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No to further budget cuts

by Frank Connolly

Labour in Government must insist that there will be no further cuts affecting working families or those who depend on public services in the October budget, SIPTU President Jack O'Connor has said.

He said the plan for a further €2 billion in cuts or new taxes is not justified in the light of recent exchequer returns which are €1.2 billion ahead of target for the first five months of the year.

O'Connor said that the new leader of the Labour Party must resist the call for the €2 billion adjustment in any talks with Fine Gael over Budget 2015 and to leave the Government over the issue, if necessary.

"If the public finances remain as good as this for the remainder of the year there will be absolutely no justification for a budget of anything remotely approaching €2bn. Therefore, it is perfectly feasible to insist that there must be no further cuts affecting working

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Activists from the SIPTU Fair Deal for Cleaners Campaign held a series of colourful events to mark International Justice Day for Cleaners on Monday, 16th June in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Pictured at the event in Connolly Station in Dublin were from left to right: Galyna Korytko, Jay Esteron and Carmen Maria Villanueva See page 3. Photo: Darragh O'Connor

REMEMBERING THE TUAM BABIES

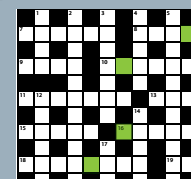
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Bausch and Lomb workers accept cost savings deal

SIPTU members in Bausch and Lomb have voted to accept a cost savings deal which management has said will secure the future of the multinational's contact lens manufacturing plant in Waterford.

The crisis at the Bausch and Lomb plant in Waterford began on 29th May with a shock announcement to workers that Valeant, the owner of the company, was seeking 200 job losses plus a 20% cut in wages or it would close the facility.

The demand for cuts was not due to falling profit margins but based on a claim by management that €20 million in cuts were necessary to keep the Waterford plant open as payroll costs were running at 30% higher than in the company's facility at Rochester, New York.

The announcement was followed

by 11 days of talks between union representatives, lead by SIPTU Vice-President, Patricia King, and management. The talks' process was facilitated by the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) and broke up without agreement after two marathon overnight sessions concluding on the morning of Thursday, 12th June. The LRC then published the final proposals tabled by the management side.

The agreement includes a wage reduction of 7.5% in basic pay; elimination of some bonuses; one hour added work per week and a reduction in the Sick Pay scheme. The company also agreed to work with the IDEAS Institute to develop innovation in the operation of production lines.

These proposals were presented to a general meeting of SIPTU members in the company canteen on the evening of Thursday, 12th June, at

which it was decided to put them to ballot. The result was announced on Monday, 16th June.

SIPTU Organiser Alan O'Leary said: "These proposals were very difficult for our members to accept. However enhanced compensation means that these cuts won't be felt for some time which provides a vital cushion. Also, a new gain sharing commitment from the company equivalent to 10% of savings on unit labour costs shared equally among workers provides an opportunity to mitigate the losses."

In a letter to workers the Valeant Chief Executive Officer, J. Michael Pearson, stated that the agreement would enable management to "keep the Waterford plant open and viable for the long term." He also committed his company to further investment in the plant; the letter also praised the "constructive negotiations" between union leaders and management.

Strike at Roadstone Woods Ltd

Strike action by SIPTU members began at Roadstone Woods Ltd facilities across the country on Monday, 16th June, in a dispute concerning an attempt by management to implement major cuts to workers' wages.

The strike action will continue until a fair resolution of the dispute is achieved.

SIPTU Organiser, Davy Lane, said: "Over the last number of months both SIPTU and the TEEU have engaged in negotiations with the management of Roadstone Woods Ltd.

Due to the unrealistic demands of management these talks broke down. Union representatives are prepared to engage with the company in realistic and meaningful negotiations when it indicates it is willing to do so."

Ballot on Irish Rail proposals

SIPTU members in Irish Rail are to ballot on fresh proposals for cost saving measures in the company.

According to SIPTU Sector Organiser, Willie Noone, the proposals in-

clude definitive clarity on exchequer subvention for the rail service for the next three years and a guarantee that the company will not seek further pay reductions or changes to conditions of employment during that time.

The SIPTU National Rail Committee decided on Monday, 16th June, to put the proposals to a ballot of members. The ballot will take place from 19th June until 6th July and will be counted on 7th July.

SIPTU to study Aer Lingus/DAA pensions report

SIPTU will carefully study the final report of the Expert Panel on the resolution of industrial relations issues in the Irish Aviation Superannuation Scheme

(IASS) which was issued on Monday, 16th June.

"We will carefully study the report over the coming days and will consult with our members and their

representatives in Aer Lingus and the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) on its content and recommendations," said SIPTU Pensions Policy Advisor, Dermot O'Loughlin.

Continued from page 1 – No further budget cuts

families or the people who depend on public services," Jack O'Connor said.

"We have already come out publicly calling on the incoming leadership of the Labour Party to insist on this as a red line issue in any talks with the Fine Gael Party and we have also called on them to make it clear that they will leave Government on this issue if necessary."

He said that it was possible to achieve the deficit target of less than 3% of GDP without anything remotely like a €2 billion correction given the growth in tax revenues

which are largely the result of growing employment in the economy.

"Of course, the levels of growth must be maintained in order to ensure that the gap between tax revenue and spending does not expand beyond 3% of GDP by the end of 2015. This is why we are urging the Labour Party within the Government to ramp up its emphasis on measures to stimulate the growth of domestic demand. This accounts for three quarters of GDP and two thirds of it is comprised of consumer spending," he argued.

He said the Government must press ahead quickly with the establishment of the new Strategic Invest-

ment Bank.

"If it could be established in time for September it could compete at auctions for the €400bn in low interest loans for the SME Sector which has just been announced by the European Central Bank. Generating jobs is the key to recovery and gradually improving living standards once again. After that, the next most important element is increasing wages which also increases employment because it improves spending power within the economy. We have to use every opportunity to press the case," Jack O'Connor said. *See page 15.*

Housing top priority for Dublin City Alliance

FOR the first time progressive parties and Independents have come together to agree a programme for the running of Dublin City Council over the next five years.

Following last month's election, which returned a clear majority of left-wing councillors to Dublin City Council, an agreement on mayoral appointments and general policy concerns was reached between Sinn Féin, Labour, Greens and some Independent councillors.

Labour Councillor and SIPTU Organiser, Brendan Carr, said: "This is the first time there has been a left controlled council. It will reflect the clear concerns of the voters of Dublin."

He added: "The parties and individuals in the Dublin City Alliance share many core beliefs and the housing crisis will top the agenda, both in terms of assisting those who are homeless and seeking to increase the number of social housing units."

The agreement will also see the roles of Lord Mayor of Dublin and Deputy Mayor shared between members of the Dublin City Alliance.

In early June, Independent councillor Christy Burke was elected as Lord Mayor as part of the agreement with Sinn Féin's Larry O'Toole taking the position of Deputy Mayor. Over the next five years the positions will be held on a proportional basis by Sinn Féin, Labour and Independent councillors.

There was a broad welcome for Burke's election as Mayor given his many years of service on the council for the citizens of the city.

During the centenary celebrations of the 1916 Rising, in 2016, the position of Lord Mayor will be held by a Sinn Féin representative.

Sinn Féin with 16 councillors is the largest party on Dublin City Council. The party's councillor in Beaumont-Donaghmede, Mícheál Mac Donncha, said: "The size of the Sinn Féin vote was based on our opposition to austerity including the Local Property Tax and Water Charges. It was not some overnight sensation but due to the many years of work of our activists in communities across the city."

He added: "We believe there is a need for a clear alternative to be presented for the country and



Dublin's new Lord Mayor Christy Burke with his granddaughter Mairead Manning (left) and his daughter Sandra Reid (right). Photo:Photocall

Dublin. The Alliance may help illustrate this to people with its focus, in particular, on housing and employment."

The Dublin City Alliance has also committed to work together to

achieve a budget for 2015 and subsequent years that is equitable, that adds no further to the financial burden on citizens and, where possible, eases that burden, but fully maintains Council services.



'Walk and talk' at first trade union youth summer camp



IRELAND'S first trade union youth summer camp took place in Carlingford, Co Louth last weekend (12th - 14th June). Twenty-five young activists including trade unionists, students, unemployed workers and activists from a number of progressive campaigns came together under the theme "Activism and the Connection between Progressive Social Movements and Organised Labour."

Ethel Buckley, SIPTU National Campaigns and Equality Organiser, one of the organisers of the event, said:

"This was a new initiative that we were excited to present to young activists. There was a good bond between participants from different unions and campaigns. Many current issues were debated that are of interest to young trade unionists." Two guest speakers challenged participants and provoked thought and debate. Dr. Katherine O'Donnell, Director, Women Studies Cen-

tre, University College Dublin asked participants to understand power dynamics in their activism and to question preconceptions about privilege and oppression under the title 'The Personal is Political.' Dr. John Barry, Professor of Green Political Economy, School of Politics, Queens University Belfast also spoke.

Eleanor McKenna, an unemployed young worker from Drogheda, Co Louth, participated in the event.

"I did Activist Academy with the Young Workers Network so participating in Carlingford Summer School seemed like the obvious next step in becoming an activist in the labour movement. Engaging with other young activists, from both sides of the border, was a very welcome aspect for me. Hopefully the Summer School will become an annual event in the trade union calendar."

Carlingford Summer School was a joint initiative of the Young Workers Network, Nevin Economic Research Institute and Trademark.

Activists mark International Justice Day for Cleaners



SIPTU members who celebrated International Justice Day for Cleaners at Ceannt Railway Station Galway on Monday 16th June.

ACTIVISTS from the SIPTU Fair Deal for Cleaners Campaign held a series of colourful events to mark International Justice Day for Cleaners in Dublin, Cork and Galway on Monday, 16th June.

In Dublin, cleaners from a wide range of workplaces gathered at Connolly Station during morning rush hour to hand out cards in celebration of the day to passing commuters. They were joined by members of the Dublin Resistance Choir who delivered a series of rousing renditions of traditional union songs.

Later in the day a similar event was held at St James's Hospital. In Cork and Galway, cleaners held commemorations at Kent and Ceannt Stations, respectively. An event was

also held at Cork University Hospital where cleaners were joined by supporters from the SIPTU Cork District Council.

Mary McBride, a cleaner from St Luke's Hospital who took part in the Dublin events, explained the value of the commemorations.

She said: "We are often invisible to the public. Yet without the work we do, many of our most important facilities including hospitals, railway stations and universities, simply could not function. This day is about reminding people about the value of our work to society."

International Justice Day for Cleaners is celebrated by trade unions throughout the world and commemorates cleaners who were beaten off the streets by police in Los Angeles on 15th June, 1990, during a protest for union recognition rights.



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At the solidarity "soapbox" event outside Dáil Éireann on Wednesday 11th June, from left to right: Duduzile Moyo, Nokulunga Vezí and Oklamí Bello. Photo: William Hederman

Damage of 2004 citizenship referendum marked by 'soapbox' at Leinster House event

OKLAMÍ Bello was born in Ireland two years ago. Because of the citizenship referendum passed in June 2004, he is not an Irish citizen and faces possible deportation. He is pictured with his mother Nokulunga Vezí (right) and Duduzile Moyo at a solidarity "soapbox" event outside Dáil Éireann on Wednesday 11th June to mark the 10th anniversary of the referendum.

Oklamí and Nokulunga live in a "direct provision" accommodation centre in Cork. Asylum seekers living in direct provision are not allowed to work and must survive on a weekly payment of €19.10 a week. Currently 4,278 asylum seekers live in direct provision centres, of whom 1,590 are children.

At the event, migrants shared their experiences and recorded the consequences of the referendum. Over the past 10 years,

the Constitutional amendment approved by the referendum has split families, divided the entire population, and caused hardship for many people in Ireland.

The 27th amendment to the Constitution, ratified by the referendum, meant that children born in Ireland would no longer have an automatic right to citizenship. Birthright citizenship entitlement was changed to, in effect, a blood-based citizenship entitlement, guaranteed only to children born in Ireland one of whose parents is already a citizen, or entitled to citizenship.

The amendment was sold to the public in various ways in 2004. Then justice minister Michael McDowell said it would protect maternity services from "pregnancy tourism". It has done nothing to improve the Irish healthcare system and has had terrible consequences for Irish-born children and their families, some of whom continue to suffer in the direct-provision system.

As bakery sit-in ends, it's time to close gap for locked-out workers...



By
Mick
Halpenny

IT WAS a great day for the Paris Bakery employees on Tuesday, 10th June when the Revenue Commissioners announced they were putting the company into liquidation.

That meant their 19-day sit-in was ended and the 25 workers involved could now apply for their unpaid wages, holiday pay and other entitlements from the State's Insolvency Payments Scheme administered by the Department of Social Protection.

The workers had been engaged in a sit-in at their place of work on Dublin's Moore Street ever since their employers closed doors without warning in late May, leaving workers owed roughly €125,000 in unpaid wages and other benefits and entitlements.

Worse still, the locked-out workers had no means of getting the money from either Paris Bakery or the State because their employers had not gone through any formal insolvency procedure, such as bankruptcy, receivership or liquidation.

They began a campaign of occupation and publicity to highlight their plight.

Supported by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), trade unions, including SIPTU activists, and Irish Congress of Trade Union President, John Douglas, they took their case to the public, on to the airways and to the Dáil.

Their campaign struck a chord of



From left to right: Corneliu Rotaru, Inna Kovalska, Johanexis Joa, Paloma Vaz Marcal, Mael Daumas, Anissa Hosany, Matilde Naranjo and Eduard Claihnet Photo: Photocall Ireland

sympathy as well as anger with the public at the unfairness of the current law on employee protection in the event of insolvency – an issue Congress on which has been campaigning for a number of years.

Congress Legal Officer, Esther Lynch, points out the law here is not only unfair, it's also out of step with European legislation.

And Congress is not the only organisation that has a major problem with the current set-up.

Last year in the High Court, Justice Mary Laffoy also flagged up the "unfairness inherent" in the

law over how it deals with employees of companies that have ceased trading but have not been formally wound up as opposed to those in firms subject to a formal wind-up procedure.

So Congress is proposing to pull Irish law into line with provisions under the European Directive on Insolvency, so that when an employer has ceased trading and payments to employees have stopped permanently for a period of six weeks or more, then the company should be "deemed" insolvent.

That means the workers con-

cerned would be able to apply for payment of outstanding monies from the Department of Social Protection.

That's the case that was argued by a joint delegation of Congress, MRCI, and Paris Bakery workers, who addressed the Labour Parliamentary Party group, chaired by Louth Labour TD Ged Nash in the Dáil on Wednesday, 11th June.

As Eduard Claihnet, one of the spokespersons for this remarkable group of workers, said: "We are very happy for ourselves but now we want the Government to

change the law to make sure no other workers have to go through what we had to!"

But perhaps the last word should go to another of the workers' spokespersons, Inna Kovalska, who told the Labour group: "The other lesson from our campaign is that workers should join unions to be stronger so that maybe we can deal with these kinds of situations before they get bad."

"The Government can help by making it easier for workers' unions to be recognised."

SIPTU

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'It's like working with a

■ By Scott Millar

AT 11.30 a.m. on Thursday, 29th May, a well-dressed man strode into the canteen of the Bausch and Lomb manufacturing plant in Waterford.

More than 400 workers were assembled, having been called to an emergency meeting only an hour before. With camera crews and journalists already gathering out-

'Pay cut or else' demand shocks Bausch and Lomb employees

side the plant, workers knew the news would not be good.

In a calm and assured Californian accent, Angelo Conti intro-

duced himself as the Vice-President of Manufacturing for Velanta, the global pharmaceutical company which took over Bausch and

Lomb last year.

He then read a short statement saying that the company was seeking 200 redundancies at the Waterford Plant and a 20% wage cut for all workers.

Conti added that failure to comply with these demands would mean the closure of the plant; he then walked out.

"It was the first time we had ever seen him, it was a bombshell," recalls Pauline King, a SIPTU shop steward in Bausch and Lomb where she has worked for 13 years.

"There was shock in the canteen. No questions were allowed to be

'It was the first time we had ever seen him. It was a bombshell... there was shock in the canteen. He just read out the statement and that was it. People were just dumbfounded. It was horrific'

asked. He just read out the statement and that was it. People were just dumbfounded, it was horrific."

SIPTU Bausch and Lomb workplace committee chair, Johnny Curran, said: "The only reason they gave for the pay cut was that the work was being done for less in their plant in Rochester in America.

"Their profits are still good here. In the space of a year we have gone from getting a pay rise to being told if they don't get the cuts they want, that's it, they're gone."

Bausch and Lomb was established in Waterford in the early 1980's. The construction of the contact lens manufacturing plant was heralded as a major achievement for the State's industrial

strategy of attracting multinationals to Ireland.

Jemma Mackey, who is vice-chair of the SIPTU workplace committee and has worked at the plant for 15 years, recalls "a fairly good relationship" with management.

Although most wages at the plant are in line with the industrial average of approximately €35,000, a job at the unionised company was highly-prized and seen as secure.

The company was taken over by the Canadian headquartered pharmaceutical multinational, Valeant, last summer, in a deal that workers heard was finalised at executive golf outings in the US.

At that stage Valeant immediately announced its intention to target 10% to 15% job cuts and a programme of cost-savings across the global business.

In Waterford, the take-over had been viewed with a measure of trepidation but as the months passed local management said that the new owners had not been inquiring about changes and concerns dissipated.

But the shock announcement at the end of May has left the 1,100-strong workforce (800 of whom are SIPTU members) concerned for their families and community.

Jemma said: "It has affected people, there is a lot of anger. Morale is at rock bottom.

"Many also feel a sense of betrayal. In recent years the workers have worked with management on many changes, introducing new technology and work practices."

She added: "Personally, a 20% wage cut would mean €158 out of my weekly wage. I have three teenage children, my daughter is currently doing her leaving cert and she has got her place in college but is now saying, 'You won't be able to afford to send me'. It is not only my future but hers at stake."

Pauline is in a similar situation, she told *Liberty*: "I can't afford it and I don't know anyone in our workplace that can. Everyone is committed to all that they earn, it's all going out."

John, who is dad to a three year old and the sole wage earner in his household, said: "If I was to take this cut in pay, I would be in difficulty.

"It will also devastate the local economy. They are talking about taking €20 million at least out of the local economy every year.

"It is going to have a knock-on effect for everyone in the South East – restaurants, bars and shops.



Bausch and Lomb manufacturing plant in Waterford – a key employer in the area

gun to your head'



Bausch and Lomb SIPTU shop stewards Pauline King, John Curran and Jemma Mackey

Events at the plant have spread foreboding throughout the town.

"Everyone is talking about it in the town," added Jemma. "Every man, woman and child are afraid because they know of the impact it is going to have."

"You walk into a shop and everyone fears for it. The workers in Bausch and Lomb also contribute to many charities in the area. Last year €40,000 was given to the local hospice."

Within minutes of Conti's announcement, SIPTU was in contact with management and a talks process aimed at saving jobs had begun.

Following initial meetings, skilled mediators from the Labour Relations Commission became involved on Monday, 9th June. However, a key concern of the workers is what they believe was a com-

plete lack of political action to protect their interests.

Jemma said: "We have been very much let down by the Government. [Minister for Jobs, Skills and Enterprise] Richard Bruton and the IDA we reckon were in touch with the company for two months before the announcement but did not inform the workers."

A statement by IDA Chief Executive, Barry O'Leary, which sympathised with the need for Bausch and Lomb to "cut its cost base" has caused extreme disquiet among the workforce.

Local politicians were more supportive with several – including Labour TD, Ciara Conway, and Sinn Féin Senator, David Cullinane – pledging their support for the workers in a meeting with a SIPTU delegation on Monday, 2nd June.

Like the Bausch and Lomb workers some politicians have also connected the dispute to a much broader struggle.

Johnny said: "Something new has happened here with this immediate threat of closure. If this works this will be the new future for multinationals in this country."

"Our reliance on the sector and approaches to negotiations with multinationals has to be examined, particularly when you have politicians in the US calling for the company to 'bring the jobs home'."

Pauline added: "What is happening in Bausch and Lomb is being watched by the whole of Ireland. It would seem that multinational companies feel they are capable of just doing anything they want."

"You are trying to work with a gun to your head."

On Monday, 16th June, workers agreed to accept the proposals put by management during protracted negotiations and based on a promise of new investment by Valeant in the Waterford plant.

See page 2.

Waterford: employment black spot

Waterford has been particularly hard hit by job losses in the current economic crisis. The major company closures in the city and county have included:

Waterford Crystal closed its manufacturing plant in January 2009 with around 1,000 jobs losses. Some months later the Waterford Crystal showroom opened in the city that saw 100 jobs created.

Talk, Talk, the UK based company closed its call centre in October 2011 with less than one month's notice and the loss of 575 jobs.

ABB wound down its manufacturing plant which produced distribution transformers in Waterford over late 2009 and early 2010 with 178 job losses.

Teva Pharmaceuticals has cut more than 300 jobs since 2009.

GlaxoSmithKline in Dungarvan cut 130 at its pharmaceutical plant between 2010 and 2012

There have also been numerous other smaller job losses including at Guhring Tools where 38 workers were made redundant in 2011 as well as in businesses including restaurants, shops and other service providers which relied on the patronage of workers employed in decent manufacturing jobs.

Public sector workers ballot for strike in the North

SIPTU has joined all other unions across the North in balloting members working in local government, housing, education, further education, libraries and some voluntary sector organisations over the rejection of the National Joint Council (NJC) employers' side pay offer of 1%.

Around 1.5 million refuse collectors, social workers, town planners, librarians, care home staff and other local government employees are expected to walk out of work for 24 hours across the UK on 10th July.

Following a pay freeze lasting three years and 1% pay increase last year, it has been decided that workers have had enough and they wish to send a very strong message to the employers' side that they want and expect a decent pay rise.

Since 2010, low paid local government workers have lost out in real terms by an estimated £2,831 a year. Belfast City Council employee and SIPTU activist, Garret Ó Fachtna, told *Liberty*: "Given the continuing economic, political and ideological attacks on public sector workers over the last number of years, I think that our members see little choice but to vote for industrial action."

"Prices continue to rise, almost as fast as the value of our work is de-

ridged by politicians and the media.

"Public sector workers deliver first class services, often in very difficult circumstances and mostly to the most vulnerable in our society. We need to continue the fight for public sector jobs, terms and conditions and a fair and realistic rate of pay."

SIPTU NEC member, Phelim Jennings, who works for Newry and Mourne District Council, said: "Our members are infuriated by a pay offer that will result in workers on a

salary of £14,000 and above being given only a 1% increase, while those at lower grades will be paid little more than the minimum wage."

Following the 2011 public sector walk-out over pension reforms, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition will have presided over Britain's two biggest post-war strikes as the planned action proceeds.

The result of SIPTU's ballot is expected on 29th June.

Longest hunger-strike in Palestine history marked at Dublin protest



Protesters at Dáil Éireann mark the 50th day of the hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners. Photo: Fatin Al Tamimi

AS the longest mass hunger-strike in Palestinian history passed its 50th day, a protest was held outside Leinster House on Thursday 12th June by members and supporters of the Campaign to Free Marwan Barghout and All Palestinian Political Prisoners and the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

The protest was joined by several TDs, including Joan Collins, Dessie Ellis, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Seán Crowe, John Halligan, Thomas Pringle and Richard Boyd-Barrett.

Some 125 Palestinians prisoners in Israeli jails embarked on an open-ended hunger-strike to protest against Israel's use of administrative detention, a form of internment without charge or trial, against Palestinians living under military occupation.

Amnesty International has called for an end to the practice, calling it "arbitrary detention that

fails to fulfil the international criteria for a just trial", "inhuman and degrading", and notes that Israel uses it to "suppress the legitimate and peaceful activities of activists".

Almost 80 hunger-strikers have been hospitalised, and their lives are now in danger in what is the longest mass hunger-strike in Palestinian history according to the campaign.

In response, the Israeli state is trying to fast-track legislation that will allow force-feeding of the strikers, an act the UN Special Rapporteur on torture has labelled a form of torture. There is speculation in the Israeli press that the government will allow strikers to die to test the response on the Palestinian street.

Protesters called on the Irish government to condemn and call for an end to Israel's widespread use of administrative detention, which is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention which states that internment can be used "only if the security of the detaining power makes it absolutely necessary."

Organising and pay on agenda at new Medical Devices Forum



Medical Devices Forum members at Galway meeting

By Frank Jones

THE newly set up Medical Devices Forum has been told that SIPTU represents the majority of workers who are organised in the sector.

However, it was also pointed out that many of the 250 workplaces employing 25,000 workers nationwide remain unorganised.

Fifteen members drawn from 11 separate employments attended a recent meeting of the Forum in Galway.

Between them they represent more than 4,000 SIPTU members in the Medical Devices Section of the Manufacturing Division. Forum members discussed the impact collective bargaining legislation could have in helping to

organise workplaces in the sector. It was agreed to revisit the issue at the Forum's next meeting in September.

It was noted that some former SIPTU members had moved to unorganised workplaces after being made redundant and, as such, these ex-members would have a much greater understanding of the benefits of being in a union.

The meeting also discussed the success the section had in securing wage increases generally in line with the 2% strategy adopted by the Manufacturing Division.

There was some debate as to whether this was the time to change strategy. The Forum was ad-

vised by a number of members that some deals partly or wholly involving monetary pay increases had been secured in their employments. This led to a wider discussion about the benefits of monetary increases over percentage rises for lower paid workers, and what constitutes 'lower pay'.

A healthy discussion followed with all agreeing that the Forum would continue to monitor this area and leave it as a standing item on its agenda for future meetings.

It is hoped the Forum will meet three times each year with much of its work depending on continued contact among the membership between meetings.



Christy Moore presented the award for music to Clondalkin musical trio Sandra, Pamela and Mary Jessica Corcoran who performed live at the fifth Traveller Pride Awards on 11th June 2014. Christy said; "I love the vein of Traveller music and song that runs right through our traditional music. John (Jacko) Reilly, Maggie Barry, Johnny and Felix Doran, The Keenan Family and Pecker Dunne are just a few of the singers and musicians whom I have encountered along the way. I sing many songs from these sources. I value deeply The Traveller tradition. It is an important part of what makes Irish culture what it is today".

SIPTU College in Waterford links up with Traveller project

STEREOTYPES were challenged and a valuable insight into issues affecting the Traveller community was given to students of the ICTU/SIPTU HETAC Equality Module at SIPTU College Waterford in a presentation on Monday, 26th May.

The Waterford Traveller Community Health Project made the presentation as part of the programme developed by tutor Margaret de Courcey to raise awareness of Traveller ethnicity.

She told Liberty: "As [it is] one of the nine grounds under the equality legislation, we all too often pay lip service [to it] in favour of developing more detailed discussions on other areas such as gender, age, disability etc. I felt the opportunity to explore in more detail this area would enhance our awareness on the serious issues that confront the Traveller community."

Contributors to the presentation included Waterford Traveller Community Health Project manager Emma Maguire and development worker Nan O'Reilly, who is from the Traveller community.

At the start of the session students were presented with a series of photographs and descriptions and asked to link each statement to a picture. "As expected, because of our stereotypical expectations based on



sight and maybe prejudices, the vast majority of us were incorrect in our linking of the person and the description," Margaret said.

The session outlined issues, both historic and current, facing Travellers and sought to separate the myths from the realities about the community. It concluded by listing the positive achievements of a number of Travellers, including a barrister, psychotherapist, PhD graduate and a political writer.

"While I provide the more formal training requirements, the guest speakers play a vital role in bringing their issues out to the class for more detailed discussion."

Margaret invites shop stewards and union activists from the southeast to join the course, which continues in September. The two-year programme is based on six modules, each module taught over 10 weeks. Students can opt in and out of modules. For details please contact Margaret de Courcey, on 0876784725 or mdecourcey@siptu.ie. This course is also open to all other ICTU union activists in the south-east.



Show of solidarity: vigil for the Tuam babies outside Leinster House on Wednesday 11th June
Photo: Photocall

No woman, no cry

■ By Hilary Minch

WE stood in the soft evening light. Babies' clothes, toys, flowers on the railings of Leinster House.

One message read: "For the babies we hold in our hearts and not in our arms" and another "For the mothers, the love and support you never had is here today".

A haunting lament on the tin whistle rose above the candles, our bowed heads. Remembering the 796 Tuam babies. Remembering the women forced to give birth in mother and baby homes across Ireland because society didn't want them.

Remembering the children who were born in the homes, who died, were left in unmarked graves or were adopted.

The vigil on Wednesday, 11th June was more than remembering. It was a show of solidarity. It was a refusal to remain silent in the face of such inhumanity, in the face of such a terrible wound deep in the soul of our country.

The importance of not just being shocked and outraged, but of doing something about it and not turning our backs. A call for justice in the form of a full, open judicial inquiry into all mother and baby homes. Most importantly it was a space for stories, for testimony

from men and women who experienced life in mother and baby homes and from survivors of the industrial institutions and Magdalene laundries.

We listened to representatives from organisations that have spent a lifetime campaigning for rights and justice. Words cannot convey the pain, the hurt, the terrible injustice – but the speakers from the Adoption Rights Alliance; Sur-

'It was a refusal to remain silent in the face of such a terrible wound deep in the soul of our country'

vivors and Victims of Institutional Abuse Northern Ireland; the Aishlinn Education and Support Centre; Amnesty International Ireland; the Bethany Survivors Group, Ireland were incredibly articulate, speaking from the heart and united in raising their voices for justice.

The response on social media to the Justice for the Tuam Babies page was huge – more than 8,500 likes in five days.

About 1,000 people took part in the march and vigil. It was an emo-

tional gathering. Many who joined us had been born in mother and baby homes or had given birth there.

Some had experienced abuse and trauma in the homes or had survived abuse in other institutions. Others came because they cared. People came with their children and their memories.

The speeches, music and lament gave way to a spontaneous rendition of Bob Marley's great anthem. The magical voices of the Discovery Gospel Choir, Liam O Maonlai, Karan Casey, Mary Coughlan, Don Baker and Frankie Conway.

The audience responded. We held hands, formed a huge circle. We sang and tears fell:

*"No, woman, no cry,
No, no, woman, woman, no cry.
Woman, little sister, don't shed no tears,*

No, woman, no cry."
The crowd was slow to disperse, an urge perhaps to linger in the warmth and compassion.

As I wandered along the shrine of babygrows, flowers, toys and candles on the railings of Leinster House, I spoke to a woman.

She had been a baby in one of the homes and had discovered her origins.

At 7.00 p.m. the nursery door was locked. There were no night feeds for tiny babies. No warm caresses or hugs. Just the sound of crying.

Thin end of the wedge

■ By Scott Millar

A MAJOR campaign to highlight the threat to the travelling public and to decent jobs posed by plans to privatise 10% of Bus Éireann and Dublin Bus services has been launched by the SIPTU Transport Sector.

SIPTU Utilities and Construction Division Organiser, Owen Reidy, said: "The National Transport Authority has decided to put out to tender up to 10% of Dublin Bus routes and all Bus Éireann Services in Waterford City from 2016. This will be a bad deal for commuters, bus workers and the exchequer that will ultimately have to foot the bill when this ideological experiment fails."

"We in SIPTU believe in the promotion of an adequately funded, integrated public transport system in the interest of the social good. We must learn from other jurisdictions that have gone down the privatisation road and ensure we don't make the same mistakes."

"In its 2011 election manifesto Fine Gael had sought the tendering of 100% of public bus routes. This was prevented by Labour in government but there is concern the Fine Gael aim is the eventual destruction of public bus services and their replacement by a private monopoly."

SIPTU believes a wide-reaching public debate concerning the future of public transport is needed. These discussions must include citizens and transport users, trade unions, local authority representatives, the regulator and other stakeholders.

Reidy said: "We must reject out of hand the simplistic tabloid demonisation of transport workers em-

'This will be a bad deal for commuters, bus workers and the exchequer that will ultimately have to foot the bill when this ideological experiment fails'



Waterford Bus Éireann drivers Andrew Quigley, Francis Coughlan and Peter O'Toole. Photo: Scott Millar

Waterford bus workers resist NTA plans

IN WATERFORD, Bus Éireann workers are organising to resist NTA plans to put out to tender all City Service routes. Peter O'Toole, a SIPTU Shop Steward at the Bus Éireann depot in Waterford, said: "This is not about bringing down fares or improving services, all this is an attempt to move public services into the private sector."

He added: "If the City Service goes in Waterford there will be no need to have a Bus Éireann depot in Waterford because the inner city services can be run out of the depots in other cities. If that happens it is not 35 decent jobs being lost in Waterford but 180."

"We have decent jobs. From our earnings we contribute through tax and spending in the local economy. The loss of these jobs will be a further blow to the local economy in Waterford which is already reeling from many job losses."

played in CIÉ as if they were a cosseted group of workers.

"Clearly, they are not: they are working people on modest incomes going through a challenging time having made significant sacrifices in 2009 and 2013 to sustain and maintain their company's viability."

It is intended that current Bus

The threat to Waterford City services from 2016 was the subject of a public meeting held in the Tower Hotel on Thursday, 15th May. The large crowd, which included local councillors and Oireachtas members, was in-

'It is about protecting a service which has done its job for decades'

formed of the real concerns the staff of Bus Éireann and the travelling public have.

Waterford Bus Éireann Shop Steward Andrew Quigley said: "We also fear that privatisation will mean the public of Waterford

Éireann and Dublin Bus workers will transfer along with buses to routes operated by private companies. Under TUPE (transfer of undertakings legislation) the maintenance of such drivers' terms and conditions of employment are guaranteed.

However, Owen Reidy added: "At a recent meeting between senior personnel of the NTA with a SIPTU

will no longer receive the service they do now with non-commercial routes or services slowly cut away.

"What they are doing in Waterford is just the thin end of the wedge and will be implemented elsewhere. Bus Éireann has a public service ethos and is accountable but a private operator is only working towards profit."

Waterford Bus Éireann driver Francis Coughlan said: "We need to highlight that this is a national issue not just a local issue. It is about protecting a service which has done its job for decades."

Peter added: "We have presented the NTA and politicians with information on the failings of privatised bus services in Britain, Germany and elsewhere. In many countries there is pressure to restore public services whereas here they are seeking to repeat the failures of elsewhere."

delegation of Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann representatives, the actual motivation behind this proposal became crystal clear when the issue of TUPE was queried. It is clear the overall aim is further cuts to workers' conditions of employment, a lowering of standards and a potentially fragmented provision of bus services."

A flawed plan

The National Transport Authority (NTA) has a number of objectives it wishes to achieve by tendering out routes, and in each area the plan is flawed.

Value for money for the taxpayer: An independent Deloitte report on the Cost and Efficiency of Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann in 2009 confirmed that: "PSO (public service obligation funding, the money given by government to provide the service also known as subvention) current funding for Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann is relatively low when compared to comparable operations in other countries in Europe." Since the time of that report the subvention from the State to Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann has been slashed by 30% and 25% respectively.

Compliance with contracts: Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann are contracted by the NTA to provide particular bus services on a five-year contract. Within the terms of such a contract there is a range of compliance clauses and targets. Both companies are fully compliant with their contractual obligations. Any objective analysis of the most recent published performance reports from the NTA - for the third quarter of 2013 - clearly indicates both companies surpass the contractual targets set by the NTA.

Customer experience: Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann have been continuously investing in improving the experience of customers over recent years. In Dublin Bus developments include RTPi (Real Time Passenger Information) at more than 500 bus stops, RTPi through apps and text SMS, wifi across the fleet and 100% wheelchair accessibility. This contrasts with the UK where many bus services have been privatised. UK government surveys indicate 46% of passengers have stated services have got worse since deregulation with only 16% stating things have improved.

Compliance with EU legislation: The NTA and the Government can fully comply with the relevant EU directive on the provision of bus services and the terms of the Dublin Transportation Act 2008 by maintaining the operation of the current five-year direct-award contract model. The legislation allows for the maintenance of such a contract model where the Authority "is satisfied that the continued adequacy of the public bus passenger services to which the contracts relate can only be guaranteed in the general economic interest by entering into such direct-award contracts."



It's back to basics at St James's

ACROSS the health sector, SIPTU members are facing increased challenges due to changes to work practices, funding cuts and the relentless push to privatise services.

In St James's Hospital, Dublin, these challenges have re-invigorated interest in union activity.

In recent months, the SIPTU St James's Workplace Committee has been holding regular monthly meetings and held shop steward elections to ensure all sections where SIPTU members work are represented.

Paddy Dingle, who is SIPTU Chief Shop Steward in St James's, told *Liberty*: "I want the union in this hospital to be seen as one that has a grip on change, so that people from other hospitals can come down and see how we deal with concerns."

"St James's should be seen as a platform of how the union deals with the new situation."

Recent months have seen a new network of shop stewards elected for all departments from support staff, which includes materials managers, housekeeping, porters, radiographers and other non-nursing medical staff.

SIPTU members, such as Eugene Burke, who had not previously been active in the union have be-



come involved. He said: "I started in this hospital as a contract cleaner over 30 years ago. I've now been working for 17 years in materials management."

"The union was a lot stronger 20 years ago; nothing went on in the hospital without its involvement. That broke down about five or six years ago. I've decided to get involved now because the union needs to be built up to the organisation it was before."

Referring to the decline in union activity at the hospital, Committee Vice-Chair, William Higgins, admits that "things had died away".

"We had a committee here over 20 years ago and it died away. It wasn't that people had lost interest; just everything was going smoothly, money was around and there seemed to be less for the union

to do." However, the years of union/management partnership did bring many benefits for workers that must now be defended.

Tina Kelly, who represents housekeepers, has worked at the hospital for 27 years.

She said: "When I started as a part-timer, we only had two weeks holidays and through partnership we ended up with four weeks holidays, we had sick leave, we were brought into the pension schemes."

The situation has changed dramatically since the onset of the financial crisis with staff under increasing pressure to maintain the proper functioning of the hospital for patients.

Paddy said: "The main problems are the moratorium on recruitment, overtime budgets being cut

and increased sick leave because people are stressed in their jobs as they are being left on their own."

Workplace Committee members, such as John Mooney, who represents maintenance staff, have direct experience of the public sector recruitment moratorium.

He told *Liberty*: "I worked in the main building going around the floors. A job came up on the tractor and it was all explained to me what the conditions were and I said I would take it."

"Then the man that was partnering me retired. I'm left out there on my own now. If anything happened to me in an isolated part of the hospital, no one would know."

A perceived lack of proper engagement between management and union representatives at all levels is also causing problems.

According to Eugene, management tends to communicate "with each other but not with the workers on the floor".

This approach can lead to problems. John recalls: "I drive the tractor at the weekend and one Saturday I went to drive it to a part of the hospital and there was security guard there saying I couldn't drive it in. People are not even being told about changes until they happen."

The newly-invigorated committee is intent on challenging these situations. Paddy represents the workforce on the board of the hos-

pital but believes that the key is organising at ground level.

"An individual can't do everything and we need to get people organised. Currently, the union is seeking to get new interns and increased numbers of the non-national staff into membership."

Tina believes that there is a growing realisation among workers

'I've decided to get involved now because the union needs to be built up to the organisation it was before'

"that you can't stand on your own, that you need people around you."

As a new worker representative, she also underlined the essential need for shop stewards training.

Eugene added: "You're going to make mistakes sometimes but with the group around you, it won't just be an individual having to make all the decisions."

People willing to wear the hair shirt no longer



By
Vic Duggan

One thing about the 2015 budget is for sure: the planned €2 billion spending cuts and tax hikes will be watered down for reasons both economic and political



EVER since the Troika left late last year, the Government has been making noises about easing the burden of austerity on Irish families. There is also a sense that now Ireland has "regained its sovereignty", and the economic emergency can be considered over, people are not willing to wear the hair shirt any longer. This is precisely the message the governing parties have taken from the drubbing they received in the recent local and European elections.

At best, 2015 will be the last full year before the next general election. The electoral reckoning could well come much sooner than early 2016, meaning October's budget could be the last before the Government faces the voters again.

While there are differing opinions on how and when to get there, there is broad agreement that the budget deficit should be brought

below 3% of GDP, in line with Ireland's legal obligations as a euro zone member.

While the Government could ask for an extension, as other countries such as France have done, it is likely they will not want to squander – as they see it – their hard-won credibility with those who lend us money – the EU, IMF and particularly the financial markets. It is therefore likely that October's budget will be carefully calibrated to meet the 3% "letter of the law".

In the first five months of 2014, tax revenues came in €446m ahead of target while spending came in €155m below target, meaning the deficit is about €600m lower than was expected by this time of year. If these trends were to be maintained through the rest of 2014, it is quite possible that the starting point for 2015 – on which October's budget sums will be calculated – would be more than €1 billion better than had been envisaged. Against this, however, must be discounted a number of one-off measures – such as income from

the Central Bank and the timing of receipts from the National Lottery – that won't be in play next year.

As in last year's budget, there may be some once-off creative accounting to hit the 3% target. This would mean less need for politically toxic spending cuts and tax hikes this side of the general election, but would do little for the long-term sustainability of the public finances.

The ESRI made headlines with a

recent upbeat assessment that, with the return of strong economic growth, no further austerity measures would be needed in 2015 on top of the already enacted water charges. The big "known unknown" here is the growth rate itself. While the ESRI's analysis is predicated on GDP growth hitting 3.5% in 2015, for instance, the OECD's Economic Outlook, published in May, forecast a more sedate 2.2% growth rate. In truth, it

is impossible to forecast this with any great degree of precision.

So long as there are no wildcard negative surprises – unknown unknowns! – in the second half of the year, it may well be the case that the Government will need to announce only minimal new austerity measures in October's budget. But this is far from guaranteed.

Looking beyond 2015, things get even murkier. The national debt is more than a fifth larger than the entire annual output of the economy, more than double the 60% of GDP level permitted of euro zone members. New European rules, moreover, mean that this level should fall by a 20th of the excess every year – so by more than 3% in 2015.

Does this mean more austerity? Again, the growth rate is the critical variable. If the economy gets a tailwind, as investment comes back from unsustainably low levels for instance, the debt-to-GDP ratio could fall rapidly as it did in the 1990s. On the other hand, if growth disappoints, and if interest rates spike higher, then further adjustments would be necessary to ensure the national debt doesn't spiral out of control, never mind putting it on a sustainable downward path.

While an EU-level deal on Ireland's legacy debt from the banking crisis could be a game-changer, events have shown this is something that can't be counted on. Even in a best-case scenario, however, there will not – and should not – be any swift return to the giveaway budgets of days passed, no matter what happens in elections.

After a hat-trick of regressive budgets, where the less well-off have shouldered a larger proportional share of the austerity burden, it is questionable whether the FG-Labour government can reverse this trend at the same time as targeting income tax relief at middle-income households and putting more emphasis on cutting spending – which hurts the less well-off harder – rather than raising revenue.

So long as there are no wildcard negative surprises in the second half of the year, it may well be the case that the Government will need to announce only minimal new austerity measures in October's budget. But this is far from guaranteed

Putting a roof on our economic recovery...

■ **By Micheál Collins and Daragh McCarthy**

HOUSING has been one of a number of issues that has sat at the core of Ireland's recent economic collapse.

The severity of the decline in commercial land and property prices, followed by the decline in residential prices and associated employment and economic activity has impacted hard on the economy.

Aside from the legacy bank rescue costs, the completion data in Table 1 point towards levels of activity well below normal.

Similarly, uncertainty and high mortgage debts continue to suppress spending and broader economic activity. The housing sector, an important part of a normal economy with sustained employment, investment and consumption, remains worryingly suppressed. Along with this, many thousands of households are in negative equity, there is an emerging price 'bubble' in some urban areas while affordable housing is unattainable.

The expensive lessons of recent years must not be lost. Excessive house prices were not good news for the economy and society generally. A key sector of the economy was let get out of control and allowed to alter from its core role of accommodation provision to instead pursue capital gains.

A further legacy of the recent economic collapse is that policy makers are reluctant to engage in anything related to housing.

However, just because previous policy initiatives were flawed and inappropriate does not mean that current and future initiatives are to be avoided.

The collapse in house completion figures (see Table 1) has occurred despite recovering demand

for housing and untapped potential for additional supply.

On the demand side there are underlying market needs linked to the structure of the population, the slow recovery in employment and a gradual emergence of lending capacity.

Furthermore, the demand for social housing remains extremely high with 89,872 households recorded as on waiting lists in May 2013; more than twice the level in

'Housing... a key sector of the economy was let get out of control and allowed to alter from its core role of accommodation to instead pursue capital gains'

2005.

On the supply side, a profile of the unemployed points towards large numbers of males with skills and experience in the skilled trades who are unemployed.

Across Europe in 2012, 7.2% of those employed worked in the construction sector while the Irish figure was 4.7%, a number that implies that more than 50,000 workers are likely to regain employment in this sector as it recovers and returns to levels equivalent to European norms.

However, as a return to normal conditions is awaited for the housing market, there is merit in Government investing in a new social housing programme.

This would simultaneously ad-



dress the waiting lists and boost economic activity and employment in the construction sector.

Structured on a commercial basis, and perhaps drawing on some of the funds available from the new Ireland Strategic Investment Fund and other sources such as pension funds, a plan to build 20,000 additional units over four years seems feasible.

These units would be in addition to the 4,500 units that NAMA has committed to provide. Based on Department of Finance job multiplier estimates, such a scheme would create approximately 16,000 jobs in the sector (4,000 per annum over each of the four years).

An investment of this magnitude would move Ireland closer to the average level of public investment as a percentage of GDP in the EU.

As that programme winds down, the broader housing sector should be in a better place to absorb these workers and maintain its return towards more normal levels of activity and employment.

Given Ireland's recent economic history, recovery must not mean a return to the ways of the past. A new era for housing policy is required. It must be one where the primary aim is to provide affordable homes that are fit for purpose, as opposed to excessive capital gains for investors.

Table 1: Irish house completions, average prices and comparisons with income/earnings (i.e. how many multiples of annual income the house costs). 1995-2013

Year	No. of dwellings completed	Average house prices (€)	Relative to gross household income	Relative to disposable household income	Relative to gross average earnings
1995	30,575	77,994	3.43	4.18	-
1996	33,725	87,202	-	-	--
1997	38,842	102,222	-	-	-
1998	42,349	125,302	-	-	-
1999	46,512	148,521	-	-	-
2000	49,812	169,191	4.87	5.88	-
2001	52,602	182,86	-	-	-
2002	57,695	198,087	-	-	-
2003	68,819	224,567	4.96	6.24	-
2004	76,954	249,191	5.05	6.45	-
2005	80,957	276,221	5.41	6.82	-
2006	93,419	305,637	5.55	7.00	-
2007	78,027	322,634	5.39	6.72	-
2008	51,724	305,269	5.04	6.22	8.30
2009	26,420	242,033	4.28	5.27	6.57
2010	14,602	228,268	4.22	5.29	6.32
2011	10,480	230,303	4.35	5.51	6.41
2012	8,488	220,415	4.22	5.44	6.11
2013	8,301	234,301	-	-	-

Note: This table updates an analysis from Drudy and Collins (2011). Household income data are averages from the CSO's Household Budget Surveys and Survey on Income and Living Conditions. Disposable income is income after taxes and social transfers. Average earning data is only available from 2008 onwards.

SIPTU President, Jack O'Connor, has called on the Government to launch a major national social initiative to solve the housing crisis over a five year period. Addressing the Labour Party leadership hustings in the Communications Workers Union headquarters in Dublin on Saturday 14th June, he said:

"This initiative would coincide with the centenary of the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil. A high level Task Force should be set up, chaired by the Tánaiste and populated by the Departments of Finance, Public Enterprise and Reform, Social Protection and Environment (including the Local Authorities) to develop and implement an all-embracing programme which mobilises all available resources, including NAMA, the NTMA and the Strategic Investment fund. Its mandate should extend from the direct

provision of housing to the development of funding vehicles to provide low interest loans enabling citizens to acquire accommodation or retain their homes.

"A sustained effort should be made to ensure that this initiative acquires the character of a pivotal national project connecting with all layers of our society.

"Monthly progress reports should be published by the Task Force. This major social project would be an appropriate way to commemorate the memory of Connolly who always insisted that 'Ireland apart from its people means nothing to me'.

"In any event, we should not shame ourselves as a nation by allowing this appalling housing scandal to continue while we commemorate the memory of the heroic people of 1916."

Setting out the values that will nurture a new Republic



By
Niall Crowley

CLAIMING Our Future is proposing the development of a 'Declaration for a New Republic' and its content will be discussed and developed over the coming year.

It will be launched to coincide with the centenary commemorations in 2016 and the general elec-

'...the need for an alternative to the boom-and-bust economy, a more equal society, change the way we govern ourselves, decent jobs, radical reform of banking, public sector reform'

tion planned for that year.

A wide range of civil society organisations will, hopefully, get involved in the process of developing this declaration.

Meetings have been held in Dublin, Cork and Galway to develop the idea. A draft document is being put forward to focus discussion.

Organisations around the country and in all sectors of civil society might then hold events to discuss this and feed back their ideas for the final declaration.

A deliberative event in 2015 would then consider and agree on the final 'Declaration for a New Republic'.

This should be an ambitious blueprint for an alternative Ireland that would be capable of mobilising support and of having a real impact on the political process.

Claiming Our Future emerged out of such a deliberative event. In 2010, a thousand people deliberated on the future in Dublin's RDS.

It was a powerful moment as people from across the full spectrum of civil society agreed on a set



Delegates at Claiming Our Future's 2010 launch event in Dublin
Photo: COF

of values that united them.

Equality, environmental sustainability, participation, accountability, and solidarity were chosen. These values provide the starting

point for the 'Declaration for a New Republic'.

These values continue to pose a challenge for Irish society and Irish politics. They offer a valuable

point around which to organise a civil society that is increasingly fragmented. They provide a template on which to develop alternatives to the directions currently being pursued for Irish society by policy makers.

However, these values do not have much traction either popularly or politically. These are not the values that influence or shape policy or practice across the State.

There has been no concerted effort to trace out their practical implications for policy, budgets, or institutional reform.

We have yet to establish the comprehensive blueprint for an alternative Ireland based on a commitment to these values.

Back in 2010, Claiming Our Future identified policy alternatives to be prioritised. These included the need for a sustainable alternative to our boom-and-bust economy, a more equal society, change in the way we govern ourselves, decent and sustainable jobs, radical reform of the banking system, and reform of our public services.

A number of themes have emerged out of these to focus the work of Claiming Our Future.

Income equality has now come on to the international agenda with work by Wilkinson and Pickett on *The Spirit Level* and by Thomas Piketty on *Capitalism in the 21st Century*. Even the International Monetary Fund has raised it.

It has yet to gain any real position in the political or popular discourse in Ireland, despite the top 10% garnering more than 14 times

the income of the bottom 10% of Irish earners.

The 2014 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated that catastrophic climate change can be averted without sacrificing living standards, that the cheapest and least risky way of dealing with global warming is by abandoning all dirty fossil fuels, and that current emission cutting pledges by the world's nations make it more than likely that the 2°C global warming limit will be broken.

The Irish Government has pro-

'The Irish Government has produced a climate change bill with no binding targets for emissions reduction and no pathways to achieve emissions reduction'

duced a climate change bill with no binding targets for emissions reduction and no pathways to achieve emissions reduction.

A Claiming Our Future deliberative event on political reform found significant support for reform and empowerment of local government, electoral processes that secured greater diversity among political representatives, and recognition of the democratic contribution of civil society and protection for its advocacy work.

Since then the Government has tried to abolish the Seanad and, on failing to do this, has refused to reform it. They have disproportionately cut funding for community groups and are now trying to privatise this work.

These three themes will feature in the 'Declaration for a New Republic'. There are many more themes, such as decent work, human rights, and a living wage for example.

We hope that a wide participation in this process will broaden the agenda and secure wide support for this initiative.

New climate bill has no binding targets for cutting emissions
Photo: Francesco Cavallari





By JACK O'CONNOR
SIPTU General President

Liberty View

A Red Line for Budget 2015 – No Further Cuts

Budget 2015 is now rapidly looming. This is a crucial juncture on the road to the future. The plan that was ultimately agreed with the Troika by the present Government commits us to cut the gap between tax revenue and public spending to below the equivalent of 3% of GDP next year, (as against this year which was the original target agreed by the previous Fianna Fail/Green Party administration).

A further €2bn "adjustment" is pencilled in to the Government's fiscal plan to achieve it. This would entail a combination of cuts and new taxes. Of this, €500m is estimated from water charges and about €300m from the Haddington Road Agreement. This

The EU Commission has recently been out demanding an even bigger adjustment than €2bn. This is on the grounds that the Government is too optimistic about growth projections for next year.

would leave about €1.2bn to be made up. The EU Commission has recently been out demanding an even bigger adjustment than €2bn. This is on the grounds that the Government is too optimistic about growth projections for next year.

However, it is becoming increasingly clear that we can get to the 3% target without anything remotely like a €2bn correction. The exchequer returns for the end of May are running €1.22bn ahead of target for the first five months of the year. If this position is maintained, the deficit for this year will come in at just over 4.1% of GDP as against

the Government's forecast of 4.8%. Tax revenues are 2.9% ahead of target and income tax reflecting higher employment numbers is ahead by 7.8% over the same period last year (actually this seems to bear out the assessment that there are more jobs being created in Ireland pro-rata than in any other country in the EU at the present time).

If the public finances remain as good as this for the remainder of the year there will be absolutely no justification for a budget of anything remotely approaching €2bn.

If the public finances remain as good as this for the remainder of the year there will be absolutely no justification for a budget of anything remotely approaching €2bn. Therefore, it is perfectly feasible to insist that there must be no further cuts affecting working families or the people who depend on public services. This demand will form the cornerstone of our pre-budget submission and we will expect that it would also be the case with the wider trade union movement. We have already come out publicly calling on the incoming leadership of the Labour Party to insist on this as a red line issue in any talks with the Fine Gael Party and we have also called on them to make it clear that they will leave Government on this issue if necessary.

Of course, the levels of growth must be maintained in order to ensure that the gap between tax revenue and spending does not expand beyond 3% of GDP by the end of 2015. This is why we are urging the Labour Party within the Government to ramp up its emphasis on measures to stimulate the growth of domestic demand. This accounts for three quarters of GDP and two thirds of it is comprised of consumer spending.

The Government must press ahead quickly with the establishment of the new Strategic Investment Bank (entitled Strategic Investment Banking Corporation - SIBC). This was one of Labour's best achievements in the negotiations with Fine Gael on the Programme for Government after the General Election of 2011. It is quite clear that they have been meeting stiff resistance in their efforts to bring it about since. It is key to injecting hundreds of millions of euro in job generating "off balance sheet" investment into the economy, because it could raise low interest loans from the German KfW Bank and the European Investment Bank.

If it could be established in time for September it could compete at auctions for the €400bn in low interest loans for the SME Sector which has just been announced by the European Central Bank.

If it could be established in time for September it could compete at auctions for the €400bn in low interest loans for the SME Sector which has just been announced by the European Central Bank.

Generating jobs is the key to recovery and gradually improving living standards once again. After that, the next most important element is increasing wages which also increases employment because it improves spending power within the economy. We have to use every opportunity to press the case.



Don't be afraid to ask



By
Frank
McDonnell

ONE of life's essential lessons when it comes to dealing with the State is never be afraid to ask what you might be entitled to.

An unfortunate fact of these straitened times we live in is that while we still have (some) rights and entitlements, the State will not always be rushing forward to let you know what they are.

A good example of this was the Government's failure to highlight a recent positive change with regard to prescription charges.

Until December of last year medical card holders suffering from a range of "prescribed illnesses", including epilepsy, cystic fibrosis, diabetes and cerebral palsy, were required to pay a €2.50 levy for each prescription item.

As the charge was levied on each item, it could easily add up to as much as €20 per month in some cases. Many pensioners were struggling to cope with these costs and some were having to forgo taking vital medicines as they could not afford the imposition of multiple levies each month.

Following an intensive lobbying campaign led by SIPTU's Limerick District Council, this levy was abolished with regard to these prescribed illnesses.

The only problem was that the Government didn't bother telling anyone that it had made this change and as a result many people could still be paying the charge unawares. You'd almost think they didn't want people to know!

Thankfully, there are civil society organisations such as trade unions, community support groups and

citizens' rights offices who will assist you to find the information you need.

And if you have spent a lifetime paying taxes and charges, it's only right and proper that you should have access to any and all State supports that you are entitled to.

A good example of a financial support that many people may not be aware of is as follows:

If someone is on a State pension of €230 per week, his/her spouse, regardless of age, could be entitled to a qualified adult payment of €153 per week.

Not only this, but this money is quite properly paid separately into the spouse's bank account.

An important point to bear in mind with this example is that the spouse may be better off seeking a qualified adult payment on the strength of their partner's contributions, as this could be worth more than the alternative of a reduced pension entitlement.

There are a number of other entitlements available depending on circumstances such as home improvement grants and HSE fuel allowance payments (in addition to the normal fuel allowance) to name just two.

For people suffering from certain categories of illness there is also the long-term illness book which entitles people to medicines without any charge (including prescription charges).

Finally, there is recourse to a Community Welfare Officer for exceptional needs payments if people are in real financial difficulty.

Two books which I would highly recommend on this subject are *Entitlements for people over 60* and *Entitlements for People with Disabilities*, both published by the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Frank McDonnell is chairperson of SIPTU's Limerick District Council



Deirdre McCarthy, project coordinator with Community Technical Aid, describing the likely impact of privatisation.
Photo: Darragh O'Connor

Communities resist privatisation

COMMUNITIES Against Cuts launched its campaign against the privatisation of community programmes at a packed press conference in Dublin last month.

The 13th May launch at Buswells Hotel, which was chaired by broadcaster Vincent Browne, saw contributions from a number of SIPTU community activists and others working in the sector.

The community sector delivers a range of services to the young, old, unemployed and disabled on behalf of the State on a not-for-profit basis.

However, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government is planning to subject the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (formerly the Local Community Development Programmes or LCDP) to competitive tendering from 2015, effectively privatising the programme.

Social researcher, Brian Harvey, speaking at the launch, said: "The community sector has developed over 20 years with an ethos of co-operation and inclusivity – competitive tendering goes against

that ethos."

Community Project Co-ordinator, Tommy Coombes, from Bluebell CDP outlined the challenges facing those working in the sector.

He said: "Our community is virtually under siege with issues of fear, debt, rent arrears, unemployment, early school leaving, drug and alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour, lack of housing maintenance, social isolation added to an over-riding feeling of abandon-

been met with a wall of silence from the Department. Workers simply don't know if they will have a job this time next year."

At a recent meeting at the Labour Relations Commission, SIPTU, IMPACT and Local Development Companies who deliver the LCDP agreed a joint approach to deal with issues arising from privatisations and alignment.

In recent weeks, thousands of people from local communities

right across the State have attended public meetings to oppose the privatisation plans.

Following a meeting with the Department of Environment on Wednesday 11th June SIPTU Sector Organiser, Eddie Mullins, said: "workers have questions about their future and don't even

know if they will have a job this time next year, however the Department is unwilling to negotiate. We will now be meeting with shop stewards and members to plan our next steps.

Communities Against Cuts is a coalition campaign group comprising SIPTU Community Campaign, the Community Workers Co-op, Citywide and other community activists. A number of high-profile actions will be rolled out by the campaign in the coming months.

Communities Against Cuts



Medical card holders with 'prescribed illnesses' no longer have to pay prescription charges

SIPTU meets minister over fears for jobs

■ By David Connolly

A SIPTU delegation led by Vice-President, Patricia King, met with the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, on 4th June to discuss a range of issues of concern to Community Sector workers.

These included the contracting out to the private sector of the new DSP JobPath programme as well as job security for union members in Local Employment Services and Jobs Clubs.

The delegation also highlighted the need to put in place the formal mechanism for engagement as recommended in a recent agreement covering Local Development Companies (LDCs) brokered at the

Labour Relations Commission.

On JobPath contracts, senior officials at the meeting informed the delegation that a number of tenders had been received and were being evaluated.

However, while it had been originally announced that four individual contracts were to be issued in May, this was more likely to occur in September.

The delegation outlined SIPTU's opposition to the privatisation of these services and that the JobPath programme should be delivered through the existing employment services.

It was proposed that a further meeting should be held with the DSP minister when the evaluation process was completed.

At the meeting Minister Burton confirmed that the Local Employ-



Burton: assurances given over tendering to the private sector

ment Service, Jobs Clubs and other community-based programmes

will not be put out to tender in 2015, or for the foreseeable future.

This assurance will be a great relief to hundreds of workers employed in the Local Employment Service and Jobs Clubs managed by the Local Development Companies.

Over recent months there have been persistent rumours, fuelled by answers to Dáil questions and comments by local DSP officials that the Department was obliged to contract out these services by public tender, as is happening with the new Social Inclusion Community Action programme from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

This programme has been the main source of core funding for

Local Development Companies for more than 20 years.

Despite this, however, the Environment Minister, Phil Hogan, decided that the programme should be made available through a public tendering process from 1st January next year.

This tendering process is now under way and is causing extreme stress for the thousands of workers employed in these companies.

In response to this, SIPTU organisers along with IMPACT officials and the LDCs Employer body, Irish Local Development Network, met with senior officials in the Department of Environment on 11th June to progress the LRC recommendations.

Rosie Hackett remembered



At the opening of the Rosie Hackett Bridge were Rosie's nephew John Gray, Lord Mayor of Dublin Oisín Quinn, Minister for Transport Leo Varadkar, SIPTU General Secretary Joe O'Flynn, Sabina Higgins and Emer Costello.
Photo: Sam Boal/Photocall Ireland

A HOST of Rosie Hackett's proud relatives from across Dublin and Britain gathered in Liberty Hall on 19th May, the day before the new public transport and pedestrian bridge across the Liffey was opened in her name.

Historian James Curry gave an account of Rosie Hackett's extraordinary life, including her involvement with the Irish Women's Workers Union during the 1913 Lockout, in the Irish Citizens Army and the 1916 Rising when she served with Constance Markievicz in St. Stephens Green.

Family members found the process of seeing dozens of photographs of Rosie on a big screen, and

listening to the story of her life and an archival recording of her voice, to be an emotional experience.

The lecture was based on an article written by Curry for the official Dublin City Council booklet *Crossing the Liffey in Style: Rosie Hackett Bridge*, which was launched at the Dublin City Library and Archive on Friday 9th May by the city's then Lord Mayor, Oisín Quinn, who also formally opened the bridge 11 days later. SIPTU General Secretary Joe O'Flynn also spoke at the bridge opening on behalf of the union.

"One of the audience members at the packed booklet launch was SIPTU's first Equality Officer May

O'Brien, who regularly came across Rosie in the ITGWU's newsagent and tobacconist shop on Eden Quay during the late 1940s and 1950s," Curry told *Liberty*.

"At the Liberty Hall lecture on the 19th, when I read May's description of seeing Rosie (a woman she greatly admired) angrily confront a 'big brawny man' in the union's shop in 1947 after she felt he had slighted the men and women of 1916, the room was filled with smiles and laughter at Dublin naming its newest bridge after a woman you wouldn't want to cross!," he said.



At the launch of *Crossing the Liffey in Style: Rosie Hackett Bridge* at the Dublin City Library and Archive (left to right): Laura Paul, Bill O'Brien, May O'Brien, James Curry. Photo: Pól Ó Duibhir

Get that Summer Feeling with the Brands and Products of Supporting Quality

Supporting Quality is a consumer campaign which aims to protect quality jobs in Ireland by promoting quality goods manufactured in Ireland and quality services provided by fellow workers



**SUPPORTING
QUALITY**

Protecting Quality Jobs in Ireland
Promoting Quality Irish Products

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!



Dulux Paints Ireland are proud to join the Supporting Quality Campaign. We have been in Ireland since 1885 and employ over 180 people. Our full product range is available to view on www.dulux.ie and in stores nationwide.

www.supportingquality.ie



Like our campaign on **Facebook** and be entered into a draw to win a **€100 voucher**

Terms and conditions on our Facebook page



Ballygowan goes Gold to back war against cancer

BALLYGOWAN has officially unveiled a major new campaign to raise funds to support increased cancer awareness across Ireland and to fund vital cancer support services for those who battle against the disease every day.

Working with the Irish Cancer Society, and its campaign partner Marie Curie Cancer Care in Northern Ireland, Ballygowan is asking consumers to join the fight against cancer and support the Ballygowan

Gold campaign.

At the heart of its pledge to support the charity, Ballygowan – a Supporting Quality product – has unveiled plans to turn Ballygowan labels gold. From now until September, Ballygowan Gold bottles will bear a specially designed label promoting the Irish Cancer Society's National Cancer Helpline – a free nationwide information service staffed by oncology nurses, providing information and support on cancer to the general public, cancer patients, their families

and healthcare professionals.

Furthermore, a donation made to the charity for every Gold bottle sold with all monies going to fund essential nursing services, supporting cancer patients and their families at home.

The Ballygowan and Irish Cancer Society partnership will be supported by a large-scale marketing campaign fronted by comedian Des Bishop. The initiative has also garnered the support of broadcaster Mairead Farrell, whose life has also been touched

Help Ballygowan raise funds to support the fight against cancer.



This summer Ballygowan labels are turning gold to support the Irish Cancer Society. For every gold bottle sold, a donation will be made to help fund much needed Night Nursing Services. Every bottle will make a difference so **B** part of it and support Ballygowan Gold in your store today!

For Point of Sale Materials and more information please contact your local Sales Representative.



Limited edition gold labels available across 500ml Still, 750ml, 1L & 2L Still ranges.

Every bottle makes a difference. **Choose to B part of it.**



Brolly good show: broadcaster Mairead Farrell and comedian Des Bishop both back Ballygowan campaign

by cancer in the past.

Speaking at the launch of the Ballygowan gold campaign, Des Bishop said: "Behind the cancer statistics, real lives and real people across Ireland are impacted by this deadly disease. Both my family and I know only too well how tough this fight can be.

"For this very reason, the campaign from the Irish Cancer Society and Ballygowan really struck a chord with me. It allows everyone to play their part in the fight against cancer, both through raising awareness and most importantly, raising money to fund vital nursing services."

John McCormack, CEO of the Irish Cancer Society, said: "Striving towards a future without cancer is at the very heart of everything we do at the Irish Cancer Society. Partnering with Ballygowan enables us to reach a mass audience with a cancer awareness message.

"We are truly heartened that in addition to raising funds to support the cancer cause, millions of Ballygowan bottles will bear the Irish Cancer Society name and also

the National Cancer Helpline free-phone number so that anyone out there with a query or concern about cancer can get the support they need.

He added: "Together, with Ballygowan, we won't stop until cancer does."

Leonie Doyle, Director of Brand Marketing at Britvic Ireland said:

"This campaign empowers Irish consumers to provide much needed support to a cause that touches one in three of our lives.

"Ballygowan is a proud Irish product with a strong heritage and we hope that consumers' trust in our brand will translate into much needed support for

the fight against cancer in Ireland."

Ballygowan Gold is available nationwide in 500ml, 750ml, 1L and 2L bottles until September 2014.

Join us in the fight against cancer and 'B part of it' by picking up a limited-edition Ballygowan Gold bottle between now and September or get involved on Facebook; <https://www.facebook.com/BallygowanIrishWater>.



Retired train driver to head up Senior Citizens Parliament

FORMER train driver and union activist, John Walsh, has been elected President of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament.

John worked for Irish Rail at Waterford, clocking up 46 years – 37 of them as a train driver.

After his retirement in 2006, John – who lives at Grange, Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny with his wife, Mary – became involved with the Waterford group of SIPTU Retired Members' Committee.

Now as President of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament, John has underlined his commitment to work vigorously on behalf of older people and has vowed to make himself available to all affiliated

organisations whenever and wherever that might be.

He told *Liberty*: "There is a need for older people to stand together and not accept cuts and other charges that might be inflicted on them."

"We need to motivate older people to stand up and fight for the rights they have earned during their working life."

Throughout his working life, John was involved with ITGWU/SIPTU at local and national level and held a number of senior positions, including Rail Section Secretary for 34 years.

He was also a branch delegate and served two terms as Vice President and three terms as President. John was on the SIPTU National

Rail Committee for 12 years and served as its chairman for five years.

He also served on the ICTU Group of Unions for approximately nine years and sat on the executive of that group.

He was on the Standing Orders Committee of SIPTU and was its chairman for many years with responsibility for the smooth running of annual conferences among other tasks.

During his time with Irish Rail, John was also Safety Representative for the Waterford area covering the track to Arklow on the east coast line, to Athy on the Dublin line and to Cahir on the Limerick line.

He was for many years a Com-

mittee member of the CIÉ Social Club and served on Irish Rail's Joint Consultative Council (JCC) and was its Joint Chairman.

Outside of Irish Rail and union responsibilities, John is a former Chairman and Secretary of the Residents' Association in Mooncoin.

He served in the Defence Forces with the FCA for seven years and An Slua Muiri for 12 years.

He is currently Chairman of the Waterford Branch of the Irish Naval Association and is the group's National Honorary Treasurer.

His other interests are photography, golf, GAA, soccer, travel, DIY and spending time at the family's mobile home in Rosslare Strand.



John Walsh: committed to work hard for pensioners

First LGBT rights in the workplace training course

THE NUMBER one issue for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people is equal rights at work – being able to work in an environment where you can be fully open about your sexuality without fear of discrimination.

That was the main finding of a 2009 survey, 'Burning Issues' conducted in 2009 by the National Lesbian & Gay Federation of Ireland (NLGF). Sponsored by SIPTU and the Equality Authority, the survey was aimed at gaining more insight into LGBT lives.

According to ICTU figures, 56,000 trade union members in Ireland identify as LGBT. Approximately 20,000 of those are SIPTU members. That workers' rights ranked higher than marriage equality or other major issues offers an opportunity for the trade union movement to take action. SIPTU and its LGBTQ Network are concentrating efforts on identifying and meeting those needs. There are a number of valuable ways in which we can do this, including visibility, solidarity and equality training.

Recently the first 'LGBT in the Workplace' training day was held at SIPTU College, organised by SIPTU's Campaigns and Equality Unit, with the help of the Legal Rights Unit, activists from the LGBTQ Network, SIPTU College staff, TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland) and academics from the UCD School of Social Justice.

There were 28 participants, primarily Information Assistants and Advocates from the Membership Information and Support Centre



Front (left to right): Vanessa Lacey, (TENI), Tom O'Driscoll (Head of Legal Unit), Chris Rowland (MISC) Rachel Mathews-McKay (SIPTU LGBTQ Network). Back row: Dr Judy Walsh (School of Social Justice, UCD), Ethel Buckley (National Campaigns & Equality Organiser), Mags O'Brien (Tutor), Dr Aideen Quilty (School of Social Justice UCD), Richie Keane (SIPTU LGBTQ Network).

(MISC) and the staff of the Legal Rights Unit.

Ethel Buckley, National Campaigns and Equality Organiser, said "the goal of this first training day on LGBT in the Workplace was to increase the capacity and expertise of staff in those departments that are on the frontline of dealing with LGBT workers' cases in the workplace and at third parties."

MISC Advocate Deirdre Canty said of the day: "As advocates in SIPTU's MISC, we are the biggest single user of the employment rights bodies.

Therefore it is vital that we are aware of how equality in the workplace is a critical priority for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

"I am certain the specialist training received on the day will prove to be invaluable both for myself and my colleagues when representing LGBT members on equality issues.

"The course allowed us to understand first-hand the experience of LGBT workers. We gained a very valuable insight into the concerns and fears of the LGBT community in the workplace."

DUBLIN PRIDE PARADE

Saturday 28th June

SIPTU LGBTQ Network invites all SIPTU members to march with the Network on this year's Pride Parade in the capital

Assemble 1:30 pm Parnell Square West

EQUALITY UNITES US SOLIDARITY STRENGTHENS US

FOLLOW US ON:



@s iptulgbtq

email: s iptulgbtq@gmail.com

Dunphy holds seat in TCD board election



SIPTU representative, Sheila Dunphy, from the ISS staff category in Trinity College Dublin was re-elected to the Board of TCD in the recent elections.

Sheila, who originally won the seat in a by-election caused by the illness and death of SIPTU shop steward, the late Noreen Murray, polled 449 votes – more than twice that of the nearest contender, Mary Foody.

A&E services in Navan must not be reduced



SIPTU members were among those who marched in Navan on Saturday, 17th May, in support of the Save Navan Hospital Campaign.

THE SIPTU Meath District Council and SIPTU Louth District Council are jointly calling for the retention of full services in the newly built Accident and Emergency Department in Our Lady's Hospital, Navan.

The retention of these services would not only benefit the local community in the North Meath area but would also assist in easing

some of the overcrowding in the Accident and Emergency Department in Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda.

SIPTU Louth District Council secretary, Paul Henry, said: "We intend to bring all union workers in both hospitals, along with our members in other workplaces in the region, into a campaign that will make clear to the Minister and HSE the level of opposition there is to their plan to reduce A&E serv-

ices in Navan Hospital in 2015."

SIPTU Organiser, John McCamley, who represents members in the local health service, said: "Enough is enough. Our members in both hospitals are on a day-to-day basis working under extreme pressure. If the plan to close the Navan Accident and Emergency Department is not stopped it will lead to our members being placed in an unsafe working environment."

Venezuela Ireland Network

**Bastille Day – time to focus on another Revolution
Let's keep this one alive!**

Venezuela - What's really happening?
A talk followed by Q&A:
Alvaro Sanchez
Charge d'Affaires, Venezuelan embassy to Ireland and the UK

Introduced by: Jack O'Connor, SIPTU General President

14th July
Liberty Hall, Dublin at 7:00 p.m.
RSVP

FREE ENTRY

This is not a jobs fair

DUBLIN INNER CITY JOB SEEKERS ADVICE FAIR

Thursday June 19th 2014
12:00 – 2:00

Killarney Court Community Centre, Buckingham St, Dublin 1

On the day there will be:

- Workshops
- Information on setting up your own business
- A showcase of the range of employment and enterprise supports available

Ph: (01) 8366890 **Email:** employmentexpo@gmail.com



This event is being jointly organised and hosted by ICON (Inner City Organisations Network) and CTA (Community Technical Aid). Supported by Pabal and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government

www.fairhotels.ie

The Informed Choice
for Ethical Consumers



Access denied – Trinity College Dublin: Irish universities are in danger of being captured by business interests.
Photo: Sam Boal/Photocall Ireland

Grant Thornton is an assurance, tax and advisory firm with a declared Irish revenue of \$63 million and a global revenue of \$3.8 billion. It claims to be "the fastest growing firm in Ireland".

We must defend our universities

A report by Grant Thornton on the Irish university system is flawed. It sees higher education as something to be subjected to narrow profit interests rather than as a public good, writes **Ronnie Munck** of Defend the Irish University

DEFEND the Irish University, represents the interests of those who teach, research and work in higher education. Our Charter (defendtheuniversity.ie) has gathered over 1,000 signatories, and we are now working closely with the Union of Students in Ireland in pursuit

of a higher education system that is recognised as a public good and which cannot and should not be subjected to narrow market and private profit interests.

Grant Thornton is an assurance, tax and advisory firm with a declared Irish revenue of \$63 million and a global revenue of \$3.8 billion. It claims to be "the fastest

growing firm in Ireland". They are a big player in business consultancy and have taken it upon themselves to produce a series of reports on the state of higher education in the Republic, similar to exercises carried out by them in the UK.

However, their first report on the financial health of Irish Higher Level Institutions paints a sorry picture, and one of which higher education staff in the frontline are all too well aware. Between 2007 and 2011 student numbers across the sector rose by 26% while the State grant felt by 25%. We might also add that staff income dropped by more than 20% over the same period, and numbers were reduced through the Employment Control Framework.

Looking to the future, student numbers are forecast to grow by more than 25% by 2030. In terms of its contribution, the State grant has declined from 40% of the total in 2007 to 25% in 2011. The sector has reached an inflection point, argues the report, or what the rest of us would call a crisis.

This report does not even vaguely understand that education is, in fact, a public good. It tells us that stripped of non-profitable courses and with its main functions outsourced it might be seen as a sector in which private equity firms would be interested. Within higher education we now see the emergence of closely integrated economic, political and State interests coming together behind this

agenda. However the stark reality is that the crisis faced by higher education will simply not be solved by a dollop of private equity involvement. No amount of private colleges, on-line or otherwise, can substitute for the massive infrastructure and long history of the higher education system.

The time is clearly now ripe to present an alternative to the market non-solution presented by the Grant Thornton report. Certainly, neither higher education staff nor students should, or can, be asked to suffer any further. Staff should not be subject to any further deterioration in their pay and conditions. The current moves towards ever greater casualisation of staff need to be halted.

As to students they already pay a very high charge (€3,000 per student) which places an unsustainable burden on many households. Current discussions around student loans should be halted and a cap placed on all charges. Higher education is a public good and society at large needs to have a greater say in the future. A broad social engagement with the future of higher education could produce a momentum towards adequate funding for a higher education system geared towards social needs and not private profit.

Ronnie Munck is a lecturer in DCU and a member of the DCU SIPTU Section Committee

CONTRACTS OF INDEFINITE DURATION



Picture: Leon Farrell/Photocall

Rosie fights for rights at the Strangled Serf cafe



By
Tom O'Driscoll

ROSIE works as a chef in a restaurant owned by celebrity chef Con Carne. Known to his mates as "Chilly" Con Carne, he epitomises coolness. He impresses the impressionable mostly by having his own TV programme and also by driving an electric-blue Maserati.

To Rosie and her co-workers his "Chilly" moniker fittingly portrays the outright, cold disdain he has for employees' rights. Con's idea of having a competitive edge means "possessing" low-paid workers who could be readily exploited and cast aside before they had completed the mandatory 12 months

service needed under the Unfair Dismissals Acts. He makes an exception for Rosie.

Rosie is a great chef and is the real secret behind Con's success. When Con disappears nightly in a plume of exhaust fumes and Armani, the diners at The Strangled Serf tuck into the culinary delights produced by Rosie.

She has just started her fifth year of employment, unlike her co-workers, but she has received a fixed-term contract each year beginning on January 1st and ending on December 31st.

Rosie has a feeling of uneasiness and wants a singular contract that is more tangible and secure.

She recently applied for a car loan and her bank refused on the basis that it considered the series of fixed-term contracts to signify a precarious employment relationship. Rosie took out SIPTU confidential membership some years ago.

So what can Rosie do?

The first thing Rosie should do is contact the SIPTU Membership Information and Support Centre at 1800-747881. This Centre has recovered an average of €4 million in compensation per year for SIPTU members since its inception in 2010 and has advised and represented thousands of members in that period.

In this instance the advice would be for Rosie to consider seeking a

contract of indefinite duration under the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act, 2003.

What is the purpose of this legislation?

The Fixed-Term Act comes from a European Directive and was part of a suite of protective legislation put in place to protect "atypical" workers. Its purpose is basically two-fold: to ensure fixed-term workers cannot be treated in a less

favourable manner than a comparable permanent employee and also to prevent the abuse of excessive continuous fixed-term contracts. In this instance, Rosie will be seeking to address the use of continuous fixed-term contracts and so will be seeking a contract of indefinite duration (CID).

What is a Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID)?

A CID has all the attributes of a permanent contract. There is no actual definition under the Act but the High Court has declared that the contents of the CID should mirror the last fixed-term contract, but have no termination date. The obvious value of a CID to Rosie would be that it would somewhat alleviate the insecurity surrounding her position at each year's end and strengthen her hand when dealing with credit institutions. It would be unwise to suggest that a CID offers ultimate job security to Rosie given the volatile nature of the restaurant trade.

How does Rosie qualify for a CID under the Act?

The fundamental rule is that a worker has to have two or more continuous fixed-term contracts with an aggregate duration of more than 4 years. Rosie had just started her fifth year, therefore she would seem to have an entitlement.

Has the employer got a defence?

The employer can raise the defence that there are objective grounds for justifying the decision to continue with fixed term contracts, other than grounds based on the fixed term status of the employee. Such grounds must be provable and capable of independent audit. In this case it would be difficult to see how Mr Carne could mount such a defence.

How can Rosie bring a claim and can she be punished by the employer for doing so?

The Union can refer her claim for a CID to the Rights Commissioner and onwards in an appeal to the Labour Court, if necessary. It is also unlawful for an employer to penalise any employee for taking a claim under the Act.

Rosie won't be getting the sun, moon and stars as a result of her union membership but she will be afforded protection, advice and representation. She might well go on to help organise some of her co-workers at The Strangled Serf.

Any similarity between this story and actual living beings is purely coincidental.

Always contact your Union for advice before considering a claim under the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act as each case needs to be assessed on its own merits.

The obvious value of a CID to Rosie would be that it would somewhat alleviate the insecurity surrounding her position at each year's end and strengthen her hand when dealing with credit institutions

When Jimmy's Hall took on Church and State...

JIMMY'S *Hall*, the story of Jimmy Gralton's attempts at providing entertainment, education and inspiration for young people in Leitrim in the 1920s and 30s is an excellent portrayal of the tensions between working people, the Catholic Church and the main political forces of the State during the post-revolutionary period.

After his hall was burned down soon after the Civil War, Gralton left for the US but returned in the early 1930s as De Valera and his resurgent Fianna Fáil were forming a one-party government for the first time.

On his return, Galton (played by Barry Ward) found that change was in the air but that many things stayed the same – not least the repressive power of the church and its allies in politics and the police.

After successfully re-opening the



Focussed: Director Ken Loach
during shooting of Jimmy's Hall

hall on his family farmland where everything from Irish dancing and music, boxing, art and literature classes are provided, Gralton locks horns with the local parish priest who objected to the carry-on and, in particular, to the socialist's introduction of African-American jazz to the north Leitrim community.

With a screenplay by Paul Laverty which is full of humour

and sharp wit and filmed beautifully by director Ken Loach, *Jimmy's Hall* combines a tender love story (Simone Kirby plays the interest here) with a political conflict which erupts when Gralton, his neighbours and republican supporters attempt to stop an eviction by a landlord in a large estate in neighbouring Co Roscommon.

In the ensuing fallout, Galton is hunted down by the Garda acting for local political and church interests and becomes the first and only Irish citizen of the Free State to be banned from his own country and deported to the US, never to return.

As with *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, Loach challenges the Irish audience to recall and confront our history and perhaps learn the lessons of the past and he does so in a hugely entertaining way.



Visionary: Barry Ward who plays republican socialist Jimmy Gralton

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The Spirit of Mother Jones Festival 2014

29th July - 1st August,
Shandon, Cork

Featuring:

Rosemary Feurer, Betty Cook, Anne Scargill,
Gareth Peirce, James Green, Dave Hopper,
Lamprini C Thoma, Tadhg O'Sullivan,
David Joyce, Paul Winter,
Claire McGettrick, Luke Dineen,

Music and Films:

Si Kahn, Anne Feeney,
Two Time Polka, Jimmy Crowley
Cork Singers Club, Cork Rokk Choir,
Butter Exchange Band,
Lions Youth Brass Band,
Frameworks Films, Richard T Cooke,
William Hammond, Kieran McCarthy,
Aoife Delaney, James P. McCarthy,
Cork Shakespearean Company,
Wildwood Flower Bluegrass Band,
the Mother Jones Ceili Band

Venues:

Firkin Crane Centre, Maldron Hotel

Further details:

see festival programme,
www.motherjonescork.com
Tel: 086 3196063,
086 1651356, 087 6654106



Mother Jones Festival back for third year

A FESTIVAL and summer school honouring Mother Jones, an icon of the trade union movement in the US, returns for a third year to Cork, the city of her birth, and runs from Tuesday 29th July to Friday 1st August.

Festival goers can expect a packed programme of lectures, films and gigs over four days at the Firkin Crane theatre and Maldron Hotel in Shandon.

This year The Spirit of Mother Jones festival has invited along a number of speakers, including American academics and Mother Jones experts Rosemary Feurer and James Green as well as prominent civil rights lawyer Gareth Peirce.

A series of events on 31st July will examine the struggle of miners and their communities with a special showing of the film *The Battle of Orgreave* and a talk by Ann Scargill and Betty Cook, a founder member of Women Against Pit Closures.

James Green and Rosemary Feurer will also speak on the legacy of the infamous Ludlow Massacre of striking miners in Colorado in the centenary year of the outrage.

Music highlights include gigs by the Mother Jones Ceili Band, Wildflower Bluegrass band and folk singers Si Kahn and Anne Feeney.

Jim Nolan, of the Cork Mother Jones Committee, said there was



Iconic Corkonian:
Mother Jones

particular delight that Prof Feurer was returning to the festival.

He said: "Rosemary Feurer's contributions to packed crowds at the inaugural festival in 2012 were well received and her devotion to Mother Jones in the United States has ensured the growing fame of this extraordinary Cork woman will forever be honoured."

He added: "We are delighted that the construction of the new museum to Mother Jones at Mount Olive Illinois, her final resting place is going ahead and will be completed in 2015, this is largely testament to the magnificent efforts of Professor Feurer and her committee."

Raising the flag: a sculptor's dream

SCULPTOR and artist Stuart Dunne is seeking assistance with his ambitious project to sculpt a life-size statue of Molly O'Reilly, who raised the flag of Ireland over Liberty Hall a week before the Easter Rising of 1916.

At the age of 14, Molly O'Reilly from Gardiner Street, Dublin, hoisted the green flag with the gold harp of the Irish Citizens Army over Liberty Hall a week before Easter Sunday, 1916.

On Easter Monday, Molly

marched to Dublin Castle with the Irish Citizen Army under the command of Capt Sean Connolly and was a dispatch carrier between City Hall and the GPO during the Rising.

In 1922 Molly and other members of Cumann Na mBan rejected the Treaty with Britain.

Free State troops arrested Molly on the orders of Richard Mulcahy, minister for defence during the Civil War.

She was freed in 1923 after

going on hunger strike for 16 days with other republicans seeking the release of all political prisoners. Molly died on 4th October, 1950.

Dunne is looking for practical material, including bronze, copper and tin as well as finance in order to realise his dream of completing the work before Easter 2016, the centenary of the Rising and to have it erected in a suitable outdoor space in the city.

To contact Stuart tel: 087 4156749
email: stuartdunne1@gmail.com



A maquette or scale model of the proposed statue of Molly O'Reilly raising the flag over Liberty Hall in 1916

Irish Famine link to plight of Filipino rural poor

A leading member of the Philippines National Democratic Front - has likened the plight of Filipino workers and peasants today to the situation of the Irish people during the Famine.

NDFP Chief International Representative Luis Jalandoni made the comments on May 20th as he unveiled a stone memorial to honour the victims of the infamous Doolough Famine Walk of 1849.

Each year pressure group Afri organises a walk to retrace the route taken by a desperate group of famine victims in search of food from Louisburgh to Doolough.

In his speech Luis Jalandoni said working people in the Philippines faced a "fierce struggle for food sovereignty" with 70% of the population surviving on less than €1.70 a day.

"This measly amount is insufficient to provide the basic daily need for food. Upon sickness, there is no money for medicines, much less for housing and schooling." Despite the poverty of most of the population, he pointed out that the Philippines was a country of vast natural wealth and resources.

Jalandoni asked: "Why is this such, in a country with 9.7 million hectares of fertile agricultural land, marine resources abounding in fish, rich mineral resources with the country number 3 in the world in gold deposits, number 4 in copper, number 5 in nickel, and number 6 in chromite?"

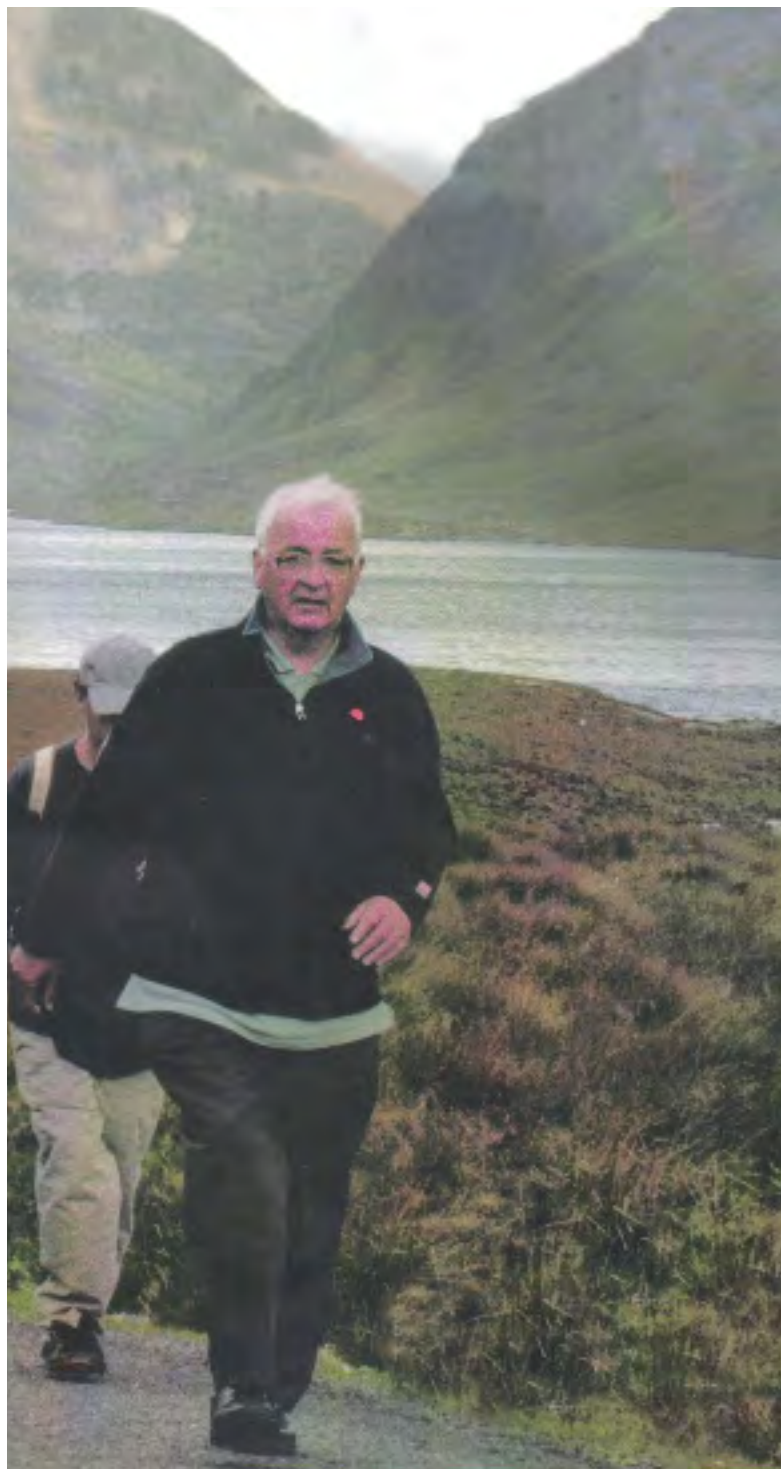
He continued: "This situation of hunger, poverty, disease, and death in the midst of plenty is, I think, similar to the situation of the Irish people during the Famine.

"As James Connolly pointed out in his book, Labour in Irish History, the Irish people produced enough for the entire population during the Famine, in fact, more than double.

"Enough grains and other food were produced, but these were exported to England. Connolly declared the English administration of Ireland during the famine a colossal crime against the human race."

Jalandoni said that the current struggle for food sovereignty in the Philippines is the fight against land grabbers who take away the land of the peasants and indigenous peoples.

"It is a struggle against the Manila government's Public Private



Jack Hynes on the Doolough famine walk in 2004. Photo: Derek Speirs

Partnership programme that gives away the land to foreign corporations, mining companies, and agribusiness firms. It is also a struggle against Monsanto, Zeneca, Syngenta, and other such corporations that steal the farmers' seed varieties and render the farmers dependent on genetically modified varieties. The Philippine peasant movement, with two million members, struggles in the legal democratic sphere. It unites with other Asian movements in the Asian Peasant Coalition," he said.

He said that policies dictated by the US through the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, in collusion with subservient Philippine governments, ensure that the peasants are de-

prived of their lands in favour of multinational firms like Dole, mining corporations like Xstrata and Glencore, and logging companies.

"These destroy the livelihood of the peasants and indigenous people, and ravage the environment. While these multinationals and their local cohorts reap super profits, the working people are denied their basic right to food, health, education and life.

"In the face of the intolerable exploitation and oppression, a movement for national and social liberation has arisen since the late 1960s. The struggle for food sovereignty is within this liberation struggle."

Luis Jalandoni also spoke of the late Jack Hynes, an Irish missionary who lived and worked in the Philippines, particularly in the island of Negros for many years and integrated with the poor people, learning their language.

"He stood with them in facing the military who threatened them on behalf of the landgrabbers. He joined the fisherfolk in going out to sea and who 'live on the edge of because of the risks they take'."

"When Marcos imposed martial law in 1972, he and his colleagues brought food and supplies to the freedom fighters in the mountains. The dictator launched a policy of encirclement to isolate the revolutionary forces. Jack and his colleagues broke through that encirclement. They transported freedom fighters across enemy lines. Jack rescued torture victims and brought them to safety for medical care.

"The revolutionaries most hunted by the dictatorship were retrieved from danger by Jack. He and his colleagues like Pat and Vinny Healy, and Donal MacDonald risked life and limb to help the liberation movement."

In the mid-70s, Jack Hynes left

the priesthood and married his soulmate, Lulu. Together with their children, they moved back to Ireland. He was a devoted family man who campaigned for Fr Niall O'Brien and eight others imprisoned by the Filipino government in the 1980s.

When Redemptorist priest, Fr. Rudy Romano was disappeared in July 1985, he led the Filipino Irish Group in launching a one-year daily picket at the US embassy to protest against the abduction.

When Jack Hynes died in 2006, the Filipino people presented Lulu with a wooden sculpture with the inscription, "Jack Hynes, Hero of the Filipino People."

"In his honour, and with the aim of keeping alive his legacy of outstanding solidarity, a group of us Filipinos and Irish people are launching "The Jack Hynes Solidarity Project", with the assistance of Afri. Jack was very involved in the Famine Walk; he was present in 1988 at the very first Famine Walk. We sincerely hope that the Jack Hynes Solidarity Project will effectively help in building a strong solidarity between the Irish people and the Filipino people," Jalandoni said.



Coni Ledesma and Luis Jalandoni from the Philippines unveil a Famine Memorial on the grounds of Delphi Lodge during the 2014 Famine Walk

PICTURE: Rob Fairmichael

The French are on the sea

Capital in the Twenty-First Century
By Thomas Piketty

THOMAS Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has become something of a publishing sensation, topping best-seller lists the world over.

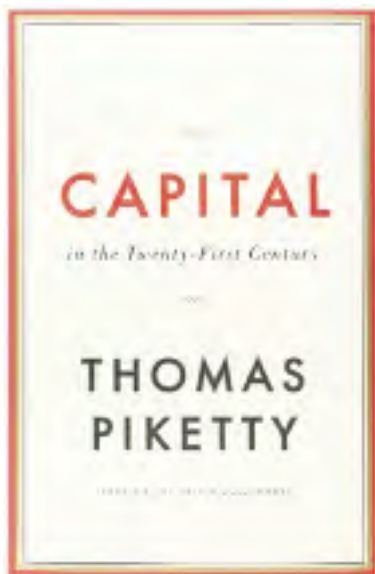
He has almost reached the status of 'celebrity' which is no mean achievement for a 'mere' economist. So what is all the fuss about? And do we really need another critique of capitalism?

Well, probably the most important thing that Piketty has achieved, through his admirable academic endeavours, is to anchor economics firmly within the safer harbour of the social sciences.

He sees the limitations of economics and reminds us "that historical experience remains our principal source of knowledge", but he also chastises those within the wider social science field who dismiss every statistic as a "social construct".



Outlining the problem:
French economist
Thomas Piketty
Photo: Sue Gardiner



His publication comes at a timely moment and will no doubt prove an important intellectual tool for a growing student body who are challenging the neo-liberal syllabi that are presented as the totality of economic thought in universities throughout the world.

Piketty's central thesis is that the return on capital exceeds economic growth. He supports this claim with a dizzying array of economic data and statistics stretching back over centuries. Simply translated this means that the rich are getting richer.

This doesn't come as a surprise to many of us. Maybe not, but in reading his book as he relays economic trends over the centuries, you begin to see the post-war pe-



One of his solutions:
Progressive taxation
Photo: National Nurses United

riod between 1945 and 1980 as very much the exception over the long epoch of capitalism. This period, for most of the western world, was the only time when the

world became less unequal. His predictions for the coming century are quite stark; he reminds us that over the long term, economic growth has always been quite low,

averaging 1% throughout written history.

He attributes the rapid economic activity of the 19th and 20th centuries to industrialisation, global wars and huge population growth. He stresses the importance of population increase to overall economic growth.

As the poorer countries 'catch-up' with the West and as population increase begins to slow-down, so too will economic growth return to its historical lower average. This will lead to further widening between the rich and the rest as inherited wealth will become more critical and in this sense he claims the "past will devour the future".

A significant achievement of the book is its ability to demystify the complexities of modern capitalism.

Piketty claims that "Capital is not that very different from what it was in the 18th century. Only its form has changed; Capital was once mainly land but is now industrial, financial and real estate".

All societies rely on universal value systems for their existence.

In this sense it combines the worst of capitalism with the worst of feudalism.

His remedies to the current inequalities in society have been dismissed as utopian. In short, he advocates progressive taxes on wealth, more democratic control of financial institutions and more transparency in global finance.

He notes the limitations of nation states to impose effective taxes on capital due to the myriad number of tax avoidance and tax evasion measures available to the wealthy.

The EU must act in concert, he states; tax competition between states is ultimately only in the interests of capital and not the citizens of Europe. He commends the Financial Transaction Tax. He advocates that corporations be required to make a single declaration of their profits at European level.

The tax-take should then be distributed proportionate to individual states, on a wages or sales basis. He challenges the reader to explore new forms of participation and governance in society and notes that "the market and the ballot box are merely the polar extremes in organising collective decisions".

So what as trade unionists can we learn from Piketty?

Principally, Piketty debunks 'trickle-down' economic theory. Between 1986 and 2008 wage determination in this State was based on wage increases linked to inflation.

The distribution of wealth within society was peripheral to determining the share between capital and labour. *Capital in the Twenty-first Century* brings this issue back centre stage.

Progressive taxes on capital will, however, only bring us so far; it is 'after the fact' as it were. The only civic organisations that can effectively look at the 'pre-distribution of wealth' are trade unions.

Our reliance on inflation to justify wage claims will no longer be adequate; the more fundamental question of the distribution of wealth between labour and capital must be addressed.

As we look for a larger pay-dividend in the months and years ahead *Capital in the Twenty-first Century* will give serious intellectual weight to our argument. France has always produced a rich philosophical vein that has armed Irish radicals with sound intellectual reasons to challenge societal norms; Thomas Piketty continues this proud tradition.

Adrian Kane

Thomas Piketty will speak at the TASC AGM in Dublin on Friday 20th June.

'Our reliance on inflation to justify wage claims will no longer be adequate; the more fundamental question of the distribution of wealth between labour and capital must be addressed'

Modern capitalist societies, with their professed equality of rights for all citizens, contrast sharply with the very real inequalities of living conditions.

To overcome this contradiction, Piketty says "it is vital to make sure that the social inequalities derive from rational and universal principles rather than arbitrary contingency".

Thus we live in a world of meritocratic hope. The 'American dream' is now the dominant world-view. The reality of modern capitalism, however, is that it "combines the arbitrariness of inherited inequalities with a meritocratic discourse that makes the 'losers' responsible for their situation."

Stop supplying to Israeli prisons, Desmond Tutu tells G4S

DESMOND Tutu recently led protesters in London campaigning against British security firm G4S's role in maintaining prisons and detention centres in the West Bank and Israel.

The South African retired archbishop and Nobel peace laureate challenged the company over its alleged role in facilitating "Israel's brutal occupation and abhorrent prison system" at the company's annual general meeting on 5th June.

Tutu, along with film directors

Mike Leigh and Ken Loach, philosopher Noam Chomsky and others, wrote an open letter to G4S management, published in the Guardian, demanding the company stop supplying equipment to Israeli prisons.

"G4S helps the Israeli Prison Service to run prisons inside Israel that hold prisoners from occupied Palestinian territory, despite the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibition of the transfer of prisoners from occupied territory into the territory of the occupier," they wrote.

"Through its involvement in Is-

rael's prison system, G4S is complicit in violations of international law and participates in Israel's use of mass incarceration as a means by which to dissuade Palestinians from protesting Israel's systematic human rights abuses."

The protesters claim that human rights organisations have documented "systematic torture" and ill treatment of Palestinian prisoners, including children held in solitary confinement, at some of the Prisons.

In a separate letter to the Guardian a number of British MPs

said children were reportedly ill-treated in the prisons and called on G4S to "terminate its contracts with facilities where children suffer routine physical and verbal abuse".

G4S, which employs 8,000 in Israel, said it "takes very seriously our obligations to ensure that our activities do not contribute to human rights abuses".

G4S, which employs 625,000 people in 125 countries, including Ireland, is also likely to face further questions over the death of Jimmy Mubenga, an Angolan national who died while he was being deported



Desmond Tutu: criticised G4s over its alleged role in facilitating Israel's "abhorrent prison system".
Photo: Photocall

from the UK. Three G4S security guards who had restrained Mubenga have been charged with manslaughter. All three deny the charges.

Curragh 1914 – a mutiny or a very British coup?

A Question of Duty: The Curragh Incident 1914

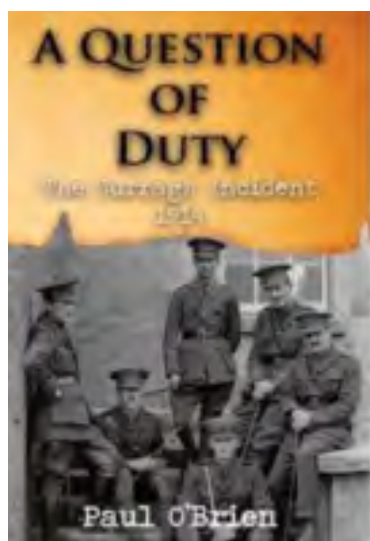
By Paul O' Brien

(New Island Books, 2014)

THE Curragh Military Camp, Kildare, March 1914. Most of the British officers, including their general, threatened to resign from the army rather than be deployed to the north of Ireland to face down opposition from unionists to the Home Rule Act which would give a measure of self-government to Ireland.

Was it a mutiny, or worse, part of a "very British coup", facing down the lawfully elected government and the equally lawful will of the British parliament which those very officers were sworn to uphold?

It is hard at this remove of time, on the centenary of what would be called the Great War, to credit that in the summer of 1914, the big talk-



ing point of international relations was the possibility of civil war on British soil. Of course, we now know that this threat was swept away (or rather under the carpet)

when a 19-year-old Serbian nationalist student, Gavrilo Princip, shot dead Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo in late June of that year.

The ensuing events propelled two imperial power blocs to a ruinous world war resulting in millions of needless deaths and, ironically, their own imperial demise. Britain, or rather England, had some previous form in civil conflict (leaving aside the ongoing class war and the Jacobite Rising of 1745). However, the last full-blown one was in 1645 resulting in the deposing and execution of Charles I.

This latest book by historian Paul O'Brien not only deals with the military issues around what was called "the Curragh Mutiny" but also the wider political context. He shows it was not just the petulant act of a few professional soldiers, but rather

reflective of a wider rift within the British establishment which precipitated a crisis in civil and military relations. Had it not been for war in Europe, that crisis could have propelled Britain into the modern-day sequel to the Civil War of the 17th century.

In summary, Paul O'Brien argues that the successful threat of resignation by the Curragh "mutineers" gave confidence to the unionist opposition to Home Rule, already emboldened by the support of powerful figures in the establishment. But it also stiffened nationalist resolve and support for the Irish Volunteers.

The book is yet another from this prolific and skilled military historian of 1916 and follows on previous titles covering battle sites of the Rising such as St. Stephens Green, The Four Courts and The Battle of

Ashbourne. This one is just as intriguing, well-researched and readable as all his earlier work.

In his penultimate chapter the author points out that "any army is only a flicker away from becoming an armed gang. The only thing that prevents this is military discipline..."

The same British army were tested and found severely wanting in this regard not long after, with the killing of civilians on Bachelors Walk in Dublin after the Howth gun-running and during the 1916 Rising with the murder of unarmed civilians in North King Street and in Portobello Barracks in Rathmines. A flicker away indeed – and not too many obvious pangs of conscience about it among the British army officer corps either, including over the litany of horrors in the North and elsewhere in recent decades.

Michael Halpenny

OBITUARY

Owen Curran – a man of the highest integrity



It was with sadness and regret that we learned of the sudden death of Owen A. Curran on 5th May. Owen was the General Secretary of the Irish Print Union for 25 years and headed its negotiating team in the discussions which lead to the transfer of engagements to SIPTU in 1998.

A lifelong trade unionist, Owen served on the Executive Committee of the IPU prior to taking up the position of General Secretary. He served the union with distinction as its representative on the

Executive Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, the Dublin Printing Trades Group, the International Graphical Federation and the European Graphical Federation.

Following his retirement in January 1999, Owen devoted a lot of his time to assisting with adult education and he was also a member of the Senior Citizens Parliament. He researched and wrote a book on the history of the Irish Print Union from the time of its origin as the Dublin Typographical Provident Society in 1859.

Owen was educated in St. Mary's

College where he developed a love for rugby and for many years he was a regular at club matches in Templeville Road and international games in Lansdowne Road. After he left school Owen followed his late father into the printing trade and worked for many years in the Irish Press prior to taking up his union position. The closure of the *Irish Press* in 1995 was a source of great disappointment to him as he had so many personal friends who lost their jobs as a consequence.

A man of the highest integrity, Owen was greatly respected by union members and employers,

and his patience, understanding and insight proved invaluable in resolving many industrial problems in the printing trade. He also possessed a great sense of humour and was a great raconteur.

As a union colleague he was a pleasure to work with at all times and he was a man you could trust with your life. He was truly one of nature's gentlemen.

Owen is survived by Ita, his beloved wife of over 50 years, his three sons, Eugene, Paul and Kevin and his daughter Margaret.

Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís

AW



Dundalk versus UCD. Can the Lilywhites go all the way this season? Photo: Dundalk FC

Keeping tabs on the title challengers

■ By Brendan O'Brien

WE'RE NOW at the halfway stage of the SSE Airtricity League season, which provides a timely opportunity to assess what has been a very open and exciting campaign. So what's the verdict so far?

At the top of the table, it's developing into a four-way battle for both the three European places and the title.

Stephen Kenny's Dundalk side having made the early pace have made top spot their own for most of the season to the delight of the Oriel Park faithful who've been treated to the exciting attacking football for which Kenny is renowned for.

Their star player has again been attacking midfielder Richie Towell whose outstanding performances again this season demand international manager Martin O'Neill to have a look.

The question for Dundalk is: can they go one better than last season and finally land the title?

Cork City, currently in second place, are also having a terrific season and have brought the smiles back to Turners Cross as they've played very entertaining football in front of great attendances.

Former Hoops player Billy Dennehy has been outstanding for the Leesiders, who look certain to bag



Billy Dennehy

one of the European spots, but have they got the depth to maintain the title charge?

Defending champions St Patrick's Athletic have found this season hard going as the old adage

of it being harder to defend the title has manifested itself on the Saints.

Liam Buckley's men are by no means out of the title race, but they will be conscious that they are also in a battle to secure a European spot.

Pat's have scored some outstanding goals this season, with striker Chris Forrester's volley from the halfway line perhaps the best goal scored by anyone in the world this year. Check it out on YouTube!

Shamrock Rovers make up the fourth team in the title-chasing pack and have improved significantly on the last two disappointing seasons.

Trevor Croly's squad has been improved with the additions of former Irish international Stephen McPhail and upcoming star Ryan Brennan. If Croly can sort out the goals, then the title may be theirs for the taking.

At the other end of the table, Athlone Town seem already consigned back to the First Division, having found their season back in the Premier Division tough going indeed, culminating with the departure of boss Mick Cooke on the back of a string of poor results.

Bohemians have also drifted into the danger zone and face a huge battle to try and avoid the prospect of a relegation play-off at the end of the season.

So that's it for a couple of weeks in our domestic league as the mid-

season break allows us to sit back and enjoy the FIFA World Cup in Brazil

Finally, including friendlies, can

you name the seven players at the 2014 World Cup finals who have scored a goal against Shamrock Rovers? (Answers below).



Some of the best independent wrestlers in the world will descend on the Liberty Hall Theatre on Saturday 19th, July for a once off night of fantastic wrestling action on the edge of Dublin's River Liffey. Some of the names set to appear are EL LIGERO (Voted the UK's no.1 wrestler for the month of April 2014 by British wrestling round-up on Challenge TV). Former WWE developmental wrestlers OMEN and the 7ft monster TRON are also set to cause chaos.

Answers:

Shola Ameobi (Nigeria) - friendly vs Newcastle United 2009; Karim Benzema (France) - friendly vs Real Madrid 2009; Christian Bolasanos (Costa Rica) - vs FC Copenhagen Champions League 2011/12; Christian Noboa (Ecuador) - vs Rubin Kazan Europa League 2011/12; Giovanni dos Santos (Mexico) - vs Tottenham Hotspur Europa League 2011/12; Veitinha (Portugal) - vs PAOK Europa League 2011/12; Dimitris Salpingidis (Greece) - vs PAOK Europa League 2011/12



Rebels, Jacks and Rossies

■ By Matt Treacy

WITH the return of the Championship, not only do GAA supporters get to watch their counties in action again, but we also get to abuse one another something desperate.

So it is handy to have recognised terms of abuse distinct from the officially sanitised nicknames approved by the GAA.

The ones generally used often have a bit of a nasty edge to them. So while Cork people like to style themselves "the Rebels" in memory of their support for 15th century pretender to the English throne Perkin Warbeck who lived in Mayfield for a while, everyone else calls them "langers", which is the impolite local term for the male member.

We Dubs are "the Dubs" or otherwise "Jackeens" or even worse!

Jimmy Keaveney was once bizarrely called "an owl fish and chip man". The Jackeen one is interesting as it is often claimed that

this alludes to Dubs waving union flags on the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit to the city in 1900.

No such thing. Dublin Corporation refused a vote of homage, and there was a major riot in which James Connolly and Sean O'Casey, then of this parish, took part.

Jackeen is a much older term of abuse for Dubs and refers to the sleazy habits of what the Americans called "stage door johnnies" who preyed on innocent girls from the country.

Anyway, even if Jackeen is pejorative, we have adopted it, and also call ourselves "the Jacks".

And there are others. Roscommon are "the Rossies", but their neighbours prefer the sobriquet "sheepstealers".

So common was the practice down Ming's way back in the day that there was a story that the first Roscommon man let into heaven was thrown out by St. Peter after he was caught trying to rob the Lamb of God.

Tipperary, according to Babs Keating, will always be the "Premier County" even though these days they only win the All Ireland

with the frequency of manned lunar landings.

They are also known as the "Stone Throwers" which some claim is a reference to the militancy of the county during the Land War.

Others darkly suggest that it

'It is handy to have recognised terms of abuse distinct from officially sanitised nicknames approved by the GAA

refers to their habit of throwing things, including stones, at the opposition. There is some evidence of that from the Munster hurling final in Killarney in 1971 when Tipp supporters pelted the Limerick goalkeeper.

Tipp relatives of mine swear that the hardest items thrown were oranges but the idea of Tipp people throwing away food is hardly credible.

Offaly are the "Faithful County" or, more recently, the "Biffos". Both sound disarmingly tender and harmless, like Biffo the Bear. I propose "Sly Puck in the Back of the Head County" as a more descriptive moniker.

And Wicklow as the "Garden County", is perhaps an abbreviation of "We Buried the Ref in the Back Garden" county.

Carlow are for some bizarre reason known as the "Scallion Eaters", also as "Piss-in-the-powders"; a reference to their premature decommissioning prior to the 1798 Rebellion.

It is noteworthy too that some of the counties most famous for their 'robust' style of football have been rewarded with deceptively benign monikers.

A bit like those tropical insects that disguise themselves as flowers. Take for example Armagh. "The Orchard County" rather than the more descriptive "Flying Elbow

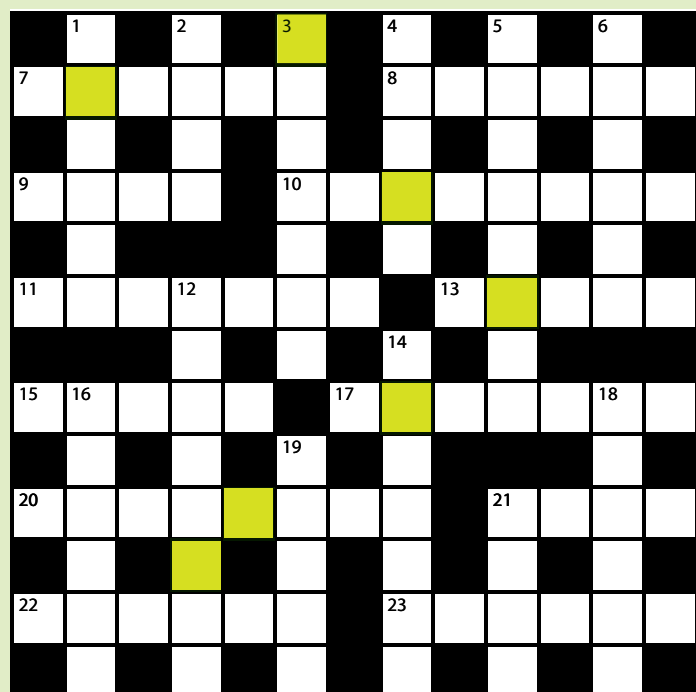
County".

Kildare are "the Lily Whites" but also "the Flour Bags". Contrary to that being a scurrilous allusion to their alleged habit of losing games they ought to win, it in fact refers to their having forgotten to bring their jerseys with them one time and having to stop off at a mill in Leixlip or Lucan and borrow some flour bags which with strategic re-tailoring were fit for purpose. Oh, and Dublin won the match.

So, when you are watching your team on the field of play, and you are gripped by paroxysms of rage at the treachery and go-be-the-wall slyness of the opposing team, and your children have their faces covered with their jerseys in mortification at your antics, perhaps reflect a while on the historic and cultural roots of the horrible epithets you are hurling at the pitch and rival supporters who have moved seats and abandoned you within a red-faced sweating *cordon sanitaire*.

But to hell with them all. You are enjoying yourself!

Liberty Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Across
- 7 On the move (6)
- 8 For news or writing (6)
- 9 Kaffiyeh wearer (4)
- 10 A Canary Island (8)
- 11 To physically attack (7)
- 13 Where a dinner is placed (5)
- 15 Not old people (5)
- 17 James Joyce's greatest work (7)
- 20 City in North East of Scotland (8)
- 21 Computer operator (4)
- 22 Severe (6)
- 23 Banner (6)

DOWN

- 1 Places of law or tennis (6)
- 2 Arm or leg (4)
- 3 Despicable sort (7)
- 4 Whirls (5)
- 5 300 stood against Persia (8)
- 6 Dexterous (6)
- 12 Can fall from space to earth (8)
- 14 Defamation (7)
- 16 Moon does this to the earth (6)
- 18 Liveliness (6)
- 19 Euro fractions (5)
- 21 Gorbachev was its last leader: Abbr. (4)

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

Email the hidden word to communications@siptu.ie or post to Communications Dept., Liberty Hall, Dublin 1

along with your name and address and you will be entered into a **prize draw to win two nights for two people in one of Ireland's Fair Hotels.**

The winner of the crossword quiz will be published in the next edition of Liberty.

*Terms and conditions apply.

The winner of the crossword competition in the May edition was Emmet Field, Blackrock, Co. Cork

Answer: Election

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