt Communications Workers Union offices on the North Circular Road in Dublin, President Higgins also said that the personal, social and cultural rights of every worker must be at the centre of a re-built economy.

Referring to the commemoration of the 1913 Lockout, he said that we owe "an enormous debt of gratitude, not only to James Larkin, but to all the workers who stood bravely beside him during that long and difficult fight."

He said: "As the heirs and beneficiaries of that difficult and bitter struggle one hundred years ago, we must, as we currently face our own difficult times demonstrate that same determination and resourcefulness to bring about positive changes and to help create a society that we can be proud of – an inclusive society based on the important values of participation, respect for all and fairness."

"It is a challenge in which all unions, including the Communications Workers' Union, will be called upon to play their part as Ireland makes the transition from an economic model that has failed humanity to one that has yet to be fully realised."

In making that transition, President Higgins said: "We must refocus and reaffirm the values of active citizenship and a caring community" and reject the view that the individual is "no more than a consumer of goods and services".

He continued: "We must ensure that the personal, social and cultural rights of each citizen, indeed every worker, are placed firmly at the centre of a re-built economy as we deliver our view of a newly-imagined Ireland – an Ireland where all citizens can participate equally."

"Tá gluaiseacht na gceardchumann tar éis a bheith lárnach i bhforbairt phobal le níos mó ná céad bliain anuas agus creidim go nglacfaidh an ghluaiseacht sin, nó gur cheart go nglacfaidh, gluaiseacht ina bhfuil sibh go léir chomh gníomhach sin, ról lárnach in atógáil ár sochaí a bhfuil an oiread sin dochair déanta dó."

[The trade union movement has been central to the development of community for over a century and I believe that the trade union movement, of which you all form such an active part, will or should I say must, play a pivotal role in rebuilding our damaged society]."

The new offices are named after William Norton, a was former general secretary of the Post Office Workers Union (previously the Dual Workers union formed in 1900 and now the CWU) and leader of the Labour Party from 1932 to 1960.



President Michael D Higgins and CWU General Secretary Steve Fitzpatrick at the official opening of the refurbished CWU offices on North Circular Road. Photo: Gerry Maxwell.

Jim Connell Society 15th anniversary may weekend trade union festival

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th May 2013 in Kells and Crosakiel, Co. Meath

FRIDAY: Official opening by Councillor Sarah Reilly, Cathorlaigh Kells Town Council and Paul Anderson M.P.

SATURDAY: Annual Summer School in Kells Resource Centre, Pig roasting event and Irish night in Jacks Porterhouse venue

SUNDAY: Annual commemoration at monument in Crosakiel, followed by entertainment in McCabes lounge.

SATURDAY LUNCH: "161 Days" Film of the Vita Cortex dispute must be seen by everyone.

Prior to the weekend, the Kells Art Club in association with Jim Connell Society are showing Strumpet City, story of the Dublin City Lockout, main organiser, Eileen Morgan, each Thursday night, commencing 21st March.

MAIN SPEAKERS:

Bob Crow, General Secretary, RMT
Steve Fitzpatrick, General Secretary, CWU
Paul Anderson MP for Blaydon
Jack O'Connor, General President, SIPTU
Dr. John Callow, London University
David Hopper, General Secretary, Durham miners

And more still not confirmed

MAIN SPONSORS:

Sponsored by The Gathering, Meath Tourism & Local Authorities and the British and Irish trade union movement.

Contact: Tommy Grimes 087-9806688
Brian Collins 087-6829205

New law to criminalise modern-day slavery in Ireland

The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) has welcomed the publication of the Criminal Law (Human Trafficking) (Amendment) Bill 2013. The Bill will criminalise forced labour (modern-day slavery) in Ireland and protect victims who have been forced to commit begging and other criminal activities.

Gráinne O'Toole of MRCI stated, "Over the past 6 years, MRCI has seen over 180 cases of forced labour in Ireland. Forced labour is on the increase and without such a law victims of forced labour are not protected. Our experience is that victims will not come forward if there are not clear protections, rights and supports in place.

We have seen cases where victims have been forced to commit criminal activity – such as working in cannabis farms – and are then charged with the offence while the real perpetrator, their employer, walks free. When this Bill is enacted, forced labour will at long last be illegal in Ireland and the authorities will be able to target the real criminals."

Fauziah Shaari, who was a victim of forced labour in a private home in Ireland, said "I was treated as a slave. I still have not found justice. The change in the law will help other victims to come forward and will make sure employers involved in forced labour will be punished."

SIPTU Services Division Organiser, John King, called for the swift enactment of the Bill.

He said: "An early enactment of this Bill is now essential to ensure that victims of forced labour are protected by robust legislation. This will allow them to have certainty that this form of modern day slavery is regarded as a criminal act by the State, and that the perpetrators will be prosecuted.

"The enactment of this legislation would put in place another measure along the way to ensuring that all those who work in Ireland will have their minimum rights protected by the State and can enjoy a threshold of decency while they work."

Launch of the Young Workers' Network

YOUNG
WORKERS
NETWORK

Building a future that works



SIPTU will launch its new initiative the Young Workers' Network on May Day, Wednesday, 1 May at 5.00 p.m. in the Connolly Room, Liberty Hall Auditorium.

The event will feature the premiere of a new short film on the realities of being a young precarious worker in Ireland. The workers who appear in the film – who responded to a call-out on twitter – will be there to talk about their situation. There will be a participative discussion on precarious work and how we can organise to combat insecure, exploitative forms of work.

The event will also launch the findings of a new survey of young workers' opinions on work, life and the future, as well as the issues on which young workers think the Network should take action.

Join us on May Day to find out more about the Young Workers Network and to take the opportunity to meet like-minded young people who want to have a say in their working lives and in their unions.

Who: Young workers (under 35), working full-time, part-time, casual or unemployed who are interested in taking action for better jobs & strong unions

What: Launch of the Young Workers' Network

Where: Connolly Hall, Liberty Hall Theatre

When: Wednesday, 1st May at 5.00 p.m. (Network members will join the youth bloc on the May Day march, Garden of Remembrance @ 7.00 p.m.)

Why: Because young workers need jobs, living wages and unions that will fight their corner

Find us on facebook (<http://fb.me/youngworker-network>), twitter (@suptuyouth) and on our new website www.youngworker-network.ie (launching on May Day).

Youth unemployment crisis must top agenda

NEW figures from Eurostat which show that unemployment in the 15 to 24 age group in Ireland stands at just under 31%, must push this crisis to the top of the political agenda, according to SIPTU policy analyst Lorraine Mulligan.

Statistics released in April revealed the Irish rate reached 30.8% in February 2013. The previous high for youth unemployment in Ireland was 30.5% in the fourth quarter of

2011 compared to the Euro area average of 21.4%.

Lorraine Mulligan told *Liberty*: "The effect of emigration almost certainly conceals the full extent of the problem. The picture across Europe is also worrying, particularly in Spain and Greece, with youth unemployment rates of almost 50%.

"Action is urgently required to provide vulnerable young people with opportunities to enhance their prospects for work and progression." **See page 22.**

Tadhg Barry Documentary Premier

Saturday 4th May
2.00 p.m. in the Triskel
Arts Centre, Cork City

Free to all Trade Union members and those with an interest in the early days of our struggle and the struggle for Irish Independence.



■ By Scott Millar

FEW TDs have had as an eventful two years as Clare Daly. The north Dublin TD has won admirers, her firebrand style of campaigning politics bringing her to the fore in debates concerning reproductive rights, austerity and allegations of Garda corruption.

However, she has also fallen out with former comrades along the way, most notably with her resignation from the Socialist Party last August.

"I'm still a socialist TD" she tells *Liberty*, "as far as I'm concerned my politics have not changed but I don't believe the Socialist Party will be a vehicle of major change.

"You have to build a bridge to people, that doesn't mean you have to dilute your programme but I don't believe that the Socialist Party explains it well enough."

This is Daly's take on the break she believes was brewing long before her election to the Dáil.

The resignation ended a stage of Daly's life as a political activist that had brought her from stu-

"You have to build a bridge to people, that doesn't mean you have to dilute your programme but I don't believe that the Socialist Party explains it well enough."

dent politics in NIHE, now Dublin City University, through involvement in the Labour Party and the anti-water and bin charges campaigns of the 1990s to the Dáil.

It is her second break with a political party. Daly was among the 12 persons expelled from the Labour Party in 1989 for alleged association with the Trotskyite Militant Tendency, a move that mirrored similar action against Militant activists in the British Labour Party.

Her view is that the current junior partner in a "vicious austerity government" and the organisation she was a member of all



those years ago, are poles apart.

"In the 1980s the Labour Party was something different. There was a very strong left in the party that favoured the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, that fully supported state industry, that fully sup-

ported free education, free healthcare, a decent society for all, was absolute in its defence of the welfare state and implacable in its opposition to the market system."

"I always viewed the council as I view the Dáil – as a platform to organise from. It gives you a bit of scope to articulate issues, and the media ignores you less."

ported free education, free healthcare, a decent society for all, was absolute in its defence of the welfare state and implacable in its opposition to the market system."

The political culture in Leinster House is one factor she believes

is crucial in what she believes is the dimming of the political idealism of her former colleagues.

"I think many TDs spend such a long time seeking to get elected that for many of them that becomes the goal. Any idealism and the policies they had to change

things are side-lined; it's just plough the line of least resistance and do not offend.

"Probably many of them start off well but that's where they end up being enclosed in here [Dáil Eireann]."

Escaping what she believes is a

corrosive culture, Daly is pleased that her Dáil office, along with most independent TDs and Sinn Féin deputies, is not in Leinster House but the adjacent Department of Agriculture complex.

"I'm very happy to be away from it. It means we have a bit of

a longer run if a vote is called but I think we are much better off, because we're not caught up in the whole pomp and ceremony of Leinster House, I think that is a good thing."

Finance is another factor, according to Daly, in the divergence

between TDs and working people.

"I'm on the same income as I was when I was in Aer Lingus, roughly around the average industrial wage, because if you start living an inflated lifestyle or you're earning more than you were, you lose track of the people who put you in here.

"It's not a pie in the sky thing, it is an actual necessity to keep people grounded."

The money saved by Daly from her TD's wage is used to hire an extra assistant.

Daly, who still officially maintains her position as a SIPTU shop steward with Aer Lingus, also has strong views on the direction of the trade union movement.

A SIPTU activist since

The money saved by Daly from her TD's wage is used to hire an extra assistant.

starting work in Aer Lingus catering in the 1990s, she is outspoken in her criticism of social partnership.

"I think a huge amount of the problems that exist, then and particularly now, is a legacy of partnership because it completely demobilised an activist layer. It led to an utter lack of participation in the union, a lack of a democratic check over the officials."

She adds: "Everything was sort of set at national level and that meant union officials began to see themselves as referees, fighting the worst excesses of a management proposal rather than actually engaging in combat on behalf of members in terms of taking their conditions forward proactively."

"It became very much defensive. I think what happened was partnership led the trade unions into buying into the idea of accepting the market system and accepting that you can only go so far. That thinking just put a lid on what was possible to achieve at the time."

A belief in the need for a confrontational approach towards the

WUAG, Daly admits the grouping has been a "disappointment."

"There was little coming together and the component groups largely used the ULA as a recruiting

Democracy Ireland's Ben Gilroy.

"It is about basic democratic demands, because people know there is no such thing as democracy in Ireland, the right to recall

cleared.

"I'm not going to be intimidated by such tactics. Since we highlighted the issue of Garda malpractice, I have been absolutely

inundated with messages from guards, retired guards and members of the public who have fallen foul of the gardaí and have had their lives ruined.

"The issue is lack of accountability, particularly of the higher ranks.

"The gardaí investigating themselves is completely inadequate. It's like Bertie Ahern climbing up every tree in north Dublin looking for evidence of corruption in the political process. He didn't find any."

"It's like when the HSE investigated Dr Neary's activities in Drogheda, the first report found that women should have been happy they had such a great doctor."

It's clear from Daly's passion for the issue that she intends to breach what the Morris Tribunal into Garda corruption described as "a blue wall of silence".

'It's about democratic demands... the Left must be open to new and novel approaches which can deliver the agenda we have been fighting on all the time'



Clare Daly Photo: Photocall Ireland

Irish establishment is evident throughout Clare's political career.

Elected to Fingal County Council in 1999, she spent much energy confronting "politically connected property developers in north Dublin, "in" a struggle she ruefully accepts was lost. "I always viewed the council as I view the Dáil – as a platform to organise from. It gives you a bit of scope to articulate issues, and the media ignores you less."

"It was never a case of vote for me and I will sort it out, it is about empowering people to fight for themselves and if people are willing to do that I will give the people's struggle a voice"

Daly was elected to the Dáil under the banner of the United Left Alliance, a loose electoral alliance bringing together the Socialist Party, People Before Profit Alliance and the Workers and Unemployed Action Group (WUAG) of Tipperary TD Seamus Healy.

With the departure in recent months of the Socialist Party and

ground."

But Daly believes some new formation on the Left is a necessity.

"You have to look at the opinion polls which are continually putting independents very high. Look at the Meath East by-election. While Sinn Féin will get votes, it is questionable how far it will go

because some people will not vote Sinn Féin. There is clearly a space on the left for a real left alternative."

"Critically, it will come from people who are not currently politically organised, those fighting against cuts to home helps, the property tax, all the people that the economic crisis has forced into political activity, they need to find a new way of organising and a new voice."

One component in this new grouping may be the United Left, a name which Daly and fellow ULA TD Joan Collins is seeking to register as a political party to use in coming elections.

The search for broad political alliances have also brought controversy for Daly, most notably in her political alliances on issues such as reproductive rights and Garda corruption with Independent TDs Mick Wallace and Ming Flanagan.

She also makes no apologies for sharing platforms with others beyond the Left, including Direct

and people's referenda are important issues.

"The Left must be open to new

One component in this new grouping may be the United Left, a name which Daly and fellow ULA TD Joan Collins is seeking to register as a political party to use in coming elections.

and novel approaches which can deliver the agenda we have been fighting on all the time."

Another key democratic deficit for Daly is the Irish media, which she describes as "monolithic, tied to the establishment".

However, it is on the issue of Garda accountability that Daly is currently concentrating her campaign for democratic rights.

Earlier this year, Daly along with Wallace, Flanagan and Collins used the Dáil to highlight the removal of traffic penalty points by gardaí from thousands of motorists, including judges and politicians.

Daly believes that her outspoken criticism of this practice led directly to her arrest by the Garda on suspicion of drink driving in January, a charge of which she was



Clare Daly Photo: Photocall Ireland

Could austerity be over by October?



By
Vic Duggan

FIVE years of perma-crisis have sapped the optimism of many an economist, in Ireland and beyond. Some of these dismal scientists have prospered in one sense, however, by making a cottage industry out of doom and gloom.

Some of the more thoughtful have offered some humility, realising that the pre-crisis conventional wisdom was, at best, incomplete and, at worst, false.

For normal people, the age of austerity feels like it's lasting an eternity. With unemployment still high and incomes stagnant, making ends meet is a constant struggle.

Emigration is the path of choice for too many of our young people: enough people to fill Croke Park are leaving every year.

The huge household and private sector debt burden means a large cohort of people can't participate fully in our economy and in society.

Unfortunately, none of this is going to change dramatically in the near term.

There is light at the end of the tunnel – and there is reason to believe that it isn't the headlamp of an oncoming train.

The recession is over. The economy is growing, however slowly. Employment is rising, however gradually. Ireland is back in the bond market, however tentatively.

It is now almost within the grasp of government to make austerity history.

After seven straight hairshirt budgets since 2008, many have come



Enough people to fill Croke Park are leaving every year Photo courtesy MSA

to dread that day in December when the Minister for Finance piles on the pain.

Emigration is the path of choice for too many of our young people: enough people to fill Croke Park are leaving every year.

Everyone has taken a hit. Tax hikes and spending cuts have taken their toll. Austerity fatigue is pervasive.

The debate on how quickly the deficit should be reduced and how the burden is shared is important,

but is becoming increasingly academic... now that we are where we are.

One may not agree with the premise of austerity, but it is an unfortunate fact of life given Ireland's dependence on the 'kindness of strangers'.

Doomsday is being brought forward to October this year. We can expect more of the same: public government wrangling and a grubby compromise that leaves nobody satisfied.

The government has given commitments to the Troika – who are paying many of our bills at the moment – to reduce the deficit by a further €3.1bn in 2014 and €2bn in 2015, or €5.1bn in total.

Two developments in early 2013 may have changed the arithmetic for the better, however.

The Fiscal Advisory Council (FAC) has estimated that the combination of the promissory notes deal and the upwards revision in 2012 GDP has

lessened the eventual austerity burden by €1.6bn, reducing the total required to get our deficit below 3% of GDP by 2015 from €5.1bn to €3.5bn.

The full benefit of this €1.6bn relief should be passed on to citizens to bring a quicker end to austerity.

There may now be an argument for pulling the plaster off quickly: if the government increased deficit reduction measures marginally in October's budget from what is already planned, by €400m from €3.1bn to €3.5bn, Ireland would have met its budget target a year ahead of schedule. Austerity would be over.

Of course, some of the measures would not kick in fully until 2015 – e.g. some tax changes and other pre-announced measures – but all the key decisions would have been taken.

In theory, economic growth could do the rest of the heavy lifting to bring the deficit below 3% of GDP by end-2015. If growth falls short, fur-

ther austerity should be avoided, in line with the IMF's own thinking on the matter. The economy should then be allowed the time it needs to heal.

For the price of marginally more austerity in 2014, we would see much stronger growth in 2015 with austerity then off the table.

This isn't an argument for more austerity, but for less and for getting it over with as quickly as possible.

Most importantly, Irish firms and families would have a degree of certainty and could start to make plans for the future. Finally, we could change the record, having endured austerity on constant loop for seven years.

Provided the economy grows as predicted – and this is a very big if – we could look forward to not having

The full benefit of this €1.6bn relief should be passed on to citizens to bring a quicker end to austerity.

to take out the calculator on budget day.

We could concentrate on everything else in our economy and society that needs fixing. We could begin working towards the longer-term aims of free GP care for all and universal childcare.

Technically, the recession may be over... but it won't feel like it's over until the age of austerity is at an end, hastening the return of strong job growth and rising living standards. The sooner the better!



**EXHIBITION
26TH APRIL - 8TH MAY 2013**

**GLASNEVIN MUSEUM,
GLASNEVIN CEMETERY,
N FINGLAS ROAD, DUBLIN 11**

Glasnevin Museum is honoured to host this exhibition of works by the renowned artist Robert Ballagh. The collection is made up of prints and posters, which will be available to purchase. Ballagh has donated this substantial collection of his work, and all monies raised from it, to the Pat Finucane Centre.

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Getting out of the bailout is one thing, staying out is another..



By
Marie Sherlock

"Austerity is counter-productive"

WITH experience over four decades of bailing out advanced and developing countries, the IMF has acquired a very controversial reputation and has been rightly demonised for pursuing appalling economic experiments on the citizens of South East Asia and Latin America.

But in recent years, official thinking has evolved somewhat and so it came as no huge surprise that, in recent weeks, former IMF mission chief Ashoka Mody admitted that the Troika had got it wrong in terms of the bailout deal for Ireland. "Clearly the experience, if experience was needed, has demonstrated that reliance on austerity is counter-productive", he said, adding that the failure to undertake a managed default of bank related sovereign debt was a mistake.

Of course, the official IMF review of Ireland published at the start of April of course was not as blunt. Crafted as a wake up call to its EU and ECB partners in the troika of lenders to Ireland, it was written with the intention of jolting EU leaders into action. The report was a stark reminder of just how fragile the Irish economy remains, that recent signs of stabilisation are no guarantee of growth and that unless the triple challenges of banking debt, private debt and unemployment are confronted the country is effectively facing into a lost decade. It goes on to call on Government to review its budgetary strategy for 2014 and 2015 to ensure targets are achieved in a "growth friendly" manner.

Yet in that same report, it stops short of attributing any blame for weak economic recovery to the deflationary policies that it is forcing the Government to push through. In effect, the report was a tight balancing act in openly challenging the policies that the ECB and EU Commission appear hell bent on imposing, while at the same time also sending a shot across their bows.

Cyprus: the game changer

Last June, the commitment by EU leaders to consider a retrospective bank deal for Ireland and to bring about deeper banking union

was hailed as a turning point in tackling the eurozone crisis. Ten months on, Cyprus has become the new economic experiment and through shameful mishandling, EU leaders has now significantly raised the probability of a eurozone breakup.

Due to the capital controls now



in place, Cyprus is now out of the common currency area in all but name. Lifting these controls in an economy with a broken banking system will be near impossible in the near future as to do so in the absence of major reassurances from the ECB would almost certainly cause a bank run.

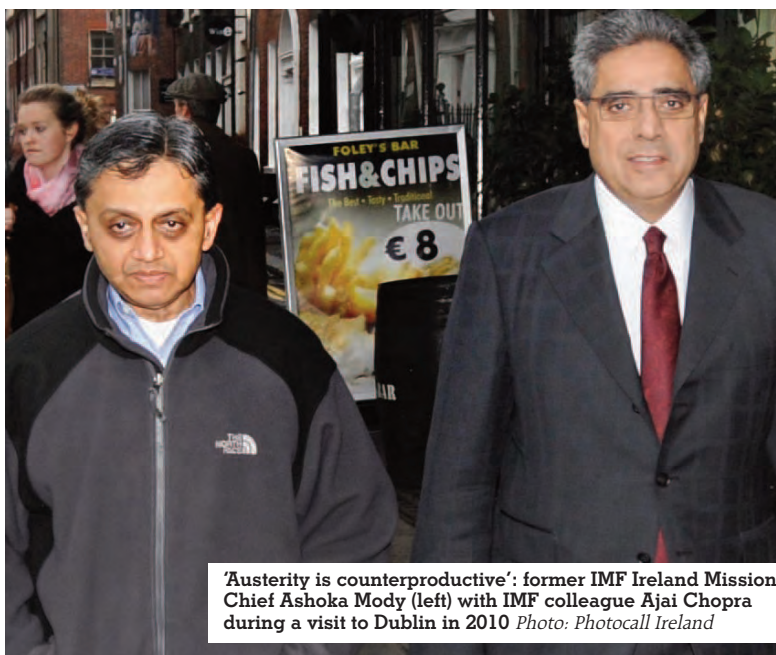
Some may have breathed a sigh of relief in Ireland that we had a lucky escape and managed to avert a full scale panic among depositors and avoid grounding the country to a halt. But lest anyone forget, the Irish Government had the National Pension Reserve Fund (NPRF) to fall back on to fund a

Cyprus has become the new economic experiment and through shameful mishandling, EU leaders have now significantly raised the probability of a eurozone breakup.

major portion of the bailout of Irish banks. It doesn't appear that any such sovereign wealth fund was at the disposal of the Cypriots or the Greeks and the key point here is that while Irish depositors were protected over the short term, over the longer term it is the Irish citizens that have footed the bill, as we are all only too aware.

NTMA figures

According to the most recent Na-



'Austerity is counterproductive': former IMF Ireland Mission Chief Ashoka Mody (left) with IMF colleague Ajai Chopra during a visit to Dublin in 2010 Photo: Photocall Ireland

tional Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) figures for end March 2013, the Irish State has in excess of €33bn in cash reserves in place to meet funding needs for end 2013 and 2014 and it has become increasingly certain that the Irish State will exit the bail out at the end of this year. However the more important question is whether we will be able to stay out.

Some relief on EU loans, but only a small part of the debt servicing story

The extension in mid April, of the loan maturities due to the EU's bailout funds, the EFSF and EFSM, provides some welcome relief over the medium term. The precise details have yet to emerge but it would appear that the €33.5bn due in repayments by Ireland to the two EU bailout funds between 2015 and 2020 will now be reduced by as much as a third over this period. However, this accounts for only a small share of the total refinancing requirement the State faces over the second half of this decade.

During that period, the State has to roll over in excess of 56% of its total national debt, some €99.6bn. In the context of anaemic growth prospects of less than 2% per year, unemployment levels at or above 10% and numerous households weighed down by heavy debt burdens, meeting this refinancing schedule is a major challenge in itself.

Add in the ever increasing

prospect that the Irish banks will require fresh injections of capital from the State when it "crystallises" or writes down the massive loan losses sitting on its books and it is clear why the IMF says that EU leaders must stand by their June 2012 commitments. It argues that retrospective recapitalisation of the Irish banks is "a critical component of a comprehensive strategy for Ireland's durable exit." Some 24% of all loans in Irish banks are currently "non performing" and within that, 143,851 mortgages were in some form of arrears of 30 days or more or have had the mortgage restructured by the end of December 2012.

Banking deal less likely

Just as we said that the promissory note deal, while welcome, only accounted for a quarter of the State's bank bailout burden, similarly any progress in getting the EU to recapitalise the Irish banks

Some 24% of all loans in Irish banks are currently "non performing" and within that, 143,851 mortgages were in some form of arrears of 30 days

would not in itself fully sever the bank-sovereign link. At best, it would only recover a small fraction of the original €20.7bn injection of equity from the NPRF and it wouldn't even touch the contingent liabilities of the State arising from NAMA and the eligible liabilities guarantee scheme, currently worth some €45bn.

Events in Cyprus most likely rule out any prospect of a banking deal for Ireland and the lesson from that debacle is best summed up by Nobel Prize winner and Cypriot economist, Christopher Pissarides writing in the Financial Times on March 27th when he commented that "far from the currency bloc acting as a partnership of equals, it is a disjointed group of countries where the national interests of the big nations stand higher than the interests of the whole". At the meeting of EU finance ministers in Dublin in mid April, there were some guarded but positive reassurances that the legacy bank debt issue was not yet off the table. Whether this message was intended to soothe the Irish hosts or was a statement of real intent remains to be seen. Before that can be even properly considered, achievement of an agreement on the single banking supervisory mechanism (SSM) for the EU 27 re-

Events in Cyprus most likely rule out any prospect of a banking deal for Ireland

mains a formidable hurdle.

For Ireland, the lesson must be this; our economic prospects are indelibly linked to the fortunes of the euro and in the absence of any real power within the EU, we need to seriously step up our efforts to ensure we can grow out of this banking and fiscal mess. The alternative of a long term trend of low anaemic growth is too depressing to contemplate.

We need to avoid low growth

By
Dr Micheál Collins

IN ITS latest commentary on the Irish economy, the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) has pointed towards a period of continued stagnation with sluggish growth and on-going high levels of unemployment over the next three years.

Given current policies, the trade union supported think-tank's spring 2013 *Quarterly Economic Observer* reported that economic growth is likely to be low this year, at around 1% of GDP, and increase marginally to 1.2% in 2014 and 2% in 2015.

Such sluggish growth is likely to carry significant implications for the labour market and government finances.

On employment, the NERI projects a further shrinking of the numbers employed in 2013, by 0.6%, with employment levels remaining static in 2014 and 2015.

Meanwhile, the growing labour force will mean unemployment will move towards 15% of the workforce in 2014 with reductions being principally driven by outward migration among young people.

Lower growth, static employment and an on-going unemployment crisis carries sizeable implications for the public finances. Without growth, Government's borrowing targets look ambitious and this calls into question the feasibility of the adjustment path currently being pursued.

While there are signs of some stabilisation in domestic demand, the amount being spent by households, companies and the Government within the Irish economy remains depressed.

The lack of any 'pick-up' in domestic activities remains one of two key problems for the Irish economy. As this is the job-intensive sector of the economy, recovery is dependent on things getting moving on the ground around the country.

Yet, this contrasts with the Government's current approach which has been to cut public expenditure and increase taxes and simultaneously hope that people will spend more and do more.

Of course, they have not – a point highlighted in the NERI report and also by recent comments from the IMF economist Ashoda Mody, one of the architects of the Irish bailout programme.

Looking at the performance of the Troika programme for Ireland, Mody noted that expectations for economic growth continued to be re-



'The lack of any 'pick-up' in domestic activities remains one of the two key problems for the Irish economy'

vised downwards driven by the scale of the domestic-focused austerity measures prescribed and adopted.

His thesis is simple – if you 'adjust' too much, you cut off the chances of any domestic recovery and you prolong, if not increase, the economic challenges the country faces.

A familiar sentiment to those of us making this point over and over again in recent years.

The other key problem for the Irish economy is the lack of eco-

nomical stability and growth among our key trading partners. Late 2012 saw both the German and UK economies shrink, with discussion in the latter now turning from the fear of a 'double-dip' recession to the prospect of a 'triple dip'.

While this is completely outside the scope of the Irish Government, the reality remains that the lack of any benefit from external growth makes the challenges facing the Irish economy harder and has caused the Troika and Government to prescribe

more and more domestic adjustments.

This, of course, further depresses the domestic economy.

The NERI report highlighted a need for Government to adopt a series of alternative policies which would assist in avoiding the low growth, high unemployment path-

way.

Following the deal on the Anglo Irish promissory notes, the Government has saved approximately €1 billion this year and this saving will be added to, given the recent deal to restructure the payment periods for Irish debt.

The report recommended using these funds and other resources to fund a domestic stimulus programme which would be focused on areas such as broadband, water infrastructure, early childhood education, retrofitting and green energy.

Such a programme would lift domestic activity, employment and tax revenues while providing long-term beneficial assets to the economy. It would also give the economy breathing space to recover as we await a wider international economic recovery.

Dr Micheál Collins is Senior Research Officer at the NERI. The latest report is available at www.NERIInstitute.net

Fiscal Advisory Council has a rethink

ANOTHER recent report on the Irish economy came from the Fiscal Advisory Council and it is of note that the Council's recommendations for the economy have changed.

Last year, they argued for faster and deeper adjustments concluding that these would be in the best interest of the economy. Fortunately, their advice for an extra €2 billion of adjustments was noted, but not implemented, by the Government in Budget 2013.

This year they have recommended that the Government stick to its current adjustment

'While the Council offers no explanation for the contrasts in its economic policy prescriptions, it has highlighted the precarious nature of the Irish economy'

plans; abandoning the do-more-faster message.

While the Council offers no explanation for the contrasts in its economic policy prescriptions, it has highlighted the precarious nature of the Irish economy.

In their view, there remains a one-in-three chance that low

growth will impede the economy from achieving the Troika borrowing targets by 2015. That message is similar to the concerns expressed by the IMF in its recent commentary on the Irish economy.

The IMF and Fiscal Council differ from the NERI, as the latter's

modelling of the economy suggests lower growth and likely difficulties for the Government meeting these targets.

The IMF and others remain more optimistic of domestic and international recovery next year.

The Council's latest report also notes the big impact on the domestic economy of reductions in capital investment. Cutting capital investment has been a major focus of the public expenditure cuts over recent years.

Of course, given this finding, the reverse also holds – with increases in capital investment offering the potential for a sizeable domestic focused stimulus.



By **JACK O'CONNOR**
SIPTU General President

Liberty View

Equality needed in adjustment programme

SIPTU members, together with their fellow trade unionists across the public service, have decisively rejected the proposals for a revised Croke Park Agreement. The result reflected a deeper resentment among workers generally and public servants, in particular, towards the way in which they have been forced to carry the lion's share of the burden of adjustment while the wealthy have contributed very little. It also reflected fatigue with the troika imposed one sided austerity strategy of the last five years, which transparently doesn't work. (Even Professor Ashoka Mody, the former IMF mission chief who was prominently involved in imposing it in the first place, recently described it as a mistake).

The proposal is now comprehensively defeated. Unfortunately, the problem hasn't gone away. The troika agreement requires us to reduce the gap between tax revenue and spending, (which was the highest in the Eurozone until this year), to 3% of GDP by the end of 2015. This entails further savings amounting to €5.1bn (if growth holds up). In accordance with the principles of the Programme for Government between Fine Gael and Labour the distribution is about 40% tax and 60% cuts. This means that about €3bn is to be achieved through cuts. Public service pay and pensions amount to 35% of spending – hence the proposal to cut them by €1bn.

Apart from the troika programme, getting to the 3% deficit is also key to exiting the so called "bailout" and remaining free of its strictures. Some say this is all irrelevant to the lives of working people and their families. Nothing could be further from the truth. Unless we can get back to borrowing for ourselves the architects of the next bailout, (if we get one), will decide how fast we reduce our 122% Debt/GDP ratio. They will dictate how we dismantle what remains of our public services and

how we increase taxation to do it. The first casualties would be working people and public service workers, in particular, as well as those who depend most on the services they provide.

The next move is up to the Government. If it chooses to legislate for pay cuts it will be faced with a co-ordinated industrial response across the entire trade union movement in the public service on a scale which has not been seen since 1913. No-one can be certain of the outcome but it would be enormously destructive on all sides.

There is some room for manoeuvre as a result

The next move is up to the Government. If it chooses to legislate for pay cuts it will be faced with a co-ordinated industrial response across the entire trade union movement in the public service on a scale which has not been seen since 1913.

of the promissory note deal which will afford breathing space of €1bn in 2014 and €1.025bn in 2015. Proper use of this accompanied by the launch of a significant off balance sheet stimulus programme as well as a belated tax contribution from the rich would lessen the requirement for a €1bn cut in public service pay and pensions.

The Government has more flexibility to concede ground in respect of the cuts projected for 2014 and 2015. The €300m from this year is more difficult because it is already in Budget 2013.

It still has the capacity to retrieve the situation in respect of 2014 and 2015. It should take steps to redress the inequity in the adjustment process to date. A good start could be made by declaring its intention to cap publicly funded

pensions at a maximum of €100,000 per annum, even to the extent of promoting a constitutional referendum to do it, if necessary. (A number of referenda are already scheduled for the autumn on other matters).

In parallel with this, the Fine Gael party should give some ground on the taxation of wealth and of those on high incomes. Their insistence on protecting this tiny minority at the top is detrimental to maintaining the social cohesion that is necessary for economic recovery.

Their insistence on protecting this tiny minority at the top is detrimental to maintaining the social cohesion that is necessary for economic recovery.

Simultaneously, the Government should signal its intention to use the space afforded by the promissory note deal, along with a major off balance sheet stimulus to:

- **Fund Job Creation**
- **Alleviate hardship for working families and**
- **Protect public services**

Such an approach would create the context for negotiation of a settlement in two phases entailing:

- **Interim terms to apply to the end of this year**
- **Better terms for 2014 and 2015**

An unnecessary and mutually destructive confrontation would be avoided. A degree of equality would be introduced into the adjustment process and public service workers would retain the protections of the Croke Park Agreement against compulsory redundancy, indiscriminate redeployment and outsourcing of their work.

Putting development at the service of universal rights...



By
Niall Crowley

DECENT work, participative democracy, and sustainable development could usefully be established as some of the universal goals to drive global development.

These were among the issues debated at the Claiming Our Future event on *Setting Goals for a Better Ireland in a Just World* on Saturday (20th April). The event was organised jointly with Dochas and the Wheel.

It is a strange time to be talking about ambitious universal development goals in the middle of an economic crisis that drives us towards greater inequality and poverty.

However, it is timely, as the UN, the EU and the Irish Presidency of the EU are deciding, debating and consulting on what happens after the expiry of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

The Millennium Development Goals are credited with reductions in extreme poverty and child mortality, increased access to safe drinking water and primary school enrolment, improved gender equality and greater levels of overseas development aid.

However, they were never seen as

relevant to the Irish context. While they enabled progress, they also co-existed too comfortably with growing inequality within poor countries and between poor countries and wealthier countries.

They failed to address the economic dimension to development and the transformations needed for development with social justice.

The current thinking in official circles is that whatever comes next should be relevant to all countries – rich and poor. The idea of 'universal goals' holds potential for, and relevance to, Ireland.

However, civil society will need to have some real influence on the debate if such universal goals are to stimulate and support a break with



our current model of development.

New goals must have an economic focus. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has usefully developed a 'decent work' agenda.

Decent work is defined as involving opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

The ILO agenda has been developed around four objectives of creating jobs, guaranteeing employment rights, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue. Decent work should be established as one universal goal.

New goals must give people a say in how their society and community develops.

The limits of a democracy that relies solely on representation have been exposed. An exclusive political elite emerges. Accountability is compromised, as it is limited to five yearly ballots. Corruption becomes a reality. A political unresponsiveness to popular demands grows in times of crisis.

Universal goals should support the growth and development of an active and challenging civil society.

They should ensure the establishment of deliberative opportunities where citizens can have a say about issues and decisions that impact on them.

New goals must ensure that development happens within the limits of the planet's capacity. This is an issue that has eluded agreement within the international community.

A good starting point would be a universal goal to reduce consumption of goods by those who are wealthy.

It is astonishing that the richest 20th percentile consumes 80% of global output and that they consume 60 times more than the poorest 20th percentile. The Universal Declaration of Rights should be the starting point for this debate. Everyone agrees with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so why not implement it?

It includes important rights for the protection of various freedoms. Most importantly for this debate, it includes rights to work, education, and an adequate standard of living for health and well-being.

A commitment to a universal goal of rights-based development, founded on fulfilling the rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should now be our shared minimum standard.


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Gilroy - the Irish Grillo?

■ By Frank Connolly

Be careful what you wish for. The voters of Meath East rewarded Direct Democracy Ireland (DDI) candidate, Ben Gilroy, with a surprising 6.5% of the vote pushing Labour into fourth place and upsetting Sinn Fein's plans for a bigger slice of the cake. But did they know for whom they were voting when they opted for the former electrical contractor? Many voters in Italy, particularly those on the Left, are only now discovering that the 5StarMovement (5SM) led by multi-millionaires Beppe Grillo and Gianroberto Casaleggio contains a significant number of fascist sympathisers.

Back at home, the people around Gilroy and DDI founders, Raymond Whitehead and Clare Leonard, have discovered that their populist views include an empathy with UKIP leader Nick Farage, the anti-abortion Christian

Solidarity Movement and the extreme right wing Freeman movement. Earlier this year, members of the latter group invaded the front of the anti-austerity demonstration organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in Dublin insisting that the organisers turn it into a rally against the proposed property tax. The Freeman of the

Thus Gilroy is 'Ben of the ancient clan Giolla Rua'

Land movement has its origins in an obscure conspiracy theory which propounds that a birth certificate creates a legal entity which is separate from a person's body. Thus Gilroy is "Ben of the ancient clan Giolla Rua (Sovereign)" instead of just plain old Ben Gilroy...

for constitutional purposes.

Gilroy was present when a group promoting the Freeman view of the world delayed the eviction of a man from his home near Mountrath, county Laois in early 2012. According to one witness, Gilroy subjected the deputy sheriff to "a lecture in law which would sound suspect to the ears of any first year law student, let alone a practicing lawyer." Gilroy's argument appears to be based on the view that all state law is invalid and so does not deserve respect.

The campaigner has also been prominent in demonstrations in Cavan supporting billionaire businessman Sean Quinn.

His well-funded by-election campaign saw hundreds of Gilroy "Returning Power to You" posters around east Meath although there was little mention in his public utterances of his admiration of Farage (who is also president of the far-right Europe of Freedom and Democracy group), or his appearances with the Quinn family or the Freeman movement.

During the 2011 general election Whitehead, a former antique dealer, night club and restaurant owner took 120 votes in Dublin South for DDI while the literature of another candidate in the constituency, Jane Murphy of the Christian Solidary Party, detailed links to DDI.

The message of the DDI is that Irish democracy would be better served with Swiss type recall referenda which, it argues, would make the political system more accountable. It will be interesting to note what the good folk of Meath East, and other places where DDI hopes to stand, make of this heady mix of consti-



Direct Democracy Ireland (DDI) candidate Ben Gilroy. Picture: Photocall

tutional confusion, economic orthodoxy and flirtation with the extreme right in Europe when they come to marking their ballot papers next time around.

Italy's populist maverick in threat to export 'revolution'

■ By Frank Connolly

THE leader of the M5M in Italy, Beppe Grillo, is the latest politician to announce that his plans to export his revolution across Europe and the world.

From Greece, the neo-fascist Golden Dawn party has already set its sights on the huge Greek diaspora stretching from the US to Australia (see page 17).

Now Grillo, whose populist policies helped garner 25% of the vote in the Italian elections earlier this year, has promised to promote his brand of anti-establishment politics across Europe in what he has described as a "revolution without the guillotine - for now".

"This is the greatest revolution in history. This is a revolution without the guillotine - for now," he said while campaigning in local elections on 18th April in northeast Italy.

"In Europe, we are getting organised. They are getting organised. There are movements in

Spain that are taking inspiration from us," said the 64-year-old former comedian, whose movement now has 163 deputies and senators in parliament.

"This has gone beyond the Indignados and Occupy Wall Street," he said.

Despite his apparent endorsement of the Spanish and US progressive movements, his supporters include many with more orthodox, even right-wing and fascist tendencies. Grillo has called for the elimination of trade unions and has demanded that one solution to the current economic crisis is to lay off tens of thousands of public employees. Casaleggio, a former financial backer of the far-right Northern League, has used his web-marketing skills to attract support from Italian neo-fascist groups such as Casa Pound and Forza Nuova.

Grillo has also been forced to defend himself against accusations by Italian news weekly *L'Espresso* that he had offshore

investments in Costa Rica, saying the article was "revenge" for his proposal to cut subsidies for newspaper publishers.

Grillo, who is a millionaire,

'This is a revolution without the guillotine - for now'

said the money belonged to his wife and his brother-in-law, adding: "In any case, I can have all the companies in the world. It's not public money. I earned it."

Asked about his plans to hold a referendum on euro membership, Grillo said he was personally undecided whether to keep the currency or not.

"The euro is not Europe. Now it's all based on financial speculation, on banks, on bond spreads. We want a Plan B for survival," he said.

Grillo has also rejected criticism of his stance against supporting the main centre-left coalition which narrowly won elections, saying: "They just wanted our votes. They didn't talk about collaboration."

"There are these dinosaurs who have been here for 30 years. The country is in ruins. They are the ones who ruined it. They were inside the system. They destroyed this great country and now they tell us to save it," he added.

Grillo has been resisting calls from within his own ranks and across the Italian left to form a government with the centre-left Democratic Party, which took 29% of the vote and prevent a return to power by former prime minister, the right-wing and scandal-ridden Silvio Berlusconi.



Former comic Beppe Grillo scooped a quarter of the vote in Italy's last election



Golden Dawn MP Ilias Kasidiaris, centre, has said the party will spread 'wherever there are Greeks' Picture: Thanassis Stavrakis/AP



Anti-racist activists stage anti-Golden Dawn protest Picture: Louisa Gouliamaki/AFP/Getty

Weimar in the 1920s, Athens in the 2010s... horrifying rise of Golden Dawn

EMBOLDENED by its meteoric rise in Greece, the far-right Golden Dawn party is spreading its tentacles abroad, amid fears it is acting on its pledge to "create cells in every corner of the world".

The extremist group, which forged links with British neo-Nazis when it was founded in the 1980s, has begun opening offices in Germany, Australia, Canada and the US.

The international push follows successive polls that show Golden Dawn entrenching its position as Greece's third, and fastest growing, political force.

First catapulted into parliament with 18 MPs last year, the ultra-nationalists captured 11.5% support in a recent survey conducted by polling company Public Issue.

The group – whose logo resembles the swastika and whose members are prone to give Nazi salutes – has gone from strength to strength, promoting itself as the only force willing to take on the "rotten establishment".

Amid rumours of backing from wealthy shipowners, it has succeeded in opening party offices across Greece.

It is also concentrating on spreading internationally, with news last month that it had opened an office in Germany and planned to set up branches in Australia.

The party's spokesman, Ilias Kasidiaris, said it had decided to establish cells "wherever there are Greeks".

"People have understood that Chrysi Avgi [Golden Dawn] tells the truth," he told a Greek-language paper in Melbourne.

"In our immediate sights and aims is the creation of an office and local organisation in Melbourne. In fact, very soon a visit of MPs to Australia is planned."

But the campaign has met with

Spectre of Far Right haunts the cradle of European civilisation

disgust and derision by many prominent members of the Greek diaspora who represent communities in both the northern and southern hemispheres.

"We don't see any gold in Golden Dawn," said Father Alex Karloutsos, one of America's leading Greek community figures, in Southampton, New York. "Nationalism, fascism, xenophobia are not part of our spir-

the colonels who oversaw seven years of brutal anti-leftist dictatorship until the collapse of military rule in 1974.

"Like-minded groups in Europe and Russia have given the party ideological, and sometimes financial, support to print books and magazines. After years of importing nazism, it now wants to export nazism," added Psarras.

Golden Dawn promotes itself as the only force willing to take on 'rotten establishment'



itual or cultural heritage."

But Golden Dawn is hoping to tap into the deep well of disappointment and fury felt by Greeks living abroad, in the three years since the debt-stricken nation was plunged into crisis.

"Golden Dawn is not like other parties in Greece. From its beginnings, in the early 80s, it always had one eye abroad," said Dimitris Psarras, whose book, *Golden Dawn's Black Bible*, chronicles the organisation since its creation by Nikos Michaloliakos, an overt supporter of

By infiltrating communities abroad, the far-rightists were attempting not only to shore up their credibility but also to find extra funding and perhaps even potential votes if Greeks abroad ever won the right to cast ballots in elections.

"[Golden Dawn] not only wants to become the central pole of a pan-European alliance of neo-Nazis, even if in public it will hotly deny that," claimed Psarras, who said party members regularly meet with neo-Nazis from Germany, Italy and Romania. It wants to spread its

influence worldwide."

With its 300,000-strong community, Melbourne has pride of place in the constellation of Greek-populated metropolises that dot a diaspora officially estimated at around seven million.

As part of its international push, Golden Dawn has also focused on the US, a magnet for migrants for generations, and Canada, which at-

'Unfortunately the Greek state does not seem to realise the urgency of the situation'

tracted tens of thousands of Greeks after Greece's devastating 1946-49 civil war.

"It's a well-studied campaign," said Anastasios Tamis, Australia's pre-eminent ethnic Greek historian.

"There is a large stock of very conservative people here – former royalists, former loyalists to the junta, that sort of thing – who are very disappointed at what has been happening in Greece and are trying to find a means to express it.

"They are nationalists who feel betrayed by Greece over issues like

Macedonia, Cyprus and [the Greek minority] in Voreio Epirus [southern Albania], who cannot see the fascistic part of this party. Golden Dawn is trying to exploit them."

In Greece, where Golden Dawn has begun to recruit in schools, there are fears of complacency.

Drawing parallels with the 1930s Weimar period and the rise of Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' party, the historian Mark Mazower recently warned against underestimating the threat posed by a party whose use of violence was so disturbing.

"Unfortunately, the Greek state does not seem to realise the urgency of the situation," he told an audience in Athens.

After spending almost 30 years following Golden Dawn, Psarras agrees. Only weeks ago, he claimed, Michaloliakos held talks in the Greek parliament with two German neo-Nazis posing as journalists. Golden Dawn rejected the claim as "old mud".

"It is an extremely dangerous phenomenon and do I think it will get worse? Yes, I do," Psarras said, lamenting that, with living standards plummeting, the organisation was opening offices.

"Ten years ago, if you had said Golden Dawn would become the third biggest force in Greece, you'd be called crazy," said Psarras. "Now look where it is."

This report first appeared in *The Guardian newspaper*

Ireland linked to global web of tax avoidance

■ By Frank Connolly

Dozens of Irish addresses have been linked to accounts held in offshore secrecy jurisdictions, allowing their holders to avoid paying their fair share of tax.

The revelation that up to €25 trillion could be held in various offshore locations across the globe led to its discussion at the meeting of Ecofin (EU finance) ministers in Dublin in mid-April. It has also fed controversies in several EU and other countries including France where the budget minister, Jerome Cahuzac, was forced to resign after it emerged that he had hidden large sums in Switzerland and other offshore locations to avoid tax. A succession of Socialist Party ministers were then forced to reveal their assets as President Francois Hollande sought to defuse a

growing crisis over offshore tax havens.

The controversy was also raised by German chancellor, Angela Merkel with her British counterpart David Cameron after it emerged that the British Virgin Islands (BVI) was a key location for up to 100,000 secret offshore trusts.

A worldwide investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) released on Thursday (4th April) has found between 50 and 60 addresses in Ireland in documents which include the identities of thousands of wealthy account holders who hold their wealth in offshore tax havens. It is believed that more than 30,000 Irish firms have directors registered in offshore jurisdictions. None of the names linked

to Irish addresses have yet been released by the ICIJ or the Guardian and other media organisations which co-operated in the extensive search of offshore holdings.

It is estimated globally that wealthy individuals have €16 to €25 trillion hidden offshore.

SIPTU Economist, Marie Sherlock, said: "That such vast sums of money have been removed from the global tax net means funding is being withheld for services and investment aimed at ensuring a better standard of living for the majority of people."

All the Irish addresses may not be directly linked to individuals or businesses who own the secret funds and could be registered to financial intermediaries, including directors, shareholders, secretaries and nominees holding addresses

within the State.

Complex offshore structures have been used to own mansions, yachts and other assets while giving account holders the benefits of anonymity and tax advantages.

Sherlock added: "There is the concern that, in a time of recession, the wealthy may be slipping into the practices of the past."

"During the 1980s, vast amounts of private wealth was illegally held offshore by swathes of the Irish elite, a situation which deepened the impact of economic recession for the Irish people. These issues should be of concern to the Government and require a swift response."

An early release of some of the findings of the investigation by the Guardian last November traced British Virgin Island entities used

in Russia by bankrupt property developer, Sean Quinn.

The former billionaire was also linked to a number of properties in Russia and Ukraine. The now liquidated International Bank Resolution Corporation had sought to recover as much as \$500 million (€385) million in assets from Quinn's investments in both countries.

The documents analysed in the investigation were passed to ICIJ director, Gerard Ryle, on a hard drive containing more than 260 gigabytes of data with over two million emails.

The ICIJ along with dozens of journalists from a network of international media outlets, including the Guardian, BBC and the Washington Post, worked on analysing the files for 15 months.



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NEC PROFILE — Anton McCabe

A great honour to be elected to the NEC



SIPTU National Trustee
Anton McCabe

SIPTU National Trustee Anton McCabe has been a trade union activist ever since he started work in Navan Carpets in 1974. He then went on to work in Tara Mines where he continued his activity with the trade union movement.

A member of the Meath Branch of the ITGWU for years and then SIPTU, he held many positions in the branch including trustee, Vice President and eventually the position of President.

He also held a position on the Regional Executive Committee, where he gained a lot of experience and confidence from Jack O' Connor, Mike Jennings, and Christy Mc Quillan former regional secretaries.

He told Liberty that his involvement with the trade union movement allowed him to be a voice and advocate for the membership, and the community of his home town Navan and beyond.

Anton got involved in a number of community campaigns in his area such as Save Navan Hospital, was elected to Navan Town Council in 2009, and held the position of Mayor of Navan in 2011/2012.

Anton played a major role in highlighting the blatant exploitation of economic migrants who came to our country in the late 90s. He told Liberty that the abuse of these workers by indigenous employers has left a scar of shame on our country. Ireland is no longer an attractive destination for economic migrants because of this.

When asked about his elec-

tion as a National Trustee he commented that it is a great honour to be elected to the NEC, the highest office open to an activist within SIPTU. "I want to thank the Construction & Utilities Division for putting their trust in me", he said.

Anton added that the trade union movement over the years has met many challenges and overcame them, but is in a new place now. "The challenges facing our members and the threats to their livelihoods are deep and severe.

"We now have to take on the Troika as well as employers and government. SIPTU as an organisation has to continue to show strong, coherent, leadership, to protect the interests of our members," Anton said.

NEC Notes

Appointment of a Social Media Administrator

The General Secretary advised the NEC that there is a gap in our communications strategy that needs to be filled in order to improve the union's connection with a younger audience, in particular, through social media.

The NEC agreed unanimously to proceed to appoint a Social Media Administrator with a view to improving and developing this area of media communications.

Establishment of District Councils

The General President advised that the General Officers had discussions relating to the District Committee structure.

He advised that the Officers were proposing to promote a rule change to address the issue of the establishment of District Councils throughout the island of Ireland.

It would also be the intention that each District Council would be entitled to nominate two delegates to attend the Biennial Delegate Conference.

Following a discussion on the various locations for the District Councils, the proposition was agreed in principle.

NEC PROFILE — Tim Daly

A union activist for over 30 years



SIPTU National Trustee
Tim Daly

Tim Daly is a member of the NEC serving as one of the unions trustees and has worked in the Security industry for G4S (formally Securicor) as a Cash in Transit (CIT) employee for the last 37 years.

G4S is a multinational company which employs over 700,000 employees in over 115 countries around the world. The company and SIPTU have a long standing recognition and collective bargaining agreement. As a member of the then Securicor European Works Council for three years, Tim had the opportunity of meeting fellow workers and trade unionists from around the world.

Tim told Liberty, "It struck me very clearly early on that in the parts of Europe where the workforce was organised they had much better conditions of em-

ployment. The trade union dividend was very apparent to me. As shop steward for the Cork CIT branch and chairperson of the National Negotiating Committee, I take this responsibility very seriously and never lose touch with the reality of dealing with member's livelihoods especially in these precarious times. Workers' pay and conditions are constantly under threat by employers in order to stay within the competitiveness of the CIT market. In light of the current recession it is imperative that jobs are maintained. In my own company, workers have complied with many changes in their conditions and work practices down through the years and more recently have had to accept further changes in agreement with a Company Survival Deal."

A union activist for over 30 years, Tim has served as President of the Cork No. 5 branch with now retired official, John

Pearson, who still remains his adviser and good friend and also served as President on the South West Regional Executive Committee for five years.

In 2010, he was elected as trustee on the NEC and he is currently involved in the NEC restructuring committee.

"My role as a trustee on the NEC has given me an insight into the enormous task and responsibility of running an organisation such as SIPTU, of which I am very proud to be a member. My position on the NEC has facilitated me in being a representative voice on behalf of the security officers and contract cleaners in my sector. As a current member and past Chairman of the Contract Cleaning and Security Sector, I have played a role in calling for REAs across our sector and am very much aware of the need to have an REA in place particularly now for the CIT as this is a key mechanism to take

wages out of competition and to help further regulate the industry. My aim as a trade union activist is to make the CIT industry 100% unionised. I believe this is possible because it is a unique section of the security industry and pay and work conditions are better in unionised companies."

Tim also believes that the Private Security Authority (PSA) has an important role to play within the CIT industry. This year, in May, for the first time the CIT industry will be licensed. The role of the PSA will be enhanced and there is an expectation that policing and monitoring of the industry will level the playing pitch.

1913 Events Calendar

23rd April – 18th May

1913 commemoration events – for a much more extensive full listing of daily events visit www.1913committee.ie

TUESDAY, 23RD APRIL

Dramatic readings from Strumpet City

Fergus Cronin & historian Paul Rouse evoke the atmosphere of the time and provide historical context through reading, recorded music and imagery.

Drumcondra Library, Millmount Avenue, Drumcondra, at 6.30 p.m. Admission free. Booking essential. Email: drumcondralibrary@dublincity.ie Tel: 01 837 7206

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24TH

Strumpet City – the TV series Bryan Murray (Fitz), John Kelleher (executive producer) and Tony Barry (producer) tell the story of the making of the iconic TV series.

National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, at 6.30 p.m.

Tenement Tour

Tour of former tenement house No. 14 Henrietta Street.

Wednesday 24th from 12.30 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Booking essential. Email: heritage@dublincity.ie Tel: 01 222 3824

THURSDAY, APRIL 25TH:

An Evening with Rashers Tierney – readings and songs from James Plunkett's Strumpet City

The classic novel of Dublin city life in the early 1900's through the words of the irrepressible Rashers Tierney.

Waterways Ireland Visitors Centre, Grand Canal Quay, at 6.30 p.m. Booking advisable. Email: visitor-centre@waterwaysireland.org Tel: 01 677 7510

FRIDAY, 26TH APRIL

Dublin City Bike Tours: Explore James Plunkett's Strumpet City

Meet outside Isaac's Hostel, Frenchman's Lane, off Lower Gardiner Street.

Each Friday in April at 10.00 a.m., duration 2.5 hours. Fee €24. Booking www.dublincity-biketours.com Tel: 087 134 1866

SATURDAY, APRIL 27TH

Strumpet City: A People's History of the 1913 Lockout Screening of the documentary James Plunkett Conscience of a City; talks on Strumpet City. History Ireland Hedge School Debate: 'Strumpet City: Was it Really Like that?'

Dublin City Library & Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, at 11.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Admission free. Booking essential. Email: cityofliterature@dublincity.ie Tel: 01 674 4862

SUNDAY, 28TH APRIL 28TH

Glasnevin Cemetery tour of workers' leaders graves

Among the graves visited are those of Countess Markievicz, Helena Maloney, founding member of the Irish Women Workers Union, Sean Connolly, the first casualty of the Easter Rising, and Charlotte Despard, sister of Lord French, and revolutionary socialist agitator. The tour culminates at the grave of James Larkin where actor Jer O'Leary will perform Larkin's famous speech.

Glasnevin Cemetery, Sunday, 28th April at 1.00 p.m. Tickets €12/€8 concession. Booking advised. Email: booking@glasnevin-trust.ie Tel: 01 882 6550

MAY

THURSDAY, 2ND MAY

Galway Trade Unions 1913-2013

Speakers Mary Clancy and John Cunningham.

Sean Meade Room, SIPTU offices, Forster Court, Galway, at 7.00 p.m. Organised by SIPTU Galway District Committee. Contact aoreilly@siptu.ie, text 087 677 6819 or phone 01 858 8285

THURSDAY TO SATURDAY, 9TH - 11TH MAY

Bratacha 2013 – a Festival of Flags and Emblems (including Union Banners) in Dun Laoghaire. *For details go to www.bratacha.com*

SATURDAY, MAY 18TH:

Women and Poverty: Then and Now, Living Conditions: 1913-2013: Moving Forward, Achieving Equality for Women?

Countess Markievicz School. Keynote Speaker: Dr Pauline Conroy. Other Speakers: Mary Murphy, NUIM, Oliver Williams (Modern Day Soup Kitchen), Clare Daly TD, Caitriona Crowe, National Archives, Graham Usher, Priory Hall residents, Rita Fagan, Community Activist, Ethel Buckley SIPTU and Justine McCarthy, Sunday Times. *Liberty Hall, Dublin, begins at 10.00 a.m. Contact www.countess-markieviczschool.ie*

EXHIBITIONS

'Infernos of Degradation': Dublin 1913. Images of Dublin in 1913 – the slums, tenements, and rookeries of the city

This exhibition highlights the everyday privations and hardships endured by Dublin's poor in the 'Strumpet City'.

Dublin City Library & Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Mon-Thurs: 10.00 a.m. - 8.00 p.m. Fri & Sat: 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m., until 30th April

REMEMBERING 1913 May O'Brien

How the Countess saved our lives...

'I WORKED as a 15-year-old girl in the Clothing Branch of the ITGWU in 1947 in the old Liberty Hall which was on the same site as the current building.

I worked till 6.00 p.m. each day.

One of my tasks was to tend the two fires which kept the dampness at bay and to ensure they were quenched when I left.

A few men would sit in the office waiting for a later meeting and if I could I'd make a cup of tea for them before putting the fire out.

One man told this story several times to us and became emotional about it. I don't know his name – they all had nicknames – but I'm quite sure the story is true.

He was 10 in the closing months of the Lockout. He lived in a tenement room with his family near Dominick Street.

His Dad told him he must go to Liberty Hall for the food parcel and the docket was so valuable it was pinned to his pocket.

He went barefoot since he'd outgrown his boots and the city was deserted. His docket inspected, he joined the queue and after his docket was inspected again got his food allocation.

Turning a run for the door he collided with a woman carrying a tray of stuff and everything landed on the floor, including his own food.

The women around turned on him and thumped him and called him the stupidest of boys.

He was conscious he'd lost the food for the family and possibly the docket would be taken from him and that would be the end for all of them.

Then a hand behind his back pushed him into another room. A tall, thin woman faced him looking very stern.

He thought she'd take the docket and the tears ran down his cheeks. He was sure she'd send him away

empty-handed.

The woman spoke. "Why were you so intent on running away from us?" she asked.

Her accent was British and hard to understand but the question had to be answered. He tried so hard to ex-

morrow – a nurse and a doctor. Tell your mother that. Tomorrow morning early. Now come with me."

In a short time he found himself running alongside a tall man with a bag of coal over his shoulder and pockets stuffed with bags.

He himself had his food parcel again and his docket safe in his pocket. They went up the stairs, banisters and steps missing, already burnt, and the man paused outside the door of their room.

"You go in first, son," he said. "And tell your Da that is with Madam's compliments and she'll call herself when

things are a little easier."

And then he lit the fire, made tea, and they'd bread and jam to go with it. And the man crumbled bread in a cup with warm milk for the little girl, and the baby was brought to the fire wrapped in a warm shawl and a rug provided for the girls' bed.

And that night, as the man always said, warmth, food, and hope had been given – it was Heaven!

And next morning a woman doctor and a nurse arrived and dealt with the health problems.

His mother had a breast infection and couldn't feed the baby who was fading away and the little girl had lost the will to live.

It was Countess Markievicz he had met that day in Liberty Hall and he reckoned she was the person who'd ensured his family's survival and the fact that he was now a grandfather was due to what she did for a family who had nothing – no possibility of survival and he'd willingly give up his life for her.

The man's friends would clap him on the back, and say, "Times were surely bad then" and offer him a cigarette and comfort him.'

May O'Brien is a retired SIPTU official and worked in the old Liberty Hall. She was only the second woman to be appointed as a full-time Branch Secretary and in 1982 was appointed Women's Affairs officer, the first such appointment in the trade union movement in Ireland.



Countess Markievicz's grave in Glasnevin Cemetery
Picture: Informatique (CC BY-SA 2)

plain but wasn't sure he could.

"Well," he said, "Me Ma is crying, and me Da is crying too, but the

And that night,
as the man
always said,
warmth, food
and hope had
been given – it
was Heaven!

baby doesn't cry any more. And me two sisters, well, they have to stay in bed all the time – their clothes, well... and the little one doesn't talk any more."

The woman indicated he should sit down at a table and she sat opposite.

"Can you light a fire?" she asked.

He thought for a moment. Everything around his home that could be was burned – there was nothing left. He nodded his head.

The woman looked at him for a moment in silence. "Yes," she said, "You need heat – a hot meal. We can give you that – and replace what went on the floor.

"But you need medical help too – we can do that but it'll be early to

Young people's workplace rights must be respected

REPRESENTATIVES from national trade union confederations, employer groups and governments debated jobs, growth and social justice at a special conference in Oslo at the ILO's ninth regional meeting earlier this month. Youth unemployment was a principal theme of the discussions. SIPTU researcher LORAIN MULLIGAN spoke as an ICTU worker delegate highlighting the issues facing young people in the Irish labour market.

"IT IS imperative to ensure young workers are not exploited as a mere source of cheap labour for unscrupulous employers who wish to covertly reduce the terms and conditions of those already in the workplace.

Young workers must benefit from applicable collective agreements. Young workers must be able to access the sectoral rates of pay covering activities such as contract cleaning, hotels, restaurants, agricultural work and security.

It is not acceptable that certain employers are seeking to weaken this system. Likewise, national minimum wage provisions must be respected. In addition, young workers must have access to suitable social security entitlements.

The Government has a key role to play in preventing the exploitation of young workers by having appropriate regulation and enforcement measures.

Young workers are vulnerable to depending on unsatisfactory precarious work arrangements, for example, zero hour contracts, ad-hoc temporary contracts and/or low-paid agency work.

The National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) must be sufficiently resourced to prevent and address abuses. Crucially, permanent contracts must remain the norm, including for young workers.

The use of traineeships must not

be allowed to facilitate job displacement and to act as an unchecked supply of free labour.

Good quality traineeships, which offer worthwhile work experience, must meet appropriate standards in relation to pay and conditions, duration, mentoring, skills development and recognition. In addition, adequate monitoring systems are required.

'Young workers must not be trapped in a succession of unpaid or nominally paid traineeships...'

Young workers must not be trapped in a succession of unpaid or nominally paid traineeships/internships which do not assist work/professional progression.

If EU level employers' organisations prove unwilling to negotiate a framework of adequate protections, the European Commission must come forward with a proposal without delay.

Scope for misusing the state-led national internship scheme, 'Job-Bridge', should be minimised through reinforced rules and compliance procedures."

Have You Made The Difference?

If every household spends an extra €4 on goods manufactured in Ireland each week, it can create up to 6,000 new jobs in Ireland!



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More brands continue to join the campaign so please keep updated on

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LIMERICK MECHANICS INSTITUTE SUMMER SCHOOL

The day commences with a wreath laying ceremony at Old Mt St Lawrence cemetery Limerick at 10.30 a.m. we assemble at the old church in the grave yard

11.15 a.m. launch of the Special Edition of the Bottom Dog in the Mechanic's Institute

Exhibition of Historical Items Opened

11.30 a.m. A lecture and question and answer session on the Limerick Soviet 1919 - Frank Prendergast

12.15 p.m. A lecture and question and answer session on the book Jim Kemmy the Trade unionist by Brian Callanan

1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m. Break for Lunch

2.00 p.m. Lecture - Austerity, who benefits? by Conor McCabe
Followed by viewing of the exhibition

Events conclude at 4.30 p.m.

SAT MAY 4TH 2013
MECHANICS INSTITUTE
HARTSTONGE ST, LIMERICK



Holiday entitlement... reading the small print

■ By Tom O'Driscoll

MANY queries on holiday entitlement invariably come into the Membership Information and Support Centre (MISC) at this time of year.

The statutory entitlement with regard to the taking of holidays is not as benevolent as might be assumed.

Employments with more effective trade union structures have holiday arrangements and entitlements for members which inevitably surpass those without effective union representation.

This article deals with the base-line entitlements under the *Organisation of Working Time Act*.



How much paid leave is an employee entitled to?

- Four working weeks for any leave year in which he/she works at least 1,365 hours;
- One-third of a working week for each month in the leave year in which he/she works at least 117 hours; or
- Eight per cent of the hours that he/she works in a year subject to a maximum of four working weeks.

In a situation where more than one of these options applies, the employee is entitled to whichever of these periods of leave is greater.

If the employee has worked more than the eight months in a year, then he/she is entitled to an unbroken period of two weeks, subject to the provisions of any collective agreement, ERO or REA in place at the time.

How much is an employee paid and how is this holiday pay sum calculated where pay does not vary from week to week?

The normal weekly sum (including any regular bonus or allowance the amount of which does not vary in relation to the work done by the employee but excluding any pay for overtime) is paid in respect of the normal weekly hours last worked by the employee before the annual leave.

What's the calculation where pay varies from week to week?

The average weekly pay (excluding any pay for overtime) of the employee which is calculated over 13 weeks immediately prior to the taking of the leave.

The leave year commences on April 1st but can an employee carry over any untaken leave?

The employee is supposed to take all leave within the leave year. If a case arises where the employee could not take the leave within the leave year for a business reason, e.g. where no cover was provided due to the illness of another employee, then the employer can allow the employee, with the consent of the employee, to carry over the leave for it to be taken within six months of the following leave year.

If, on the other hand, the employee had ample opportunity to take annual leave, but chose not to, then there is no entitlement to carry over surplus days.

In some employments, either through custom and practice or collective agreement, there may be an opportunity to carry over leave but there is usually only a narrow win-

dow allowed for taking such leave in the following leave year.

When can leave be taken?

The employer determines when leave has to be taken but he/she must bear in mind a number of listed concerns i.e. the need for the employees to reconcile work and any family responsibilities and the opportunities for rest and recreation available to the employee.

The employer is also obliged to consult with the trade union, or the employee, at least four weeks before the leave is due to be taken.

Where can an employee go with a complaint?

Firstly, the matter should be dealt with at local level with the assistance of the union representative. In the absence of a union representative, the member should seek direct advice from the union.

If the matter remains unresolved after using the internal grievance procedure, then the employee may consider taking a case to the Rights Commissioner.

There is a six-month limit from the time of the breach, usually from the end of the leave year, but there can be circumstances where a breach may be earlier. Further advice should be sought on this.

An award by a Rights Commissioner may not merely be confined to compensation for the loss, as is the norm with most other segments of employment legislation, but an award can also include a sum which may be classed as a deterrent against future transgressions by the employer.

This article is not intended to be a legal guide to the annual leave provisions under the Organisation of Working Time Act. SIPTU members should contact their local representative or SIPTU MISC at 1800 747881.



Education & Development Support Scheme

Members in Further Education
The scheme will offer up to ten awards each year.

Second-Level Awards for Members and for Members' Children

Up to thirty awards will be made each year to second-level students to cover the senior cycle (the two years up to the Leaving Certificate).

Gaeltacht Awards for Members' Children

Up to twenty-five awards will be made each year for the children of members to cover the cost of their participation (accommodation and tuition fees) in a Gaeltacht course under the scheme operated jointly by SIPTU and Gael Linn.

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.

Application forms and further information available from your Sector Organiser

Closing date for receipt of completed applications 30th September, 2013 (for awards 2013/2014)

Work-related diseases that kill 2m a year

■ By Sylvester Cronin

WORK-RELATED diseases or occupational diseases cause an immense amount of suffering and premature death in workplaces in Ireland and across the world.

There may be some coverage about the issue on Workers' Memorial Day – 28th April each year – but it is virtually ignored, particularly by those who could make a significant contribution towards resolving and eradicating the causes of work-related disease, for the rest of the year. I am referring specifically to politicians and employers.

The nature of work-related diseases in today's workplaces is changing fast with new dangers coming to the fore.

That old killer, work-related disease, pneumoconiosis, is still widespread though there have been some positive developments such as with the banning of asbestos.

However, because of the sweeping use of asbestos in the past and the long latency period, people are still dying from exposure to it and the death toll has not yet reached its

peak. Even with improvements the older/existing occupational diseases continue to take an unacceptably heavy toll on workers' health.

There are many new work-related hazards being created and/or on the horizon such as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), which are causing some life-lasting conditions, sometimes resulting in untimely retirements.

There are always new and emerging risks but, unfortunately, without adequate preventative, protective and control measures also being developed.

We seem to operate in a system that basically requires a substance or product to be proven dangerous before prevention is taken seriously.

This will be catastrophic if there is a long latency period (i.e. time lag between exposure and ill-effect).

The system should operate in re-

verse. Materials, processes, products, etc. should be proven safe to humans before use or proper protective procedures are established.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is an esteemed international tripartite body. Its structure gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments to ensure that the views of the social partners are closely reflected in labour standards and in shaping policies and programmes.

The ILO recently published a report entitled *The Prevention of Occupational Diseases*.

In this report, it is clearly outlined that work-related deaths due to illnesses and diseases are far higher than those deaths caused by accidents at work.

It is estimated that 2.43 million workers die each year worldwide and, of these, 2.02 million die from

a range of work-related diseases, which clearly indicates that the problem of work-related health issues is far greater than that of accidents.

Yet in Ireland there is a statutory requirement to report accidents that cause more than three-days absence from normal work duties and no corresponding requirement to report more than three-days absence from work as a result of work-related illness or disease.

Governments, past and present, have stubbornly refused to make reporting of work-related illnesses and diseases mandatory. Good data is absolutely essential to know what problems are present in Irish workplaces, before we can even begin to design and implement prevention strategies.

Simply put, as it states in the ILO report: "Where we know the risks,

we can act". All of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) failures end up costing workers, employers and taxpayers enormous amounts of money.

It was estimated by Indecon in a 2006 report that poor OSH costs Ireland €3.3 billion (somewhere between 2%-4% of national income).

There is ample evidence, by way of research nationally and internationally, that good OSH saves money and is good for business.

The Government has reduced the budget for the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) for the sixth year in a row and this will limit its ability to carry out preventative work, including inspections, thus increasing the likelihood of more work-related accidents, illnesses, diseases and deaths.

Reduced budgets for HSA means, in simple terms, reductions in the numbers of inspectors and inspections.

Note: I would encourage as many workers as possible to attend the Workers' Memorial event on Sunday, 28th April at 11:30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. in the Glasnevin Cemetery Museum, Dublin.

The Government has reduced the budget for the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) for the sixth year in a row



DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT

DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT
5K EVENT

4 a.m. Saturday morning 11th May 2013
Join us for this symbolic event

20 venues nationwide

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Dublin 01 6282111
or Limerick 061 484444



THE
PREVENTION OF
OCCUPATIONAL
DISEASES

International Labour Organization

2 million workers killed every year

World Day for safety and health at work
28 April 2013

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PARKINSON'S DISEASE

The tell-tale tremor

MIND YOUR HEALTH



By ILLONA DUFFY

PARKINSON'S disease is a neurological disorder that mainly occurs in those over 60 years of age. It affects about 15 per 100,000 of those in their fifties and this incidence increases to 90 per 100,000 in those in their eighties.

The disease has been highlighted by two high-profile people who suffer from it. Mohammad Ali and Michael J Fox both suffer from the disease and have tried to increase awareness and research into its treatment and prevention.

We still do not fully understand what causes it. However, it is more common in men and the elderly. Having a relative with Parkinson's increases your own risk of developing it.

What causes it?

Messages are passed within the brain by chemicals called neurotransmitters. In Parkinson's disease one of these chemicals, dopamine, is reduced in a part of the brain called the 'substantia nigra'. This affects the messages being sent to the body's muscles.

What are the symptoms?

Although there are many symptoms associated with this disease the main three are; stiffness, slowness and tremor.

Stiffness: Patients will notice that their movements are stiffer and may complain of difficulty in turning in the bed or rising from a seated position.

As time goes on the stiffness becomes more widespread causing difficulty with walking and simple activities such as writing and closing buttons.

Slowness: All body movement tends to slow down. This means that mobility is obviously affected. This adds to the difficulty in walking and rising from a seated position.

Other muscles also slow down including those in the bowel leading to constipation.

Tremor: The typical tremor or shake involves the hands and is described as 'pill rolling' due to the fact that it looks like the patient is rolling something between their fingers and thumb.

However, patients may also complain of a generalised tremor. Interestingly, the shake is worse when resting but actually improves when the patient uses their hands to do something.



Tremor in the hands can be an early symptom of the condition

Diagnosis:

In general, investigations are done more to exclude other causes of the initial symptoms than to make an actual diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. There is a new scan that measures dopamine levels in the brain but it is not routinely used before starting treatment.

To make a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease the patient must have definite signs of slowing down (bradyki-

nesia). As mentioned above, this will commonly present as a change in gait. The patient will develop a shuffling walk with difficulty getting started. They may actually bend forward to get started but then also have difficulty stopping.

Another feature is that while walking they will no longer naturally swing their arms and have difficulty turning. This all leads to an increased risk of falling.

Most patients will have a tremor so this also helps make the diagnosis. Again this is a resting tremor and will become worse when the patient is stressed or tired.

The stiffness that patients develop is one-sided in the early stages of the disease. When the doctor is checking for this, he/she will test the arm movements and look especially for rigid elbow movements called cogwheel rigidity because it feels exactly like a cogwheel.

In the early stages people with Parkinson's are often thought to be depressed because their face becomes expressionless.

Their voice may also become weaker and lower in pitch. Their swallow may also be affected and they may have increased drooling.

Other unexplained symptoms that many patients will notice are:

- reduced smell,
- restless sleep, and
- increased nightmares.

Treatment:

It is advised that all patients with suspected Parkinson's disease be referred to a neurologist or a consultant specialising in medicine of the elderly. It is best that no treatment be commenced until then.

The medicines used increase the levels of the neurotransmitter, dopamine.

Management of the Parkinson's patient involves more than just medicine. Physiotherapy has been shown to improve mobility, improve balance and reduce falls.

Speech and Language therapy can improve speech and swallowing. Occupational therapists can offer practical aids to improve walking and simple things such as sitting in higher chairs and using Velcro instead of buttons on clothing.

The Parkinson's Association of Ireland offers support and advice to sufferers and their families and all patients should join it.

Although Parkinson's disease is a progressive disorder, medication can halt the process for many years.

Despite this, depression and dementia are common illnesses that patients may develop.

For this reason, it is important that patients are part of a specialist team which can monitor and treat all these problems.

Research is on-going and future treatments may include stem cell therapy whereby cells are inserted into the affected part of the brain replacing the damaged cells.

'In the early stages, people with Parkinson's are often thought to be depressed because their face becomes expressionless'



Land of contrasts: Mags was impressed by the life and colour of the Gaza Strip

"Samoud" - the resilience of the people of Gaza despite being denied their basic human rights – Mags O'Brien reports on a recent visit

Gaza: a terrible beauty

WHEN I visited the West Bank of Palestine and Israel as part of the 2007 Congress delegation, I was so appalled at the constant violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people that I vowed to do what little I could to highlight their cause.

After my failed attempt on the MV Saoirse in 2011, I finally got to Gaza in January 2013, travelling across the Sinai Desert and entering from Egypt through the Raffa Crossing.

Gazan Palestinians have major problems obtaining permission to visit families in the West Bank, or attend hospitals, and students cannot attend universities as the border crossings can close for days on end, and most are denied permits.

In effect there is a wedge between

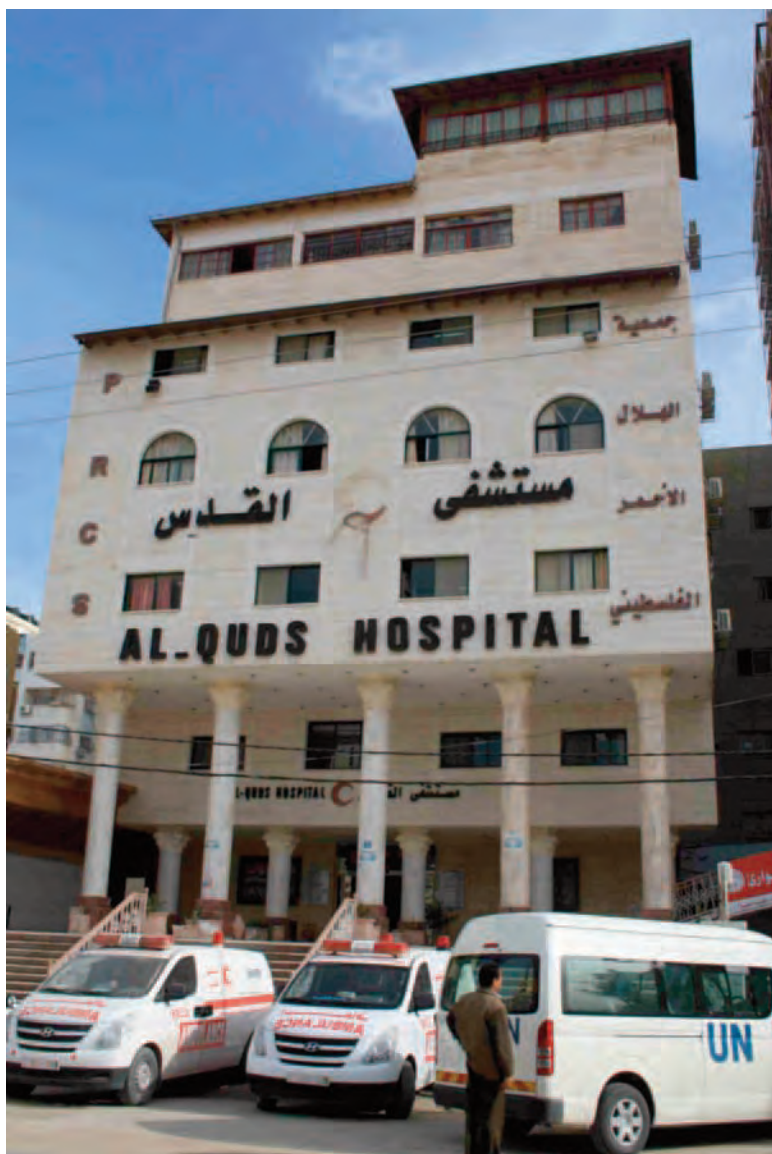
the two parts of Palestine and the whole population of Gaza is collectively punished by the Israeli denial of the right to free passage and to import many essential goods.

Of course I was prepared for a landscape scarred by war, but what I saw was so much more than that. It's only when you travel to troubled areas that you realise that life goes on apace, and Gaza is full of colour and life, despite the many hardships visited on it by the Israeli siege.

Our hotel was near a sandy beach, and it was easy to imagine a healthy tourist industry if only there was peace.

The land is also fertile, and if there was trade, there would be a thriving economy, instead of one supported largely by relief agencies.

While there, we visited a gem of a Greek Orthodox Church, a stunning museum, and a bustling, though run-down, market, a reminder that



Palestine was a prosperous and diverse society before the 1917 British Occupation and its aftermath.

The purpose of our visit was to meet civil society groups and attempt to link them with similar ones in Ireland.

I had a particular interest in visiting hospitals and speaking to paramedics, and was aided in doing so by Dr Mohammed Maqua of UNRWA who spoke at the 2012 SIPTU Health Division Conference. It was immediately apparent that one of the prob-

lems facing hospitals was power outages.

Due to a shortage of electricity there can be many power cuts every day. Medics had to ensure that patients on dialysis, life support and other essential machines were protected, and vital equipment was often destroyed due to the outages.

A major problem, apart from the obvious financial one, is getting replacements because of the siege. Equipment is often unusable for months on end. On my visit to Al

Quds hospital, I was told that it was bombed in the 2009 Israeli incursion, and intensive care patients had to be trundled on beds up the street to safety.

It took the intervention of the French government to persuade Israel to allow in the necessary materials to rebuild the hospital.

Bashar Ahmed Murad, Director of Emergency Medical Services for the Red Crescent Society, told us that lives could have been saved during "Operation Cast Lead" [2008-2009 attack on Gaza] if they had been given medical care by the Israelis, and that the IDF would not allow Palestinian medical services in.

He said: "When they were finally allowed to enter on January 7, Israeli forces only gave them a three-hour 'lull' to work and prohibited ambulances into the area. They forced them to leave ambulances two kilometers away and enter the area on foot."

Paramedics had to pile the wounded on donkey carts and medical workers pulled the carts to help the most people possible in the short time they were given.

I asked him about post-traumatic stress for paramedics and he told me that understandably it was an issue, but that it was also common for the population of Gaza, who lived with the constant threat of shelling and incursions.

I met some wonderful people in Gaza, not least the paramedics, medics and relief workers, I was struck by the *samoud* or steadfastness of the people but was incredibly sad leaving there, seeing a terribly beautiful but damaged region, needlessly scarred, and a population denied the most basic of human rights, to live in peace.

Congress supports the Boycott, Divestment and Sanction of Israel, until it ends its apartheid treatment of the people of Palestine. Please join in spreading the word to ensure that it is successful.

INTERVIEW Mariela Kohon

Colombia is a real example of what happens when you put economic model above people

By John Millington

PRESIDENT Miguel Morantes of the Colombian trade union body the CTC and Adolfo Devia vice-president of the Cali municipal workers union were targeted in an attempted assassination last month.

The British TUC expressed its outrage at the news to the Colombian ambassador in London, urging Bogota to keep to its commitments on providing safer conditions for trade unionists.

Colombia remains the most dangerous place to be a trade unionist.

But the latest act of violence against a member of civil society in Colombia is an all-too-familiar story for award-winning human rights campaigner Mariela Kohon – the director of Justice For Colombia (JFC).

Based in London, the JFC campaign is an NGO which has been actively campaigning to support trade unions and other civil society organisations in Colombia in their struggle for human rights, democracy, peace and social justice since 2002.

From humble beginnings, the campaign now boasts support from every major trade union in Britain, and progressive lawyers associations and has become somewhat of a thorn in the side of the government in Bogota.

For many, getting the wrong side of a state that has been criticised repeatedly by Amnesty international over its human rights record and faced accusations of violent repression, might deter you from speaking out.

Not Mariela.

As we sit down to coffee, the Latin UK Award winner for human rights campaigner of the year, explains that her interest in Latin America started in the family home before becoming more focused at university following a trip to the region.

"I ran the Colombian society at my university. My parents are both Latin American, one Colombian and one Argentinian."

"Colombia is a real example of what happens when you put the economic model above people."

The country is the third most unequal country in the Americas in terms of income inequality with women, indigenous people and rural communities mainly affected.

It is estimated that around six mil-



JFC Director
Mariela Kohon

lion hectares of land have been abandoned by people fleeing the civil war between FARC guerrillas, the government and right-wing paramilitaries which has raged in the country for more than 40 years.

Popular mantra places Colombia's problems squarely at the feet of the FARC and drug trafficking.

But for Mariela, solving the underlying structural inequality in the country remains key to securing long term peace.

She said: "The drugs issue is obviously a large problem. But that only really started in the 70's."

"The conflict as we know it started in 1948 but there was conflict before that and that is more about land."

"The origin of the FARC is a group of peasant farmers attempting to set

up a co-operative and then attacked.

"Obviously, the situation has developed and become more complicated but there is a lot of media propaganda surrounding the conflict."

That media propaganda and hard government lobbying has meant the large body of work being carried out by Mariela and the JFC team is being ignored in the mainstream press, namely support for Colombian civil groups such as Colombians for Peace which is brokering a long-lasting peace settlement in the country.

With the help of Cuba and Norway, peace activists in Colombia are attempting to bring together FARC and government representatives in a bid to stop the violence.

Despite current Colombian Presi-

dent Santos' official endorsement of the peace talks, death threats from right-wing paramilitaries levelled at congressmen involved in the discussions continue.

member, meeting with Santos in Colombia, came out saying, 'we support the government in the negotiations'.

"Now in any other peace process, if the EU Parliament came out supporting one side, how is that in any way supporting civil society or the process of building peace?"

"MEPs tell me that they have never been lobbied as hard as they have by the Colombian Embassy in Brussels."

"So far it has been a victory for the PR machine and the so-called liberal media in this country has not done enough to reflect what is really going on in Colombia."

But with so much interest in Latin America, particularly the close scrutiny of left-leaning governments in Venezuela, Ecuador, Cuba and Bolivia, why has Colombia not been in the media spotlight?

"Colombia has been very effective at presenting itself as a democracy," Mariela.

"There are not military uniforms at the top table. There are elections."

'It has been a victory for the [Colombian government's] PR machine - the liberal media has not done enough to reflect what is really going on'

And Mariela is critical of the government for not taking enough public action to guarantee their safety and of the EU for not applying enough pressure to Bogota.

She said: "Last month, the president of the European parliament Martin Shultz – a social democrat

Justice for
Colombia
Ireland

Marcha Patriótica

Justice for Colombia (Ireland) invites you to a

PUBLIC MEETING

with 3 members of the *Marcha Patriótica* (Patriotic March) from Colombia, chaired by JFC Ireland President, Jack O'Connor

Liberty Hall, Connolly Room
Tue, 23rd April 2013 @ 6.30pm

Gloria Cuartas
Former Senator & member of Colombians for Peace

David Florez
Former General Secretary of Colombian Federation of University Students (FEU)

Hubert Ballesteros
Vice-President of FENSUAGRO (agricultural workers' union)

Snapshots of a turbulent year

A Capital in Conflict: Dublin City and the 1913 Lockout
 Edited by Francis Devine.
 Series Editors Mary Clark and Maire Kennedy
 (Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Atha Cliath
 Dublin City Council) €23

THIS new publication, edited by labour historian Francis Devine, is a series of 16 essays – some by established writers and historians and more by emerging talents – which complement and reinforce other studies such as Pdraig Yeates' seminal *Lockout*.

It focuses on the lives of ordinary workers and their families during that epic struggle and it is they, who, in the words of the book's back page blurb, "...shine through the pages of this volume".

The editor's introduction, *Who dared to wear the Red Hand badge?* is an excellent and thoughtful overview which sets the scene as well as the timeline for the conflict.

Lydia Carroll and David Durnin, cover the essential aspects of housing, public health and healthcare in the city while historian and writer, Ann Mathews (whose play *Lockout* recently premiered) analyses the impact of the struggle from the standpoint of children and the provision of food aid (including that provided by the Liberty Hall food kitchen).

Keele University's Karen Hunt also covers the role of children and women, this time from the aspect of

the "Save the Kiddies" scheme.

In a photographic chapter, *Infernos of degradation*, Enda Leaney analyses tenement life in all its wretchedness while other essays cover support from Britain and the international labour movement as well as Labour politics and the Lockout.

A number of essays deal with various (and little discussed) cultural issues and, finally, there is an

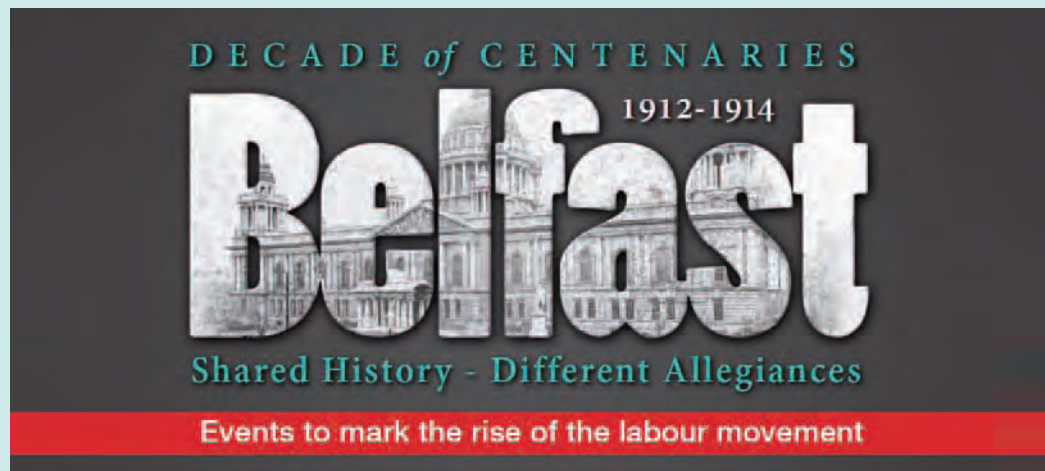
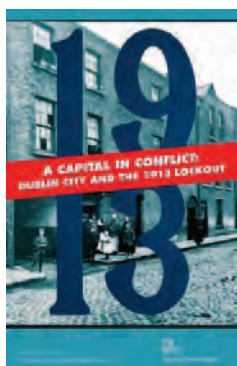
intriguing contribution by Patrick Coughlan (with Francis Devine) on the search for his 1913 "roots".

There are excellent illustrations, including a photograph of the rare "Shillito Medal" awarded to the officers and crew of the food ships sent as aid from British trade unions.

Each chapter/essay is accessible and at, on average, 20 pages or so, can be dipped into and easily read on a stand-alone basis.

This is a veritable "tool-box" to aid the study of Lockout and the city, and an extremely valuable contribution which is testament to the commitment and scholarship of all involved, including the editors, contributors and the Dublin City Library and Archive – a truly civic endeavour.

By Michael Halpenny



We are currently remembering a decade of key historical moments that shaped the history of Northern Ireland and Ireland a century ago. The period from 1912-1922 witnessed some dramatic changes. Now, one hundred years on, we are taking time to explore some of the significant events in more detail.

This season we'll look at the rise of the labour movement and the role of the trade unions. In developing this programme we have worked in partnership with the trade union movement in Belfast. If you would like to attend any of these events and have additional requirements please contact us in advance.

- City Hall events please contact Marie on 028 9027 0663
- Ulster hall events please contact Cathryn on 028 9033 4471

SATURDAY 4TH MAY 2013

Join the May Day Rally!

Free tickets available for all City Hall events from the Belfast Welcome Centre.

Phone 028 9024 6609 or call into the Welcome Centre at 47 Donegall Place, Belfast.

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 Irish Congress of Trade Unions
 Northern Ireland Committee



CITY HALL EVENTS

Tuesday 7th May 2013, 7.15 p.m.
 Programme launch and The 1913 Lockout - words and music by Jane Cassidy and Maurice Leyden

Wednesday 15th May 2013, 7.15 p.m.
 Therese Moriarty

Tuesday 21st May 2013, at 7.15 pm.
John Gray; Supping at the "bitter gourd": struggles of the Belfast Labour movement 1906 - 1932

Thursday 30th May 2013, at 12.30 p.m.
Pdraig Yeates; The Dublin Lockout of 1913 - A Very British Conflict

Thursday 6th June 2013, 7.15 p.m.
Stephen Royle and Agnieszka Martynowicz; Migration and the making of a city

ULSTER HALL EVENTS

Wednesday 15th May 2013 at 1.00 p.m.
 Special Literary Lunchtime - Words for the Workers

Saturday 18th May 2013 at 11 a.m. and Thursday 13th June at 6.30 p.m.
 PLACE presents The Workers' City: Urban Walk

Thursday 23rd May, 10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.
 PLACE presents Architecture in 3 Minutes: Transport House Short Film Workshop

Sunday 2nd June 2013 at 10.30 a.m.
 (Breakfast from 10.00 a.m.)
 Special Breakfast Club Screening of Made in Dagenham

Friday 21st June 2013 at 10.30 a.m.
 The McPeakes present Songs from the Mills and Factories

Wednesday 3rd July 2013 at 7.30 p.m.
 Screening of 'Milk' (In association with Belfast Pride Festival 2013)

Thursday 4th July 2013 at 2.00 p.m.
 Women and Labour in an Era of Patriarchy (1900 - 1930s) Dr Cathy Higgins

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OBITUARY Gladys Sheehan

Her indomitable spirit was inspiring

THE death has occurred of lifelong Equity member Gladys Sheehan (née Carr) of Bray, county Wicklow. Gladys, who passed away peacefully on 29th March, juggled family and career for more than four decades and left a strong legacy.

She ran a drama school for children from a small studio at the back of her house and believed that it was this hands-on contact with younger generations that kept her going over the years and buoyed her up in times of tragedy.

And despite her energetic, bubbly character Gladys has had many tragedies in her life.

Three of her children were born with disabilities as a result of blood transfusions. Two are dead

now but her youngest son, Dara, who is profoundly deaf, was still at home with her.

Gladys was one of the first campaigners for the National Association for the Deaf.

She fought a hard campaign to get "car fanatic" Dara a haulage licence allowing him to live a full life as a truck driver as a result.

Gladys' eldest son, Fintan, a cameraman with the BBC, died tragically on assignment at a young age only months after the death of her husband, Paddy.

Gladys picked herself up after this double blow, which might have brought many to despair.

Apart from raising her family and running a drama school, Gladys also had her other life as a glamorous actress. Starring in 120 films, she was a regular at Ardmore

Studios in the heyday of film making.

She often brought people back down memory lane to the studios – a stone's throw from her house in Bray – to tell stories of her meetings with Sean Connery, Robert Mitchum and Gabriel Byrne.

In 2005, Gladys was honoured with Person of the Year by Bray Chamber of Commerce.

Her indomitable spirit is an inspiration to anyone of us striving to cope with family, career and personal difficulties.

To meet Gladys Sheehan was to sip the tonic of one genuine Leading Lady. Padraig Murray, chair of the Irish Equity Group, expressed sadness at the passing of Gladys and on behalf of the Irish Equity Group offered sincere condolences

to her family.

He said: "When I was a young lad wanting to become an actor, Gladys gave me a tremendous foundation to start out with, like she did with so many other aspiring young people who went on to become professional actors and it was great to see so many of them paying their respects at her funeral.

"Gladys was a woman of great spirit and commitment.

"A staunch member of Equity, she would take a front row seat every year at the AGM always the willing participant to support the development of the craft she loved so much.

"She will be missed by many."

Gladys, beloved wife of the late Patrick, and mother of the late Fintan, Aideen and Stella, will be re-

membered with love by her daughter Valerie, son Darragh, grandsons David and Paul, extended family and friends.



Thatcher leaves trail of destruction behind

SHE was buried with all the pomp and ceremony of a monarch at the cost to the British tax payer of a reported £10 million, a "privilege" not accorded to a British Prime minister since Winston Churchill. However, the ceremony, in all its detail, was not one bestowed on her by a grateful populace. Self-regarding to the end, it was Margaret Thatcher herself who "negotiated" her own funeral arrangements with the former Labour government of George Brown. An expensive spectacle for the establishment and yet another burden for the working taxpayer. Little could have been more telling to mark her legacy.

Thatcher, who served as British prime minister from 1979 to 1990, provoked almost as much division in her death as she did over her many years as the most influential Conservative Party leader in decades. In Ireland, it brought back memories of her role in exacerbating the conflict in the North following her disastrous, and inhumane, response to the repub-

lican hunger strikes in 1980 and '81, the shoot to kill policies by British security forces that followed and her refusal to countenance, at least initially, any role for the Irish government in the administration of Northern Ireland. Unionists recalled their opposition to her endorsement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in the mid-1980's while praising her forceful reaction to the occupation of the Malvinas Islands by the Argentine military during the same period.

In Britain, her death also provoked mixed reaction with lavish tributes paid to the former leader by her own party and the establishment generally and scorn and vitriol poured on her by many in the working class, mining and other communities that suffered under her policies. Her imposition of the poll tax backed up by brutal police enforcement, her war crime role in the sinking of the Belgrano during the Malvinas conflict and her

slashing of health, education and unemployment budgets during her three terms as prime minister also unleashed widespread criticism. In



the House of Commons, former actor and MP, Glenda Jackson, spoke eloquently (link below) of her callous social policies while Frances O'Grady, General secretary of the TUC in Briatrain, wrote of the ultimate failure of her neo-liberal

economic vision which led to a sharp deterioration in living standards for many working families and the unemployed across Britain.

"Thatcher was suspicious of democracy. She preferred markets, and a strong but minimal central state that backed their rule. She abolished city-wide local government, capped spending and expected the poll tax to further undermine alternative voices," O'Grady said.

"State assets and a huge income stream from North sea oil were used to fund a populist programme of tax cuts, privatisation and council house sales. The family silver was squandered on bribing voters rather than modernising the economy.

"The 70s was Britain's most equal decade. The jobs that went during the 80s tended to be good, skilled jobs, delivering decent incomes and some security. She failed to replace those jobs with well-paid equivalents. Demonising unions and stripping the great mass of private-sector workers of a voice and power in the workplace is still the root of the great living standards crisis that saw the share of wealth going to wages slide long before Lehman Brothers failed.

"Even the nasty politics of "welfare reform" is driven by the high

cost of subsidising low pay through in-work benefits, and indifference to the plight of jobless communities who have never recovered from de-industrialisation.

In particular, the TUC General Secretary pointed out "The financial crash of 2008 was a direct result of the policies Thatcher championed. The dominance of finance in the economy and the failure of bank regulation flowed from her belief that markets should always be left to themselves. The credit boom – both here and in the USA – may have gone against her Grantham roots but was an equally inevitable result of deregulation and the temptation of easy loans for people hungry to improve living standards."

To borrow the words of Michelle Obama, it is moments like this that reveal who we are. Thus, elsewhere in the media, the right wing "Economist" in its leader column, hailed Thatcher as a "Freedom Fighter" and said "What the world needs now is more Thatcherism!" On the other hand, at the more rational end of the spectrum, the left of centre economist, Will Hutton asked the killer question on her legacy. Writing in the British newspaper, the "Observer", he asked "If her (Thatcher's) revolution had truly saved us, why is Britain in such a mess today?" Why indeed?



Shamrock Rovers' Karl Sheppard on the ball during the Setanta Cup semi final first leg against Cork City

Pictures: GMK Photography

Stunning Sligo rockets to top while Shamrocks draw breath



Shamrock Rovers midfielder Ronan Finn in action against Bray Wanderers at Tallaght Stadium

Pictures: GMK Photography

■ By Brendan O'Brien

WE'RE now coming towards the conclusion of the first round of matches in the Airtricity league and things are shaping up very interestingly indeed.

Sligo have exceeded everyone's expectations with a perfect eight league wins in a row to rocket to the top of the table.

Manager, Ian Barraclough, has uncovered a new star in striker Anthony Elding who has been in terrific goal-scoring form.

Derry City have also got off to a great start winning six and drawing one to place them five points behind Sligo Rovers.

Declan Devine's men are definitely continuing the strong form shown late last season and will no doubt be there or thereabouts at the business end of the season.

St Patrick's Athletic have started

similarly to the Candystripes and will be expecting at least to bag a European spot this year, while they are still well in the title race as well.

Shamrock Rovers, in the meantime, have become the draw specialists with six ties to go with their two wins to date.

While the fans are reasonably happy with progress to date, they want more points on the board to give Sligo the title challenge they expect this season.

Stephen Kenny's Dundalk side are vying with Rovers and challenging for a European spot.

At the other end of the table, the surprise slow starters have been Shelbourne and UCD, who've racked

up just one point each in their opening eight games. Unless both can quickly start catching up with the rest, we'll be set for perhaps the earliest ever commencement of the relegation battle in the Division.

Meanwhile, we're into the semi-final stage of the Setanta Sports Cup where Sligo Rovers, Drogheda United, Cork City and Shamrock Rovers are all competing for Irish domestic soccer's 'All Ireland' crown.

After the first legs, Drogheda travel to Sligo with a two-goal lead, while Cork City host the Hoops at Turners Cross with a slim lead by virtue of the away goals rule after securing a 1-1 draw at Tallaght Stadium.

MOBILES APPEAL TO FUND DEFIBRILLATOR

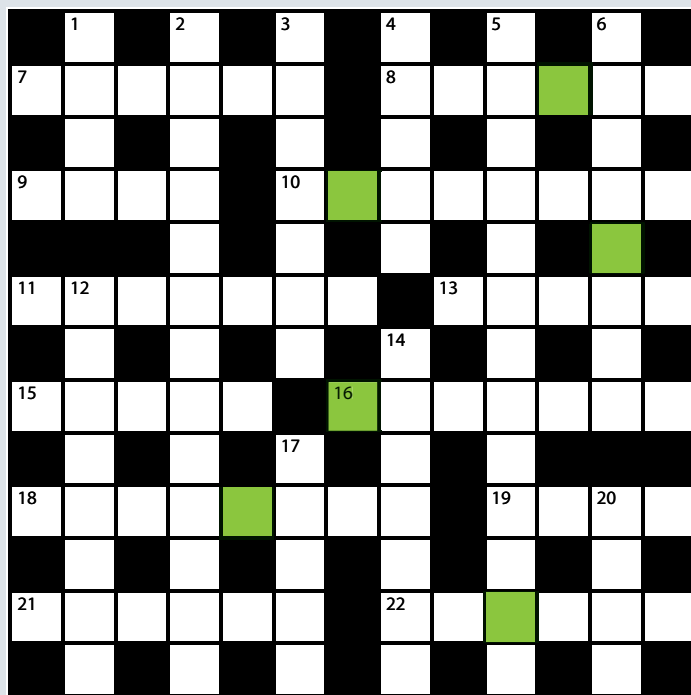
GEORGE Holden, chair of the union's South Dublin County Council Section Committee is seeking assistance in collecting 300 old mobile phones towards purchasing a defibrillator for the

Scoil Bhríd martial arts club in Kill, county Kildare. If you'd like to help with this very worthy cause, please contact George at 087 991 0948.



Liberty Crossword

Prize draw to win two nights for two people in one of Ireland's Fair Hotels.



ACROSS

- 7 Indian city (6)
- 8 Member of audience interrupts (6)
- 9 Wish receiver (4)
- 10 Protected, in a way (8)
- 11 Token (7)
- 13 Kind of duty (5)
- 15 Small songbirds (5)
- 16 Baked Italian dish (7)
- 18 Caribbean island (8)
- 19 Middle Eastern country (4)
- 21 Waylay (6)
- 22 Historical records (6)

DOWN

- 1 Family member (4)
- 2 Breed of beef cattle (8,5)
- 3 A disagreement (7)
- 4 Immunisations (5)
- 5 Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Danes (13)
- 6 North African nationality (8)
- 12 Found in the ear (8)
- 14 Found in a tool box (7)
- 17 US State (5)
- 20 Fully fit (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 communicationsdepartment@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 two nights for two people in one of Ireland's Fair Hotels.**

The winner of the crossword quiz will be published in the next issue of Liberty. *Terms and conditions apply.

March crossword winner was: Seán O'Shea, Killorglin, Co. Kerry

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