

## **INVITE: Centenary of Rotunda Takeover | Saturday 22nd January @ 1.30pm**

The Liam & Tom O'Flaherty Society are pleased to invite members of the Trade Union movement to join with us for an event to celebrate the centenary of the occupation of the Rotunda by Dublin's Unemployed in January 1922. The event is scheduled to take place starting at 1.30 p.m. on Saturday, 22 January. (Location here: <https://goo.gl/maps/CHPxUgUWg3JrR8we6>)

A hundred years ago this month, just two days after the provisional government of the Irish Free State came into force, on Wednesday, 18 January 1922, a group of at least 200 unemployed people, under the leadership of Liam O'Flaherty, took over Dublin's Rotunda concert hall in peaceful protest. As O'Flaherty told the Irish Times in an interview the following day: "the government that does not redress our grievances is not worth recognising".

The action came at a time when working-class people had been setting up Soviets in many parts of Ireland and indeed in other parts of Europe. The Russian word Soviet means Council and referred in Ireland to workers' councils taking over the running of a workplace. Nearly all of these flew a red flag over the places they had occupied. Led by Liam O'Flaherty, a founder member of the Irish Communist Party and editor of its paper the Workers' Republic, the Council of Unemployed occupied the Rotunda and flew a red flag over the Pillar Room. The unemployed held the building for four days. O'Flaherty, along with other members of the council drew up a Manifesto to the Citizens of Dublin, distributed widely, declaring:

"the wealthy enjoy the fruits of the toil of those who are now hungry. They enjoy the dividends that these men earned for them on the blood-stained fields of France and Gallipoli. They enjoy the liberty that these men fought for in the streets of Dublin, against the foreign foe. They enjoy, but they share not."

This Manifesto was deemed lost for a long time, and although there were references to it, nobody had the text. The Liam & Tom O'Flaherty Society was recently able to secure a copy of it and will be distributing this text as a look-alike poster at the event on Saturday, 22 January 2022 as part of a celebration of the stand taken by the Council of the Unemployed under O'Flaherty's leadership.

The open air event will commence 1.30 p.m. at 42 North Great George's Street, where the now famous Manifesto was printed, with the main event to take place at 2 p.m. outside the Ambassador Theatre. It will involve an address by historian Donal Fallon on the details of the occupation, a reading of the manifesto by writer Alan O'Brien, and a rendering of The Red Flag. Copies of the Manifesto will be distributed. Red flags will help to commemorate the action by Dublin's Unemployed 100 years ago, and by extension will pay homage to the workers' Soviets in Ireland.

The Liam & Tom O'Flaherty Society requests participants to wear face masks and observe social distancing. As public health guidelines for outdoor events are unclear at the time of planning, we ask potential participants to check our social media sites for any updates:

**Facebook ([fb.com/OFlahertySociety](https://www.facebook.com/OFlahertySociety)) and Twitter (@liamoflahsoc).**