

Liberty



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SIPTU Conference

Page 7 - 8



Bord na Móna

Page 14



Liberty Theatre event guide

Page 23



Support law for low paid workers

■ by Scott Millar

SIPTU members will support a proposed new law that will help to provide decent wages and conditions for low paid workers. The law will force employers to engage in a Joint Labour Committee (JLC) and agree wage levels for workers in low paid sectors, including hotels and hospitality.

The Joint Labour Committee (JLC) system plays a key role in establishing minimum pay and conditions in low paid sectors of the economy. SIPTU members in the hospitality and contract catering sectors are currently denied the protections offered by a JLC.

SIPTU members are supporting the Industrial Relations (Joint Labour Committees) Bill 2019 which seeks to reform the JLC system by giving new powers to the Labour Court. If enacted, the Bill, which has been proposed by Labour Party Senator Ged Nash, will allow the Labour Court to set binding rates of pay above the National Minimum Wage even when an employer organisation will not engage.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Martin O'Rourke, said: "Under this new Bill, employer bodies will face two choices. They can engage in the JLC process and work with unions to agree rates of pay and terms that work for their sector or have a solution imposed on them by the Labour Court and Oireachtas.

Continued on page 2



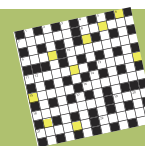
Pictured (Left to Right) Rispa Mwangi from Kenya, Fathi Mohamed from Somalia and Sindisiwe Ncube from Zimbabwe who all live in a Direct Provision Center attended the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI) conference in Liberty Hall on 5th October, 2019. See page 12. Photo: RollingNews.ie

Book reviews

Page 24 - 27

Crossword

Page 31



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Save RTE
Page 5



Housing Crisis
Page 10



Liberty View
Page 11

Liberty
View

District Councils
Page 13



Supporting Quality
Page 16-19



Book and film reviews
Page 24-27



Rovers Return
Page 30



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Photo left to right: Gerry Murphy, President ICTU and Ahmad Alsoos (former child detainee) at the TUFFP conference in Dublin on Friday 18th November.
Photo: Fatim Al-Tamini

Trade unions condemn Israeli maltreatment of Palestinian children

Leading Irish trade unionists have called on the Irish Government to halt trade links with Israel in protest at the systematic maltreatment of Palestinian children by the Israeli military. Speaking at a major conference in Dublin last week, Denis Keane of Trade Union Friends of Palestine (TUFFP) and Fórsa said an ongoing Israeli strategy of mass arrests and maltreatment of Palestinian children was being implemented on an "industrial scale," and appeared to be part of a deliber-

ate policy to traumatise large numbers of children.

According to UNICEF, the United Nations agency for children, 59 Palestinian children were killed by Israeli forces in 2018. Another 3,472 were injured, while over 200 children – some as young as 12 – were detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system every month. An earlier UNICEF report said the "ill treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalised."

Denis Keane said: "Israel is the

only country in the world that prosecutes children through military tribunals instead of civilian courts, and it is doing this on an industrial scale. Even strong allies of Israel have expressed alarm at its treatment of Palestinian children. We are calling on the Irish Government to take a stronger stand on Israel's deliberate policy of killing, injuring, imprisoning and traumatising thousands of children." Among the speakers at the conference was Mona El-Farra Director of the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA) who travelled from Gaza for the event.

SK biotech dispute results in WRC talks

SIPTU members employed at SK biotech, the pharmaceutical manufacturing company in Swords, County Dublin, have accepted an invitation to attend a conciliation meeting at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC).

SIPTU Organiser, Jim Fuery, said: "Our members in SK biotech have

agreed to attend a conciliation meeting at the WRC scheduled for Tuesday, 3rd December. The company has also agreed to attend this meeting."

SIPTU members had been refused entry to their workplace by management on 13th November.

The lockout occurred in the context of a dispute concerning a management attempt to override a

collective agreement which was part of a protection of employees on a transfer of undertakings (TUPE) concluded when the plant was purchased in December 2017.

There are 87 SIPTU members working in the pharmaceutical ingredients plant. The plant has resumed normal operation since the intervention of the WRC.

Continued from page 1 —Support law for low paid workers

"Good and progressive employers in contract cleaning and in security see the value of JLC agreed Employment Regulation Orders for their sector. Decent pay and conditions have helped them to retain good staff and they know that they have a level playing field and certainty in terms of labour costs when they tender for business."

He added: "This Bill would ensure that such good practice is adopted in other sectors such as hospitality and contract catering."

At a meeting in Leinster House to discuss the importance of the Bill, chef Lar Baker, told TDs that he wanted to see the creation of a hospitality sector "that I would want my children to work in, with

decent pay and the prospect of advancement through training".

"That is not currently the way the sector is operating," he said.

Support for the Bill is part of a wider SIPTU strategy of prioritising democracy in the workplace. This is about ensuring workers' have a collective voice in negotiations in a manner which benefits them and the companies they work for.

SIPTU Researcher, Michael Taft, said: "Workplace democracy and collective bargaining reduces staff turnover and avoids conflict on the workplace floor. Costs are lowered while income rises for businesses.

"It results in the skills and competences of workers being respected which, in turn, ensures

that businesses are able to attract and retain employees in their workplace. It also helps ensure that employee and employer representatives can more easily reach solutions as each side knows what is necessary for business survival. All this is not only good for the workers and the individual companies but also the wider economy."

The Industrial Relations (Joint Labour Committees) Bill 2019 will come before the Seanad on Wednesday, 27th November. SIPTU members will continue to support the campaign for low paid workers until they gain greater legal protection and are allowed full trade union representation.

See page 3 and page 11.

Politicians seek stronger protections for low paid workers

■ By Scott Millar

A meeting attended by TDs, senators and members of the media in Leinster House on 21st November heard SIPTU members in the hospitality industry voice their support for a Bill which seeks to strengthen the system of Joint Labour Committees (JLCs). The existing JLCs set minimum conditions and rates of pay for low paid sectors of the workforce including for those working in the security and contract cleaning sectors.

Among the SIPTU activists who addressed the politicians was chef Martin Murga. He said:

"The pursuit of profit pits worker against worker, good employer against bad employer. Such a process leads to ever declining pay and conditions in a sector. This badly impacts on workers and customers."

He added: "JLCs are the best way to ensure that the race to the bottom is ended and this proposed new law will help them function better."

The Industrial Relations (Joint Labour Committees) Bill 2019, proposed by Senator Ged Nash of the Labour Party, if enacted, will ensure that the functioning of JLCs cannot be obstructed by employer organisations or trade unions.

Addressing the meeting, SIPTU Sector Organiser, Martin O'Rourke, said: "While JLCs are currently operating well within the contract

cleaning and security sectors other workers are being denied this simple protection from a race to the bottom.

"However, employer organisations have blocked the operation of the JLCs in other sectors. They do this by refusing to participate in the process of discussion with trade unions on what should constitute the minimum standards and pay rates in the sector."

He added: "This Bill seeks to remove this veto and allow the JLCs to operate as the Oireachtas intended. It would allow the Labour Court to make its own binding proposals in sectors where either the employer or employee representatives refuse to engage in the JLC."

Aoife Mitchell, who worked in the hotel industry for nine years,

"The pursuit of profit pits worker against worker, good employer against bad employer. Such a process leads to ever declining pay and conditions in a sector"



SIPTU delegation with Senators Ged Nash, Alice Mary Higgins and Paul Gavan at the Dáil on Thursday 21st November.
Photo: Scott Millar

said she experienced difficulties which would be removed if the sector had a functioning JLC.

"There are a lot of issues aside from pay as working conditions in the sector are pretty poor as well", she said. "I would have experienced harassment and bullying and that is a common complaint from people working in hotels."

"Everybody is aware of the cost of living these days - rental prices are extremely high so you're living week to week while you're working in this sector and it's very dif-

ficult to plan for a family and all of those things come into play."

Lar Baker, who has been a chef for 32 years, said it was extremely hard for new staff coming into the sector. "They have no negotiation power. They are on minimum wage coming into sector and they have no training and no experience and there are few prospects of progression in the industry."

Among the politicians present at the briefing were senator Nash, Sinn Féin senator, Paul Gavan, independent senator, Alice Mary

Higgins, Social Democrat TD Roisín Shortall, Fianna Fáil TD, Brendan Smyth, Labour TDs, Brendan Ryan and Jan O'Sullivan, Labour senator, Ivana Bacik and Independent TD, Thomas Pringle.

RISE TD, Paul Murphy, also said he would vote for the Bill, saying he supported "broadening the legal standing of JLCs".

The Industrial Relations (Joint Labour Committees) Bill 2019 will be put before the Seanad on Wednesday, 27th November.

GoSafe talks for WRC after stoppage

TALKS aimed at resolving the dispute involving SIPTU members employed by GoSafe Ireland, the operator of speed camera vans on behalf of the State, began at the Workplace Relation Commission (WRC) on Friday, 22nd November.

The facilitated talks follow the suspension of a campaign of industrial action, including work stoppages, by SIPTU members which began in September.

SIPTU Organiser, Brendan Carr, told Liberty: "Our members in GoSafe only began their campaign of industrial action in late September as a last resort because of a management refusal to address their concerns relating to health

and safety and their conditions of employment in an acceptable manner.

"We are hopeful that with the company agreeing to talks at the WRC a just solution to our members' issues can be found and there will be no need for any further disruption to the crucial road safety service they provide."

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions believes that the GoSafe dispute, which involves a company operating a public contract, has implications for public service agreements and has lobbied both the Department of Justice and the Garda on behalf of the workers.



GoSafe workers on the picket line.
Photo: Graham Seely

Early Years support Department fund

THE Department of Children and Youth Affairs has set up a fund "to support the introduction of a Sectoral Employment Order" (SEO) for the childcare sector as part of Budget 2020.

The fund was established after a national pre-budget campaign by SIPTU activists and organisers as part of the Big Start Campaign.

SIPTU Head of Strategic Organising and Campaigns, Darragh O'Connor, told *Liberty*: "The Government now recognises that it has a responsibility to support decent pay and conditions. Thanks to cam-

paigning by hundreds of SIPTU activists and supporters, we are one step closer to an SEO and pay justice.

"However, the Government has allocated just €2.2 million to the SEO Support Fund for 2020.

"This is a welcome start, but it won't be enough to raise everyone to the Living Wage, let alone professional salaries that educators deserve.

"That's why SIPTU members are escalating the campaign ahead of the general election in 2020. Without increased government investment, pay and conditions will not significantly improve."



The Big Start National Committee call on Paschal Donohoe to 'Pay Up' following a meeting in SIPTU College in September
Photo: Darragh O'Connor

GEO Drilling Apprenticeship launched at Tara Mines



Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development, Damien English (front row, fourth from left), with Boliden Tara Mines management, Tara Mines shop stewards, Carlow Institute of Technology staff, Geo Ireland staff, Tara Mines apprentices and (pictured left) SIPTU Organiser, Andy McGuinness

THE GEO Drilling Apprenticeship was launched at an event in Tara Mines, county Meath, on 11th November, by the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development, Damien English.

The two-year level 6 Apprenticeship is sponsored by Geoscience Ireland and will be delivered by Carlow Institute of Technology.

At the event, the minister said that geo-drilling is a highly-skilled occupation and is central

to the geoscience underlying infrastructural development including housing, mining, quarrying and groundwater supplies.

The new apprenticeship was created by a steering committee which included representatives from mine and quarry operating companies, Irish Water, the Federation of Group Water Schemes, GSI, the Irish Mining and Quarrying Society, Exploration Drilling and SIPTU.

Unions sign groundbreaking protocol for National Children's Hospital



Photo from left: ICTU General Secretary Patricia King, Eamon Devoy and Denis McCarthy, BAM Building. Photo: Aoife Ni Shuilleabhain

Unions have signed an agreement with the building contractor, BAM Building, committing it to ensuring compliance with the Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) for the construction industry at the National Children's Hospital site at James's Hospital Campus in Dublin.

The protocol agreement was signed on 21st November in central Dublin.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, John Regan, said: "This protocol agreement was signed by representatives of the unions included in

the ICTU Construction Industry Committee, ICTU General Secretary, Patricia King and BAM Building.

"It commits BAM Building, as the main contractor on the National Children's Hospital, to ensuring that all sub-contractors and agencies operating on the site comply with the Construction SEO that sets minimum standards of pay and conditions for workers. The five unions involved are SIPTU, OPATSI, Connect, BATU, and Unite. This protocol is the first of its kind in 40 years.

"The agreement stipulates that union organisers will have access to the site and direct contact with workers in order to ensure they are receiving their legal minimum entitlements for the full duration of the building of the National Children's Hospital."

He added: "SIPTU is calling on the Construction Industry Federation to adopt this protocol agreement as a template for its member companies on how to co-operate with unions on all public and private building projects."

New funding model for Early Years sector

DURING the autumn an expert group was set up to develop a new funding model for the Early Years sector – a move welcomed by SIPTU members and the Big Start campaign.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Diane Jackson, said: "We are campaigning for high quality, affordable childcare supported by professional pay and sustainable services. However, the current funding system has resulted in high fees for parents and low pay for workers."

She added: "We welcome the establishment of the expert group by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. SIPTU members will actively engage with group and advocate for reforms that deliver for children, professionals, parents and services."

Organising to fight for workers in Europe



Photo from left, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary Gerry McCormack, SIPTU Divisional Organiser Teresa Hannick, SIPTU Organiser Eva Mitchell and SIPTU Organiser Michael Browne at the The European Federation of Food Agriculture and Tourism Trade Union, Zagreb Croatia on 5th November.

SIPTU Delegates Gerry McCormack, Teresa Hannick, Mick Brown and Eva Mitchell travelled to Zagreb Croatia to attend the 'The European Federation of Food Agriculture and Tourism Trade Union' (EFFAT) from the 5th to 7th November. There were 350 trade union delegates in attendance representing 34 countries across the European food, tourism and agriculture sectors. The Congress outlined EFFAT's course for the next five years establishing its priorities and action plan. The focus was very much on topical issues such as the effects of social dumping, (the practice of employers

using cheaper labour than is usually available at their site of production or sale), climate change, digitalisation, precarious work and the need to engage younger workers in the trade union movement throughout Europe. The call to strengthen collective bargaining mechanisms in sectors affected by low pay and precarious work was reinforced during the conference. Eva Mitchell, a former hospitality worker, who works in the Strategic Organising department of SIPTU, was elected to represent Northern European countries on the EFFAT Youth Bureau. The committee will focus on tackling precarious work and improving the presence of young people in trade union structures across Europe.



Photo left to right: Paul Duffy vice chair SIPTU, Tara Mines and Kieran Donaghy chairman SIPTU Tara Mines present SIPTU Sector Organiser John Regan with a print of Liberty Hall in recognition of his 20 years of service to Tara Mines workers.

Campaign to save RTÉ



Seamus Dooley NUJ, Shirley Bradshaw, Trade Union Group of Unions, Fran McNulty, RTE and Karan O'Loughlin SIPTU attending a meeting at RTE on 7th November.
Photo: RollingNews.ie

SIPTU members in RTÉ have joined with their colleagues in other unions to launch "It's Your RTE, Save It", a new campaign aimed at saving jobs and services at the national broadcaster.

The launch of the campaign involving SIPTU, Connect, the NUJ and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions follows the emergence in early November of a management plan to impose 200 job cuts and service reductions at the station.

SIPTU representatives have made it clear that the union will oppose any attempt to enforce compulsory redundancies on staff in RTÉ. SIPTU Services Division Organiser, Teresa Hannick, told Liberty the union is opposed to pay cuts for staff or the introduction of any form of compulsory redundancies and

has not ruled out industrial action.

She said: "The plan outlines job cuts on a voluntary basis but there have already been several rounds of voluntary redundancies at the station, the last one of which was not fully subscribed so it is very unclear to our members how 200 voluntary redundancies can be achieved.

"Our members in RTE have been through several rounds of rationalisation and worked hard to get the station through some very tough times. They have taken the pain to assist in ensuring the survival of the crucial services which are provided by RTÉ and this is the thanks they get - to be faced with an ultimatum over job cuts in the run up to Christmas."

As part of the "It's Your RTÉ,

Save It", SIPTU members and organisers visited the Dáil on 19th November where they addressed TDs and Senators concerning the need for Lyric FM to remain in its current broadcast centre in Limerick.

SIPTU Organiser, Graham Macken, said: "There are currently four main aims in relation to the campaign to save RTÉ as an effective national broadcaster which SIPTU members are focusing on. These are no pay cuts for the lower paid workers, no compulsory redundancies, all items proposed by management must be costed independently and Lyric FM in Limerick must continue in operation."

SIPTU and its affiliate unions, Equity Ireland and the Musicians Union of Ireland, represent approximately 1,200 RTÉ staff members.

Dublin conference on European Works Councils

SIPTU hosted the first European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) conference to be held in Ireland at the Eurofound offices, in Dublin from 1st to 3rd October.

The conference, titled 'Trade union training for European Works Councils', involved 23 European Works Council co-ordinators, trade union organisers and activists from 15 countries across the EU.

SIPTU Deputy General Secretary Gerry

McCormack opened the event which also heard contributions from EWC co-ordinators from Italy, Belgium, Romania, Poland, Norway, Germany and Ireland.

Denis Sheridan, an EWC co-ordinator at SIPTU, spoke about the Irish model assessing its strengths and weaknesses and outlined how the union made use of EWCs as an organising tool.

The event was chaired by ETUI Education Officer, Bruno Demaitre.



SIPTU members Justina Munitich and Kathleen Costello at the launch of the salary protection scheme in SIPTU College. Photo: Paddy Cole

Salary protection scheme for SIPTU health care assistants

SIPTU members working as health care assistants can now exclusively avail of a salary protection scheme with Cornmarket.

Speaking to *Liberty*, SIPTU Care Sector Organiser, Marie Butler said: "Cornmarket and SIPTU have worked together over the last number of months to secure the best price and benefits for members of the SIPTU Health Care Assistants Salary Protection Scheme.

"When it comes to cost, members can benefit from the group purchasing power of our union. The total scheme premium is 1.50% of gross salary and is great value for money."

Members may apply to join the SIPTU Health Care Assistants Salary Protection Scheme if they work in the following areas:

- A hospital, owned and funded by the HSE and a member of one of the HSE seven hospital groups.
- A voluntary public hospital and a member of one of the HSE seven hospital groups.
- A private hospital affiliated to the private hospitals as a public health facility or care centre operated by the HSE.
- A Section 38 organisation.

Tara Mines unions resist flat rate expenses reductions



Photo left: Tara Mines delegation to the Dáil: (left to right) Paul Duffy, SIPTU Organiser Jim McVeigh, Kieran Donaghy, Pat Conlon, SIPTU Sector Organiser John Regan, Eoghan O'Neill and James Markey

UNIONS representing employees in Boliden Tara Mines in Navan, county Meath, have called for the reversal of a decision to drastically reduce an allowance which has been in place for mine workers since 1990.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, John Regan, told *Liberty*: "The current Revenue-approved tax relief was established in 1990 for workers in the mining industry.

"Over the years it has had periodical reviews and was increased

to €1,312 annually for underground workers in 2009. It has been frozen at this rate since then.

"Our members have always complied with the Revenue stipulation that this tax relief is expended 'wholly, exclusively and necessarily' in the performance of their employment.

"Revenue in a swipe of a pen has reduced the €1,312 allowance to €120 and in the case of surface workers €655 to zero which will come into effect on 1st January 2020."

He added: "As a compromise, our members are seeking the continuation of the freeze on the allowance of €1,312 annually for underground PAYE workers and €655 for surface PAYE workers. The allowance should then be reviewed in a process involving the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

"In order to achieve this outcome, a delegation including members of SIPTU and the craft unions in Tara Mines, visited the Dáil where they discussed the issue with TDs."

Honorary President – Workers 'cornerstone' of new two year term

HSE worker Padraig Peyton has been re-elected as the SIPTU's honorary president with a commitment to bringing union activism into local communities and protecting public services from the threat of outsourcing.

A SIPTU Nursing member, Peyton was re-elected at the SIPTU's recent Biennial Delegate Conference. Peyton told *Liberty*: "Bringing union activism into local communities across the island, protecting public services from the threat of outsourcing as well as maintaining the union's campaigns for better housing, health, childcare and workers' rights will be the cornerstone of my renewed two-year term as honorary president."

Chairperson of the SIPTU Allied Health Professional Sector, Michele Monahan was elected as the union's honorary vice-presi-



Honorary President Padraig Peyton and Honorary Vice President Michele Monahan

dent at the conference.

Monahan has told *Liberty* that her focus will be on the redevelopment of organising structures and an inclusive role for all SIPTU members through 'on the

ground' co-operation between all divisions, sectors and other units of the union as well as a strong enhancement of the district committees.

SIPTU Biennial Conference focuses on organising workers and Brexit fallout



Delegates in City Hall.
Photos: Jimmy Weldon

MORE than 400 delegates and observers attended this year's SIPTU Biennial Delegate Conference in City Hall, Cork, where new union policy was debated and adopted on a wide range of issues of concern to members.

New policies were adopted on climate change and Just Transition, precarious work and proposed changes to pension eligibility.

Other motions passed included a call the protection of artists' self-employed status for tax purposes as well as support for the tips campaign initiated by the One Galway movement.

Among the speakers who addressed the conference were ICTU General Secretary Patricia King; the



General Secretary Designate
Joe Cunningham

recently elected ETUC Deputy General Secretary, Esther Lynch; and Dr Deirdre Curran, of NUI Galway and the Galway Hospitality Group, who outlined the shocking findings of new research on precarious work in the hotel sector.

End direct provision call at conference

SIPTU's position on direct provision was made clear when a motion calling for it to be scrapped and for refugees and asylum seekers to be integrated into local communities by giving them the right to work was carried at the conference.

The motion also dealt with combatting anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment.

SIPTU National Equality Committee Yvonne Mefor, who proposed the motion, said: "There has been a marked rise of anti-immigrant sentiment across the western world. This sentiment has undoubtedly played a part in the rise of President Donald Trump and of even more immediate concern the referendum victory of those pushing the Brexit agenda.

"In Ireland, we have also seen the ripples of such backward politics. Whereas once these views were largely confined to the internet, the purveyors of hate now feel able to meet together on Irish streets.

"Our union must take a strong, unflinching and powerful stance against such forces. This is not just because it is right thing to do for our society, but it is the right thing to do for workers."



Maisey Morgan-Sutton
addresses conference
on climate change

Climate change is a key priority

DELEGATES voted for SIPTU to adopt a clear, proactive agenda on climate change including the setting up of a Climate Action working group to help develop policies and initiate campaigns to force the Government to fully implement the recommendations for a 'Just Transition Taskforce'.

The importance of the union prioritising the issue of climate change was made clear in a well-received address to conference by Extinction Rebellion activist Maisey Morgan-Sutton.

She told delegates: "We need to stop looking at sustainability as a luxury and instead look at it as a necessary means of action to ensure a just and equitable world for us all."

SIPTU and USI agree to strengthen links

ON 7th October, SIPTU and the Union of Students of Ireland (USI) announced they were renewing an agreement reached between the two organisations to facilitate joint campaigns and to provide third level students with support in the workplace.

USI Deputy President and Vice President for Campaigns, Michelle Byrne, told *Liberty*: "Students and workers have a fantastic history of galvanising as one force. Through the partnership of USI and SIPTU, we look forward to continuing this trend into the future. Workers' rights are students' rights."

SIPTU General Secretary, Joe Cunningham, said: "We have renewed the agreement between



SIPTU Head of Strategic Organising and Campaigns, Darragh O'Connor (left); USI Deputy President, Michelle Byrne; and incoming SIPTU General Secretary, Joe Cunningham

SIPTU and USI that has been in place for more than 10 years. This agreement further strengthens the relationship between students and union members. It provides the

potential for even greater cooperation between SIPTU and USI and the wider trade union movement on the great issues that affect students, workers and society."

Government's minimum wage freeze slammed



SIPTU Divisional Organiser
Teresa Hannick addressing
delegates.

DELEGATES unanimously voted in favour of an emergency motion condemning the Government for deferring a 30 cents-per-hour increase in the minimum wage.

Proposing the motion, SIPTU Manufacturing Division Organiser, Teresa Hannick, said: "The Low Pay Commission is there for a reason. It recommended an increase to €10.10 an hour from €9.80 but the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, and the Government have failed these [low-paid] workers miserably."

Steering the union through difficult years

Generous tributes were paid to Joe O'Flynn the outgoing General Secretary of SIPTU at the Biennial Delegate Conference in his native city of Cork in early October.

First elected in 2002, Joe O'Flynn will have served the union in the position for eighteen years when he retires early next year. During that time he has managed the union and its finances through some its most difficult years while he leaves his role with membership at its highest level since the financial crisis ten years ago.

His successor, Joe Cunningham, told delegates that that it was going to be difficult "to fill the shoes" of a man who steered the organisation through turbulent times while also presiding over the most extensive restructuring of the union since its foundation.

"He facilitated the move from a branch structure to an organising

union based on industrial sectors and divisions and was also instrumental in setting up our Workers' Rights Centres and the Organising Department," Joe Cunningham said.

Joe O'Flynn started his working life as a mechanic in Cork before he joined the ITGWU in 1980 when he was appointed to look after Branches 4.7 and 8 of the union during his early years with the union.

During the 1980's, he became known for his ability and success in organising members into the union and achieved a major success for cleaners employed by the Southern Health Board in resisting efforts by the Fianna Fáil government to outsource their work.

"As a very young trade union official, Joe O'Flynn put a stop to the outsourcing of the jobs of health service workers back in 1989," Cunningham recalled.

As an ITGWU branch secretary in Cork between 1991 and 1997,

he doubled membership over a four-year period, recognising the critical importance of building union density, gaining the trust of members while also honouring commitments made with employers, he continued.

During his many years as general secretary Joe O'Flynn also served as treasurer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in a demanding role based in Liberty Hall and inevitably at a distance from his family in Cork.

During his closing speech to conference, Joe O'Flynn expressed his gratitude and devotion to his wife, Mary, and to their son Conor and three grandchildren. He also thanked his mother Chrissie, a life-long union member and activist now in her '90s who was present. The union conference took place in City Hall in Cork, where Joe O'Flynn presided as Lord Mayor during the 1980's.



General Secretary, Joe O'Flynn addressing BDC for one last time. In an upbeat speech, he detailed how SIPTU was a growing union in terms of new members...

Photos: Jimmy Weldon

General Secretary's final address to conference – on union growth and housing

CAMPAIGNING to end the housing crisis, growing our union and international issues were to the fore for General Secretary, Joe O'Flynn, in his final SIPTU Biennial Delegate Conference address.

Condemning the "intolerable" housing crisis, he told Conference that "for years we have cam-

paigned for local authorities to get back to doing what they once did and take responsibility to build public housing that people can afford." He said: "That is why we have been to the forefront in the housing campaign, 'Raise the Roof'. We see housing as a right and the government dependence on the private sector to house our people has failed miserably."

On the position of SIPTU he sounded an upbeat note. O'Flynn added: "I want to acknowledge and recognise the great work being done in the organising of new members in the union: 23,752 in 2017; 23,218 in 2018, 20,670 so far this year and we are on target to recruit more than 27,000 new workers to our union in 2019."



Delegates applaud the final speech of SIPTU General Secretary Joe O'Flynn in Cork in October.

SIPTU and Guinness Staff Union affiliation deal



SIPTU and the Guinness Staff Union signed an affiliation agreement in October which will strengthen both unions within the drinks sector and provide the GSU with access to SIPTU services. Pictured: Michael Browne, Sector Organiser; Gerry McCormack, Deputy General Secretary; Teresa Hannick, Divisional Or-

ganiser; out-going General Secretary Joe O'Flynn; John Dunne, General Secretary GSU; Joe Cunningham, General Secretary; Jennifer Spurling a member of the GSU Executive Committee; and Mark Power, who is Chair of the GSU Executive Committee.

Politics of say little and do nothing



By Vic
Duggan

MAKING virtue out of necessity is a tried and trusted political tactic.

With neither Fine Gael nor Fianna Fáil able to command a sustainable majority after the 2016 election, and unwilling to give up the narcissism of small differences by forming a grand coalition, we were left with a 'confidence and supply' arrangement that pleased nobody.

Independents were brought into the government fold while the Soldiers of Destiny reserved the right to play hurlers on the ditch without pulling the plug.

The necessity of this 'temporary little arrangement' was wrapped up in the virtuous rhetoric of so-called 'new politics'. Political reforms were to open up the legislative process, making it more deliberative and less confrontational.

Due consideration would be given to opposition proposals and private members' bills. The Committee system was to be streamlined and treated more seriously.

'New politics' was treated in some quarters as a breath of fresh air in 2016. Some thought it might last until 2017 or 2018 at a push.

One thing that wasn't expected was that the UK would vote to leave the European Union later in 2016. The political psychodrama across the Irish Sea has since kept audiences agog and kept the Dáil in suspended animation.

The Taoiseach dare not face the electorate with Brexit unresolved. The 'temporary little arrangement' has lasted longer than many would have expected, providing stability in uncertain times.

But, is this a good thing?

In reality, 'new politics' has been the triumph of the lowest common denominator. Private members' bills are allowed to pass, but then languish in legislative purgatory. Votes have come to mean so little that some TDs have decided not to bother. Budgets are constructed to avoid offending anyone, thereby pleasing no one.

We have Sláintecare, an ambitious cross-party, 10-year plan to reform the health service but without a clear financial plan to ensure it is delivered.

The Government's business-as-usual approach to housing policy is leaving record numbers homeless, a generation trapped renting and giving up hope of finding a place to



Protesters taking part in the Raise the Roof protest in Dublin in October 2018, highlighting the accommodation crisis in Ireland.
Photo: RollingNews.ie

We have Sláintecare, an ambitious cross-party, 10-year plan to reform the health service but without a clear financial plan to ensure it is delivered

call their own. The political dynamic actively discourages risk-taking or policy experimentation. Better to be criticised for continuing with the failed policies of the past than to put your head above the parapet to propose something new.

Risk aversion has spread, infecting the opposition as well as government, small parties and large, left and right.

Private members' bills and policy proposals are largely reactive, a response to recent headlines and the political zeitgeist rather than anything strategic or transformative. Thinking small is the order of the day.

At the same time, candidates in the US Democratic Party's primary ahead of the 2020 Presidential election are actively discussing universal healthcare, a Green New Deal, wealth taxes and a basic income. Ahead of the 12th December election, the UK Labour Party

The Government's business-as-usual approach to housing policy is leaving record numbers homeless, a generation trapped renting and giving up hope of finding a place to call their own

... if Sinn Féin, Labour, Greens, Social Democrats, and other left-leaning groups and independents can coalesce behind a radical policy programme as the price for power they could be truly transformative...

is putting forward its most radical policy programme in a generation. Polling might suggest that the Labour Party's leadership is unpopular, but its policies actually poll very well, as they did in the 2017 election. People have seen the damage done by privatised public services and have had enough.

If one believes opinion polls, then the next Dáil could look very like the current Dáil. The two largest parties should run each other close in terms of seats. The Greens may gain a few at the expense of Labour, Sinn Féin and Independents. But major change looks unlikely. Crucially, it isn't obvious how to construct a sustainable majority. Lengthy post-election haggling looks inevitable.

There is scope for a progressive alliance to come together to form a blocking minority, without which it would be impossible to form a government unless Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil go into coalition together.

The internecine warfare that characterises left-wing politics in Ireland and elsewhere makes it, perhaps, a fanciful proposition, but if Sinn Féin, Labour, Greens, Social Democrats, and other left-leaning groups and independents can coalesce behind a radical policy programme as the price for power they could be truly transformative.

But, if they decide not to hang together, the history of junior coalition partners suggests that, to paraphrase Benjamin Franklin, they will most assuredly hang separately.

Why government policy drives rent rises



By Michael
Taft

THE debate over Ireland's rental market goes from the absurd to the absurd.

● The Taoiseach claims that critics of the Government's housing policy are "ideological". Yet, since the Government came into office, rents have increased by up to 37%. What ideology is that?

● Dublin City Council voted to allow a private developer to build hundreds of houses for private sale on land that it owned at O'Devaney Gardens – a policy of public land for over-priced, private and highly-profitable housing.

● The development finance group, Cullaun Capital, claims we don't have a housing crisis; we have an "accommodation" crisis – a distinction without difference.

A crisis that started in Dublin is spilling out to other counties and urban areas. While some commentators have taken some solace in the fact that new asking rents have slowed down according to Daft.ie, rents are still increasing by more than 5% annually. Even more worrying is that rents in many areas are still increasing at nearly twice that rate. [Table 1]

There is no relief from rapidly rising rents in these urban areas.

The Government's policy has been to exacerbate this crisis through massive subsidies to private landlords. Under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) programme, private landlords are subsidised by the state to house people who are both in and out of work. These are substantial payments. Nationally, landlords receive, on average, more than €9,000 per year for one tenancy covered under HAP. In Dublin, the average payment is nearly €15,500. [Table 2]

Even the Department of Finance has stated these subsidies are poor value for money and that it would be more cost-efficient for the state to build houses and rent them directly to tenants. Instead, the Government's policy of throwing money at the private sector is only driving up rents which cost the state even more.

Not only is it far more expensive for the state to subsidise private landlords than build houses, it drives up rents in the private sector as there is less accommodation available for people who are in work.

The Government claims its policies are working – it just takes time for supply to catch up with



Students from Dún Laoghaire, IADT protesting outside the Dail as part of the Raise the Roof protest in October 2018. Photo: RollingNews.ie

Table 1



Not only is it far more expensive for the state to subsidise private landlords than build houses, it drives up rents in the private sector as there is less accommodation available for people who are in work

demand. However, Savills Ireland warns that rents in Dublin will continue to rise by 17% over the next three years. How much more will such subsidies cost the state?

Costly and inflationary – if you wanted to construct a policy designed to fail on every level you wouldn't have to look any further than current government policy.

There is a better, more pragmatic approach that is alarmingly straight-forward (and it doesn't

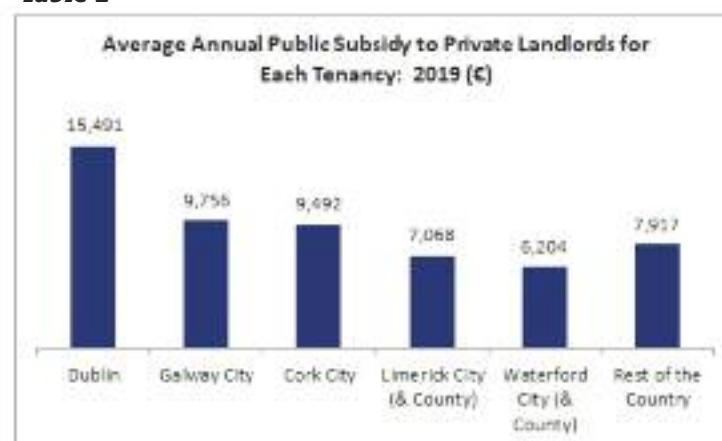
rely on subsidies, tax breaks and meaningless exhortations). SIPTU, through the Raise the Roof campaign, has campaigned for a programme of cost-rental housing.

At its simplest, the state builds a unit (house, apartment) and rents it out at the cost of construction. This model is widespread throughout the European continent. Renting out units at cost would drive down rents by hundreds of euro a month.

This would reduce costs to tenants and, so, drive up living standards. It would also be a boon to the businesses in the productive economy as tenants would have more to spend.

Lest anyone thinks that a cost-rental public housing programme is some 'ideological' caprice, here's what the Chief Executive of the Housing Agency, John O'Connor, has to say: "[The cost-rental] model is a particularly good model for how we might provide long-

Table 2



term affordable rental homes for a wide cohort of Irish households with low to middle incomes, who wish to rent. We believe that cost rental public housing should be a major part of the housing we provide and there is a need to establish cost rental in Ireland on a large scale. We must focus on public investment to support communities creating good places to live."

Another feature of cost-rental is that it would reduce rents in the private sector as landlords would have to cut their rents in order to compete with cost-rental prices.

So what is the bottleneck? We have the public land and the resources. What is the hold-up? Clearly, the problem lies in public policy and, in particular, the Government's own 'ideological' bias.

Its policy is based on delivering housing solutions almost exclusively through the private sector – even though that has only led to ever-increasing rents.

Renting out units at cost would drive down rents by hundreds of euro a month

We need a more pragmatic and evidence-based housing programme – one that is based on cost-efficiency and long-term affordability. One of the Government's biggest weapons in the debate is that so many people don't believe there is solution to the high-rent crisis. We must take that weapon away.

And give people hope that public policy can reduce rents and lift living standards.

Liberty View

JLCs are good for workers and the economy

Joint Labour Committees (JLCs) are made up of representatives of employees and employers and set minimum wages and working conditions across various employment sectors of the economy.

They originated in Ireland over a hundred years ago, retained by the independent state and went on to eventually cover a range of industries including hotels, catering, contract cleaning, retail, agriculture and other low-paid sectors. When operating effectively, JLCs allow sector-wide collective bargaining that benefits workers, good employers and customers.

However, some employer organisations have blocked their operation. They do this by simply refusing to participate in the JLCs. This has resulted in low wages, poor working conditions and exploitative business practices in those sectors,

In 2014, the Government and the Oireachtas renewed the JLCs after they were struck down by the High Court. However, some employer organisations have blocked their operation. They do this by simply refusing to participate in the JLCs. This has resulted in low wages, poor working conditions and exploitative business practices in those sectors, notably in the hotels and hospitality industry - the same problems that gave rise to their introduction more than a century ago.

The Industrial Relations (Joint Labour Committees) Bill 2019, proposed by Senator Ged Nash of the Labour Party, if enacted, will ensure that the functioning of JLCs cannot be obstructed. It would

allow the Labour Court to make its own binding proposals in sectors where either the employer or employee representatives refuse to engage in the JLC.

This would allow the JLCs to operate as the Oireachtas intended them to and would be a strong incentive to employers to end their obstructionist tactics.

JLCs can raise wages and working conditions for all workers across a sector. This stops one business from undercutting another by paying lower wages. This protects both workers and businesses from 'race-to-the-bottom' exploitative practices.

The effective operation of JLCs is also good for the wider economy. Low pay is a drag on public finances. JLCs can help improve public finances. Increasing wages and working conditions boost tax and PRSI revenue while reducing social protection payments that are needed to subsidise low pay.

Poor pay and working conditions are economically inefficient. Businesses that rely on workers' purchasing power suffer lower turnover which undermines their ability to succeed. Increased wages mean increased business activity and investment.

It is not just about wages and working conditions. JLCs ensure workers are provided a voice in their workplace. Though their union representatives, they can participate in negotiations over their contracts. Such voice and participation is the essence of democracy in the workplace.

Business productivity can also be increased by effective democracy in the workplace. Sector-wide collective bargaining reduces turnover and avoids conflict on the workplace floor. Costs are lowered while income rises for businesses. Collective bargaining respects the skills and competences of each worker which, in turn, ensures that businesses can attract and retain employees in their

workplace.

JLCs represent a new type of flexibility in the modern economy. Some employers can face real difficulties in the competitive market. There are 'inability to pay' clauses in the JLCs to protect them. Just as importantly, collective bargaining helps ensure that employee and employer representatives can more easily reach solutions as each side knows what is necessary for business survival.

Everyone who works hard for a living

JLCs can help improve public finances. Increasing wages and working conditions boost tax and PRSI revenue while reducing social protection payments that are needed to subsidise low pay.

should be able to take home a Living Wage. This should be the measure of a decent society and this Bill will assist the nearly one quarter of workers in Ireland who are on low pay.

SIPTU fully supports The Industrial Relations (Joint Labour Committees) Bill 2019. We call on workers and trade unionists - especially those in the sectors that will directly benefit from the legislation - to contact politicians and ask them to support this Bill.

Politicians that do not support a realistic measure to raise the income floor for the lowest paid workers in the country, including those in the hospitality and contract catering industry, should pay the price when the next election comes around.

Racism has no place in politics

The poison of racism has been brought into politics in Ireland in recent weeks in disputes concerning the location of Direct Provision centres and by candidates contesting by-elections to be held on Friday, 29th November.

In particular, two people, Gemma O'Doherty, standing on what she claims to be an 'Independent anti-corruption' ticket in Fingal, and the Fine Gael candidate, Verona Murphy, in Wexford have brought criticism of

immigrants to the fore. O'Doherty has been quite direct in her attacks on immigrant communities, while Murphy has at least publicly apologised for her comments on asylum seekers. Murphy had alleged that some child refugees to Ireland had been influenced by ISIS.

The Fianna Fáil candidate in Fingal, Senator Lorraine Clifford Lee, was also criticised, and apologised for denigrating travellers in tweets she published in 2011. Other elected politicians have also expressed anti-immi-

grant sentiment in recent weeks or had questionable comments they had previously made on social media brought to public attention.

Incoming SIPTU General Secretary, Joe Cunningham, has made the position of the union on racist and anti-immigrant approach to politics clear.

He said: "Racist and anti-immigrant sentiment should have no place in politics in Ireland. As trade unionists stopping the spread of such vile views is a crucial task as the spread of

racism can only lead to division between workers. Such division makes the core task of our union, improving the leaving standards of members and their families, much more difficult. The spread of racism and anti-immigrant sentiment is also corrosive to our society and the general wellbeing of communities across the country."

He added: "I would call upon SIPTU members to make clear their abhorrence for those who would seek to use racist and immigrant sentiment to further



Incoming SIPTU General Secretary, Joe Cunningham

their own political agendas. SIPTU members should vote for those candidates who will further the interests of all workers and not seek to divide us."

Challenging the Far Right with the facts



By Michael Taft

Noel Grealish's recent intervention in the Dail should worry us all. The distortion of facts is no longer confined to extremist social media outlets. They are being brought into parliament.

He claimed that billions of euros were being remitted from Ireland to Nigeria, implying that it could be the result of fraud or criminal activity. He deliberately ignored official data from the CSO (which the Government had supplied to him) showing remittance levels to be a fraction of his claim. Only a few weeks earlier he described Africans as 'spongers'.

Far-right and anti-immigrant groups are constantly distorting information on immigration in pursuit of their dismal agenda. For instance, they claim Ireland is being 'flooded' with immigrants.

It is true we have a high level of non-nationals living in Ireland. But what they don't tell you is that over 20% come from the UK (including people from Northern Ireland) and other English-speaking countries. And many of these would be sons and daughters of Irish emigrants.

Of course, when the far Right talks about 'immigrants' and 'foreigners' they are referring to people from outside the EU and the US: Asians, Africans, South Americans and people from the Middle East. There are relatively few from these national groups living here in Ireland.

People from these regions make up only 2 % of the population. As for Africans – the target of Grealish's vitriol - they make up only a fraction of the total population. And people from the Middle East, the target of Islamophobia, makes up even less.

Another far Right claim is that immigrants come here to 'live off the state'. This doesn't hold up either.

In Ireland, unemployment among non-citizens is almost the same as the rate among citizens. In the EU the situation is much different, with non-citizens unemployment much higher. It should be pointed out that over recent years many EU countries (e.g. Germany, Sweden) welcomed a large number of people fleeing wars and deprivation. It will take time to integrate these people

The Far Right – through its extremism and manipulation of facts – is trying to poison the immigration debate

into the domestic labour market.

But the fact is that we have one of the best records of integrating non-nationals into our labour market. People don't come here to sponge – they come here to work and make a better life for themselves. And in the process they help grow the economy which helps all of us.

One more trope of the Far Right is that we are being overrun with asylum-seekers or, as some would have it, 'bogus' asylum-seekers. Again, this is nonsense.

During the three years of the European migration crisis, 2015 to 2017, Ireland received 8,400 asylum applications. To put this in perspective, if asylum applications were at the EU average, we would proportionately have received nearly five times as many applications.

And while some argue we have a lax asylum regime, 61% of asylum applications are rejected, compared to an EU average of 45%.

All the claims of the Far Right and their allies collapse when we look at the reality. There are, however, many who get taken in by the

claims and not because they are racist or anti-immigrant. Many are

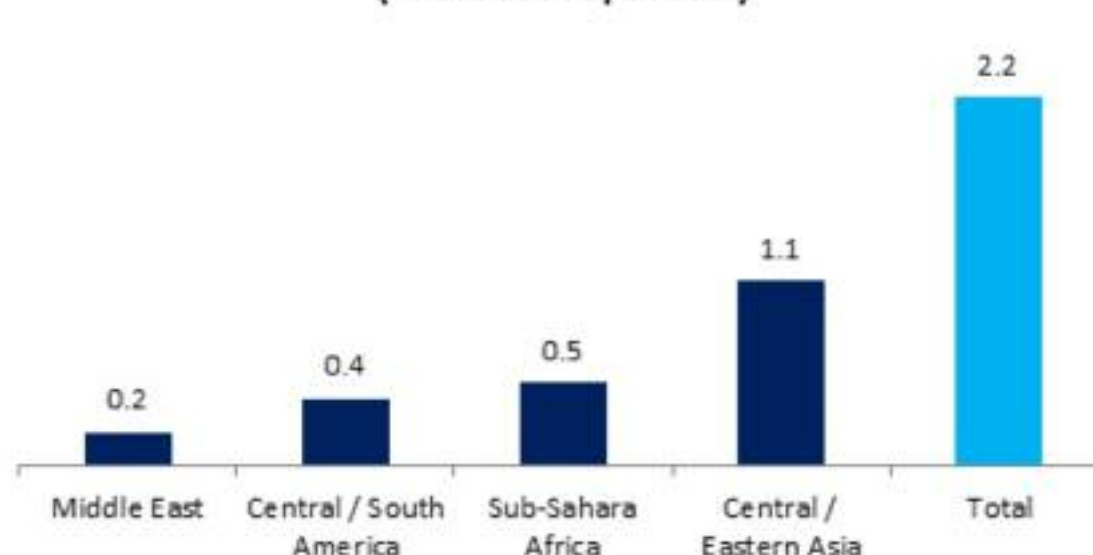
And while some argue we have a lax asylum regime, 61% of asylum applications are rejected, compared to an EU average of 45%

confused, hurting, looking for answers. Progressives must engage with this constituency with empathy, pointing out the reality and providing a better alternative for them, their families and their communities.

The Far Right – through its extremism and manipulation of facts – is trying to poison the immigration debate in order to polarise positions. In reality, they don't want an informed debate on immigration. They want a shouting match. They hope, in this atmosphere, to make gains. We shouldn't allow them that oxygen. We should challenge them at every turn.

And engage in an inclusive dialogue throughout society that can win people over to a positive message – about the economic, social and cultural benefits of immigration and the immigrants themselves.

Citizens of Foreign Countries Living in Ireland: 2018
(% of Total Population)



Limerick

Members
back Mid-West
Hospital
Campaign

DISTRICT Council members have taken a leading role in organising and supporting the Mid-West Hospital Campaign which was launched in September.

Among the main demands of the campaign are an end to overcrowding at University Hospital Limerick, the reversal of cuts in funding to public hospitals, better conditions for health workers and the opening of A&E departments in Neagh, Ennis and St. John's Hospital in Limerick.

Public meetings by the group have been addressed by SIPTU Organiser, Ger Kennedy and SIPTU Honorary President, Pdraig Peyton. Meanwhile, the District Council is also hosting an event on Friday, 29th November in the Union Hub, Roxboro Road, Limerick to celebrate the contribution and service of members.

At the event 25 and 50-year SIPTU long-service certificates and medals will be presented.

Dublin

Show celebrates
Dominic Behan

THE District Council is hosting a concert commemorating the work of singer, playwright and author Dominic Behan in Liberty Hall theatre on Saturday, 30th November at 7.30 p.m.

Among those performing at the concert are singers Phelim Drew and Deirdre Hunt, as well as historians Donal Fallon and Terry Fagan.

SIPTU Dublin District Council member, Bernie Casey, said: "Dominic is perhaps best known as the songwriter behind *The Patriot Game* and *Come Out Ye Black and Tans*, but the legacy which he left to working class literature, song and theatre goes far beyond those songs.

"The concert will mark 30 years since Dominic's passing in 1989. It will cover the many periods of his life and work; his early years in Dublin, activism in Glasgow, writing work in London and his lifelong involvement with Irish folk music and the labour and republican movements."

A new edition of Dominic Behan's autobiography *Teems of Times and Happy*

Returns, will also be launched on the night. The edition will include a series of original illustrations. The book is long out-of-print but represents one of the finest contributions to the canon of Dublin autobiographies.

Tickets are €10 and available to purchase on the night or through FaceBook at 'Up Russell Street! A night of songs and stories to celebrate Dominic Behan.'



Meath

Seminar focus on childcare across county

THE District Council hosted a seminar for union activists and local representatives outlining the need for a new childcare model in the county at the Arboyne Hotel, Navan, on 25th October.

The seminar was addressed by Chief Executive Officer from the National Childhood Network, Denise McCormilla, and leading trade union experts on finding solutions to the childcare crisis for workers, providers and parents alike. SIPTU Researcher, Michael Taft, detailed for the seminar how the crisis had impacted parents and workers across county Meath.

SIPTU Meath District Council Secretary, John Regan said: "In addition to poor wages, 80% of childcare workers surveyed in Meath do unpaid work and pay



Denise McCormilla from National Childcare Network, speaking at the Meath District Council Seminar in October 2019.
Photo: Paddy Cole

for educational materials out of their own pocket. More than 90% take training courses on their

own time, while half the workforce does not have enough time to take breaks."

And Big Start Campaign Organiser for the Meath area, Lynda Daly, warned: "Poor wages and living conditions are leading to a

working in the sector in five years' time.

"We must start looking at real solutions to this potential crisis



Launch of the Meath Childcare Survey at the District Council Seminar.
Photo: Paddy Cole

recruitment and retention crisis in the sector with nearly three-quarters of childcare workers in Meath saying that, if things remain the same, they will not be

for parents and children across the county before it is too late."

Where is our just transition?

■ By Scott Millar

BORD na Móna has for decades been one of the key state enterprises in Ireland. Supporting thousands of high-quality jobs directly and thousands more indirectly throughout the midlands.

The announcement earlier this year that the ESB was halting the operation of its peat-burning power plants in Shannonbridge, county Offaly, and Lanesboro, county Longford, in 2020, rather than initially planned in 2030 has sent shockwaves through midland communities.

It has also placed the issue of future of the BNM core industry, peat harvesting, into short-term rather than medium-term doubt.

With the fight against global warming heating up the end of peat harvesting by the company throughout the midlands is now only a matter of years away.

The impact is clear, while BNM in 2018 employed 2,000 people directly, 500 of these staff are expected to be made redundant by the end of the year.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Willie Noone, is at the forefront of the fight to create a viable post-peat production future for hundreds of union members and their local communities.

"The Government has claimed it will commit resources to creating alternative employment opportunities in the midlands away from carbon producing industries," he said. "The problem is we are yet to see how these new employment opportunities will be directly linked to those workers facing the loss of their jobs."

"In reality what we have is BNM downsizing its operations without linking proposed closures and pro-



Protest in Lanesboro in support of Bord na Móna workers, July 2019.
Photo: Courtesy Agriland

duction reductions strategically with investment in new forms of employment.

"The Government is doing the optics, such as appointing the Just Transition Commissioner, Kieran Mulvey. He is supposed to engage with unions but has no remit in his role to become involved in industrial relations matters.

"Such matters are the key concern of the BNM Group of Unions so what are we really supposed to talk to him about."

He added: "The reality is what is needed is proper engagement by the company in existing industrial relations mechanisms such as the Workplace Relations Commission, where the outline of true just tran-

sition for the workers affected could be formulated."

Meanwhile, SIPTU Shop Steward Pat Cox, who works at the Lanesboro power generation plant, in county Longford, claimed it was an uncertain time for the workforce.

He said the company is not "working well with its workers at the moment" and has been "slow to come up with a plan".

"We are losing our jobs but there should be decommissioning work on the bogs. The plant should be phased out over three or four years, but we are not getting much commitment to such a process from management.

"The company is slow to come up with a plan and state exactly

what funding will be available from the Government and how this process will be managed."

Cox insisted that change should be managed and "should not be sudden".

"In Europe coal stations are only being phased out, they are not closing overnight. What we have seen so far from BNM is not a just transition. It is going straight from peat burning to closing the plant. It was meant to go from burning peat to burning peat and biomass for five or six years. This is the way the coal stations are doing it around Europe."

He continued: "Last July, there were 70 full-time and 70 part-time workers in the Mountdillon area and with voluntary redundancy that has probably gone down to less than 100 in total and is expected to further decrease in the coming months. It's really the seasonal jobs which will be hit the hardest, many are also part-time farmers or in other work, but the BNM work is crucial to them."



Wind turbines: a proper managed approach is needed in transitioning to cleaner forms of energy

In reality what we have is BNM downsizing its operations without linking proposed closures and production reductions strategically with investment in new forms of employment

ICTU calls for direct WRC talks on future of BNM

ICTU General Secretary Patricia King strongly attacked the current approach of the management of Bord na Móna (BNM) at an appearance before the Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action, on Wednesday, 20th November.

Calling for proper management and union talks, King said BNM

had flatly refused to establish a stakeholder forum under the auspices of the Workplace Relations Commission even though it is State-owned.

She dismissed an offer to meet the newly-appointed Just Transition Commissioner Kieran Mulvey, highlighting that his powers specifically exclude involvement

in industrial relations.

King also rejected management references to the company's joint industrial council, as this deals only with day-to-day issues, "and has no relevance whatsoever" in the current reorganisation plan.

"Redundancies do not solve the problem. It's about protecting decent work, not providing replace-

ment jobs with indecent conditions," she told TDs.

She added: "A coherent just transition framework would address the real fears of workers and their communities on the impact of the shift to greener energy production. In the case of BNM this would entail programmes to ensure workers could redeploy or reskill for new

green jobs. But these programmes are not yet in place.

"In Budget 2020, the Government announced some €31 million for retraining initiatives, a retrofit programme – some of which might be 'old money' – and initiatives on bog restoration, all of which may deliver up to 500 jobs. But there is no certainty on this."

Mediation bid to resolve St Vincent's dispute



By Paddy Cole

HSE and the Sisters of Charity have entered into mediation in the latest attempt to resolve an ongoing dispute at St Vincent's Centre and other services across the country.

SIPTU Industrial Organiser, Sharon Cregan said: "We welcome the fact that the parties have entered mediation. The fact is our members have been caught in the middle through no fault of their own and have been denied vital access to basic social welfare entitlements, such as dental and optical benefits.

"It is unacceptable that loyal workers who provide such a vital community service should be left to remain in limbo while the employers sit on their hands.

"We hope that this process will produce a timely and fair resolution but remain sceptical as members have been badly let down so far and are ready, willing and able to take further action if needs be."

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



SIPTU members from St Vincent's Centre protesting outside Revenue House in Cork.
Photo: Paddy Cole

Jobs embargo putting patients at risk

SIPTU representatives have told a Joint Oireachtas Health Committee that the HSE recruitment embargo across all grades in the health service and related agencies is putting the lives and health of patients at risk.

At a sitting of the committee on Wednesday 20th November it was claimed that hundreds of vacancies exist throughout the health service in radiography, support grades and other health services.

SIPTU NEC member, Broc Delaney claimed the embargo is only exacerbating the waiting list crisis and the delivery of timely and appropriate care.

Delaney told *Liberty* that as well as the appalling impact on sick and vulnerable people it was also creating a "dynamic for outsourcing of health services to the private sector" and for "breaching protections which were hard fought for



in public service agreements".

He added: "The pressure on existing health service staff has brought them to breaking point. The concern of our members for their patients and those in their care is driving this call for a complete lifting of the staffing em-

bargo."

SIPTU delegates at the union's Biennial Conference in Cork recently voted unanimously in favour of a call on the Government to lift the embargo on recruitment in the health services and fill all vacant positions.

Home help services face strike in run-up to Christmas

HOME help services in parts of Dublin and Wicklow are facing potential strike action in the run up to Christmas that could result in disruption for thousands of people.

The dispute centres on eight organisations in Dublin and Wicklow, which provide home help services under agreements with the Health Service Executive, and involves a call for the restoration of payments cut following the economic crash. SIPTU Health Division Organiser, Paul Bell said: "The decision by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to turn their backs on a deal that was brokered earlier this year to apply pay restoration to thousands

of Section 39 workers will not be tolerated by our members.

"We now intend to work with other unions to chart a way forward that will resolve this dispute in a way that is fair and just for workers and that minimises any impact a potential strike will have on service users."

He added: "The continued mistreatment of these vital community health workers, who work in home care and elder care, including dementia and Alzheimer services, is unacceptable and is already the focus of conversation for SIPTU members in the lead-up to any future negotiations on any successor to the public service agreement."

Season's Greetings from all at the S

CHOOSE AND SUPPORT WORKERS I

Christmas Recipe

Snow Flake Chocolate Truffles



INGREDIENTS

- 100g bar plain or milk chocolate, chopped
- 75g/3oz Shamrock Ground Almonds
- 75g/3oz cake or trifle sponge crumbs
- 75g/3oz icing sugar
- 2 tablespoons orange liqueur or rum or brandy
- 4 tablespoons double cream

COATING

- Melted chocolate (white, plain or milk)
- 50g/2oz cocoa powder, chopped nuts, coconut or chocolate vermicelli

METHOD

1. Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a pan of hot, not boiling, water or in a microwave oven.
2. In a large bowl, mix the crumbs, sugar, ground almonds and brandy until combined, then gradually add the melted chocolate, mixing well.
3. Stir in the cream.
4. Chill the mixture in the fridge for at least 1 hour until firm enough to handle.
5. Take teaspoons of the chilled mixture and roll into balls - you should get about 30.
6. Dip the balls into melted chocolate and cover with the coating of your choice, while the chocolate is still tacky.

VARIATION

Use white chocolate and coconut liqueur instead of rum or brandy and roll in coconut.

RECIPE NOTES

- Makes 30 truffles.
- Cake will keep for up to 2 weeks, once wrapped tightly and stored in an airtight tin.



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Supporting Quality Campaign IN IRELAND THIS CHRISTMAS!



**SUPPORTING
QUALITY**

Protecting Quality Jobs in Ireland
Promoting Quality Irish Products



Christmas Recipe

Festive Old Fashioned Cocktail



INGREDIENTS

- 40ml Jameson Black Barrel
- 10ml PX sherry
- 10ml honey chocolate syrup
- 2 dashes Angostura Bitters
- 2 dashes Orange Bitters



HOW TO MAKE

1. Add 40ml Jameson Black Barrel, 10ml PX sherry, 10ml honey chocolate syrup, 2 dashes of Angostura Bitters and 2 dashes of orange bitters into a mixing glass filled with ice.
2. Stir well before straining into a rocks glass with ice.
3. Garnish with an orange twist.



Shannon Airport is delighted to join the Supporting Quality Campaign. We're proud of the commitment our airport staff take in ensuring our passengers have an easy and enjoyable airport experience. As home to the world's first Duty Free, we know how vital support is to the success of local products and services. Backing this campaign backs quality indigenous jobs all over Ireland.

BOLIDEN Tara Mines

Boliden Tara Mines is delighted to join the Supporting Quality campaign. Boliden is a metals company with a commitment to sustainable development. Our company's core competence is within the fields of exploration, mining, smelting and metals recycling. With over 600 employees in Ireland and 5,500 Europe wide we value quality manufacturing and quality employment.



Christmas cheer and respect for workers

CHRISTMAS is a special time at Newbridge Silverware. Thousands of customers visit the company's Christmas Emporium at its shop and visitor centre in Newbridge, county Kildare.

A favourite for customers is the Christmas tree and house decorations. To mark the 85th anniversary of Newbridge Silverware, this year the company created a special edition 2019 dated decoration as part of its annual 'The Joy of Giving' annual celebration.

The new decoration features a festive Christmas wreath adorned by nine small symbols, each representing one of the nine other collectible decorations in this unique range. It also includes illustrations of Christmas scenes from 1934 and 2019 depicting different genera-

To mark the 85th anniversary of Newbridge Silverware, this year the company created a special edition 2019 dated decoration

tions and both sharing Newbridge Silverware gifts.

Ireland's leading cutlery, jewellery and ornament manufacturer has a long association with Supporting Quality and was the first business to receive a plaque to indicate its long-term commitment to the campaign.

SIPTU Shop Steward, Stacey



O'Connor, told *Liberty*: "There are approximately 40 SIPTU members in the production and dispatch departments. We are proud to work for a company which is involved in the Supporting Quality campaign. It shows that it appreciates the importance of the role of the workers." Production Manager, Cliff English, said that Newbridge Silverware was totally committed to the aims of the Supporting Quality campaign which are to protect jobs in Ireland and support quality Irish products.

He said that Newbridge Silverware continues to instigate progressive change in its product lines in order to expand into new markets and develop existing ones.

In recent years this has seen the company launch a major new product line of rose gold jewellery and develop its range of Christmas decorations and other seasonal products.

SIPTU Organiser, Jim Sheridan, said: "The union has a constructive relationship with the management at Newbridge Silverware. The company respects collective agreements and realises that working with the union is the way to ensure it maintains a committed and highly motivated workforce."



Photos:
Scott Millar

There are approximately 40 SIPTU members in the production and dispatch departments. We are proud to work for a company which is involved in the Supporting Quality campaign



Busy time of the year: Highly-motivated SIPTU members Stacey O'Connor (left) and Bev Hoey (right) working in the dispatch department.



SIPTU member Anna Pachanowska.



SIPTU Shop Steward Stacey O'Connor (right) with Production Manager Cliff English and SIPTU Organiser Jim Sheridan

Cork Airport going from strength to strength

THE SOUTH of Ireland is thriving. Across Munster, a hub of innovation and technology is growing, while the province's strong reputation for tourism, bolstered by the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East, is flourishing.

Responding to this growth is Cork Airport, as the air travel hub is meeting demand with continued expansion.

Now in its fourth consecutive year of growth, passenger numbers this year will reach 2.6 million — up 9% on 2018. Next year, Cork is forecasting a 4% rise with 2.7m expected to travel through the airport. These figures firmly position Cork Airport as the fastest growing airport on the island of Ireland.

Cork Airport's Managing Director Niall MacCarthy highlights that connectivity from Cork Airport extends even further than its 51 direct routes, with daily flights from Cork to the major international hubs across Europe.

"One of the main reasons some of the world's biggest companies choose to do business here is due to our connectivity," he explains. "Along with our four daily departures to Heathrow connecting to the extensive British Airways world network, we have double daily flights to Manchester connecting to Virgin Atlantic and Etihad networks and double daily departures to Paris CDG, connecting you to more than 500 destinations on the Air France network."

"We are also very proud that Cork Airport is topping the punctuality league for international airports in Ireland from records collected by global aviation analysts OAG."

Coupled with new flights, there is ongoing investment in new facilities, infrastructures and services at the Airport. In March, Cork Airport opened a new Airport Control Centre (ACC) and a purpose-built office suite, The Hub, following a significant investment by daa.

Three operational departments – the Airport Police Control, Airport Duty Managers and the Airside Management Unit – have now relocated to the ACC, which features the latest technology and IT systems. This includes CCTV monitoring of the airport campus, 24-hour newsfeeds and flight information, police control and alarm master stations.

These new facilities followed additional investment in Cork Airport's campus roads and forecourt management technology. There are further developments planned for next year in security infrastructure and equipment – all of which will



Photo from left to right: SIPTU Sector Organiser Neil McGowan, Tony O'Connell Cork Airport, Fabia Gavan Supporting Quality, Cormac O'Donoghue Cork Airport and SIPTU Organiser Tony Carroll. Photo: Jimmy Weldon



amount to €10m in new investment over two years. Cork Airport also boasts Ireland's first Aspire airport business lounge, operated by Swissport.

Conscious of supporting passengers with disabilities, both visible and hidden, Cork Airport is the first airport in the Republic of Ireland to implement the sunflower lanyard initiative supporting passengers with hidden disabilities.

The discreet identification

scheme, recognised in airports such as Heathrow, provides those with hidden disabilities the opportunity to avail of additional support.

The project is part of an initiative by OCS, a large provider of passenger assistance services worldwide. The sunflower lanyard, available at the OCS desk in the airport terminal, is easily recognisable to staff across a wide number of airports. Cork Airport also

named Shine Centre for Autism as its 2018 Charity of the Year, which included a commitment from Ireland's second busiest airport to build on its existing autism initiatives. This included the provision of books from the Suzie series by Charlotte Olson, intended to help children with autism cope with new situations. The books are available at the Airport's OCS desk.

To date, in excess of €65,000 has been raised by the airport's award-



winning charity programme, with this year's Charity of the Year being Marymount University Hospital and Hospice.

As a result of Cork Airport's delivery of growth, commitment to the local community, and implementation of customer-focused initiatives, the airport won the top award for European airports in its class from the Airport Council International (ACI) in Limassol, Cyprus, earlier this year.

We are also very proud that Cork Airport is topping the punctuality league for international airports in Ireland from records collected by global aviation analysts OAG

This was the second win for Cork Airport at the ACI EUROPE Best Airport Awards, having also won its category in 2017. The awards recognise excellence and achievement across a variety of airport disciplines relating to airport operations.

"Anyone who uses our airport at Cork know we pride ourselves on the smoothness and friendliness of the passenger journey. This is all down to the staff at Cork who work round the clock, 365 days of the year, through good weather and bad, to make that journey friendly and easy," added Niall.

"Our excellent team in Cork work hard to deliver a great airport experience and are committed to growing and delivering our offering, with support of the daa Group, for the benefit of passengers – both business and leisure – across the South of Ireland and beyond."

Liderzy SIPTU Migrant Network spotkali się w Belfaście



By Barnaba
Dorda

Na początku listopada w stolicy Irlandii Północnej spotkali się liderzy związkowi pod auspicjami naszego

SIPTU Migrant Workers Network, sieci szszerzającej działaczy związku zawodowego różnych narodowości, by dyskutować o swoich sukcesach, wymieniać się doświadczeniami i poszerzać swoją wiedzę na temat prawa pracy w szczególności na temat zagrożeń związanych z molestowaniem seksualnym w pracy.



Uczestnicy treningu przed muzeum James'a Connolly'ego w Belfaście

To już kolejny raz kiedy SIPTU zorganizowało trening dla liderów związkowych i jak zwykle frekwencja dopisała. Oprócz stałych uczestników podobnych spotkań pojawiło się też sporo nowych osób. Do Belfastu przychali liderzy z trzech różnych sektorów: „Manufacturing”, „Servicing” i „Health”, przyjechali przewodniczący lokalnych struktur z różnych zakątków Irlandii: m.in. Polacy, Litwini, Czesi, Połudnowoafrykańczycy, Hindusi, Rumuni. Warto pamiętać, że oni wszyscy zostali wcześniej wybrani w swoich lokalnych zakładach pracy jako shop stewardzi, przedstawiciele pracowników, przez swoich kolegów.

Podczas dwudniowego spotkania jednym z ważniejszych diskutowanych tematów było jeszcze większe zaangażowanie migrantów w same struktury SIPTU. Karan O'Loughlin, szefowa TEAC (Transport, Energy, Aviation and Construction Division) mówiła o obecnej strukturach związku SIPTU i potrzebie by migranci starali się by być wybieranymi do sektorowych

komitetów związkowych, a później by być delegatami na roczne walne zebrania związkowych Dywizji (Division) albo walne konferencje SIPTU. W ten sposób mogą mieć wpływ na kierunek w jakim SIPTU będzie podążać. Jedną z uczestniczek wspominała, jak została wybrana przez, w zdecydowanej większości, irlandzkich kolegów, by reprezentować ich na walnej konferencji SIPTU która odbyła się w październiku w Cork. Uczestnicy zgodzili się, że w Komitecie Wykonawczym SIPTU (National Executive Committee) powinna znaleźć się osoba o korzeniach migranckich, i to jest cel który jest możliwy do osiągnięcia.

Jak zawsze stałym elementem treningu były seminarium i warsztaty dotyczące prawa pracy przygotowane przez Workers Rights Centre, związkowy departament zajmujący się reprezentowaniem indywidualnych członków związku przed sądami w sporach pracowniczych. Tym razem tematyka obejmowała molestowanie seksualne i inne przejawy molestowania z powodu rasy, orientacji, religii, wieku czy niepełnosprawności. Punktem wyjścia był artykuł opublikowany w irlandzkiej prasie o zatrważającej ilości przypadków molestowań w sektorze hotelarskim i restauracyjnym. Autorka artykułu zwracała uwagę, że skala i rozmiar tego typu zjawisk jest ogromna, ale jednocześnie przymykanie oczu i akceptacja niestosownych zachowań wobec pracowników tych sektorów jest równie alarmujący. Celem warsztatów przygotowanych przez Paula Henry'ego, szefa Workers Rights Centre było podniesienie wiedzy na temat prawa pracy w tym zakresie i praktycznych porad co pracownik powinien robić w tego typu sytuacjach i czego można od pracodawcy oczekiwać.

Wszyscy uczestnicy mieli też możliwość zwiedzić Belfast dzięki uprzejmości lokalnych związkowców, którzy zorganizowali specjalną wycieczkę po najciekawszych miejscach miasta związanych z historią związków zawodowych. Stolica Ulsteru nie tylko słynna jest ze swoich murali i murów oddzielających protestantów i katolików, ale przepiękne centrum i fascynujących zakątków.

Jeśli jesteś zainteresowany podobnymi spotkaniami, koniecznie wejdź na <https://www.facebook.com/SIPTUMigrantAndInternationalWorkersSupportNetwork/>

US settlements move ‘rips up international law’



By Yvonne O'Callaghan

IN A seismic shift to US foreign policy, the Trump administration declared that it now considers Israeli settlements on the West Bank to be legal.

The decision by the US government to effectively recognise Israel as an apartheid state came as Israeli leader and former prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was indicted on criminal bribery and fraud charges.

In recent weeks – in a decision welcomed by rights groups – the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that EU countries must identify products made in Israeli settlements on



Israeli settlement in the centre of Hebron in Palestine

their labels.

The CJEU stated that settlements “give concrete expression to a policy of population transfer con-

ducted by the state outside its territory, in violation of the rules of general international humanitarian law”.

Meanwhile, in Ireland, the campaign continues for the Occupied Territories Bill, brought forward by Senator Frances Black, to be en-

acted into law.

The bill will make it an offence to import or sell goods or services originating in an occupied territory or to extract resources from an occupied territory in certain circumstances.

Reacting to the US move, Senator Black said: “The US wants to rip up international law with its shift on Israeli settlements in Palestine.

“We can’t just sit by – the Irish government must support my Occupied Territories Bill and push for real EU action before it’s too late.”

Over the coming weeks, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence will issue its report on the bill. It is hoped that the legislation will then move into the final stage of the Dáil process.

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Net Reward	€ 500.00
Employer PRSI @ 10.75%	€ 111.98
Total Reward Cost to Employer	1,153.65

Vs

Net Reward paid through Payroll

Reward Value	€ 500.00
Income Tax @ 40%	€ -
USC @ 8%	€ -
PRSI @ 4%	€ -
Income Taxes	€ -
Taxes paid by employer	-
Net Reward	€ 500.00
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Total Reward Cost to Employer	500

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Colombian unions hold mass protests as exiles stage demo outside the Dáil



Peace protest: Colombian expats outside the Dáil on Thursday 21st November

A GROUP of Colombians living in Ireland held a protest outside the Dáil to highlight human rights abuses in their native land as hundreds of thousands of compatriots took to the streets at home in a series of mass demonstrations against labour and pension reforms.

Trade unions and social organisations in Colombia organised the 21st November nation-wide demonstrations to protest against

a series of government reforms that opposition groups claim will further weaken workers' rights in a country where existing rights are minimal.

The mass show of opposition, dubbed the 'Para Nacional', as well as targeting President Iván Duque's economic plans was also called to show support for the peace process and demand an end to shocking levels of violence directed against social activists and trade unionists.

According to human rights organisations, more than 200 ac-

tivists have been killed since Duque took office in August 2018.

The Dail protestors, told *Liberty*: "Colombians expect and demand that the peace process and the agreement that was signed be respected."

"We are calling for a stop to human rights violations and extrajudicial killings by armed forces – 18 children were killed in the last month,

"Colombians need access to free and quality education for all and an end to the endemic corruption within the government."

In a joint-statement, the International Trade Union Confederation and the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA-CSA) slammed President Duque's proposed series of reforms.

It stated: "This harmful agenda imposed by Iván Duque's government, together with the Colombian oligarchy, is part of the conditions that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have imposed to continue supporting neoliberal policies which have deepened poverty, exclusion and the right to sovereign development to the country."

One of the 'Para Nacional' demos on 21st November



International unions blast Bolivian military after Morales forced out



Pro-Evo Morales indios unleash their anger at the ousting of their president

THE International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has condemned the military interference in Bolivia's electoral process which has led to the ousting from office of left-wing president Evo Morales as well as his decision to flee the country in fear of his life.

Morales, Bolivia's first indigenous president, whose policies lifted nearly a quarter of the country's population out of poverty, was forced out by high-ranking military officials.

And it came after threats were made on his life and violence was directed against ministers, parliamentarians and their families.

ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow said: "No elected president should be forced out of office under military orders. That is not how democracy works.

"The electoral process is the solution, not intervention by military leaders. Military coups can never be the answer."

She added: "The fact that Morales has had to flee the country for fear of his life, cutting short his current term, highlights the undemocratic nature of what is happening in the country."

Both the Trump administration and the Organisation of American States (OAS) have been heavily criticised for issuing statements that undermined the Bolivian electoral system.

The Morales government, with its pro-poor agenda, has been



Ousted: Evo Morales

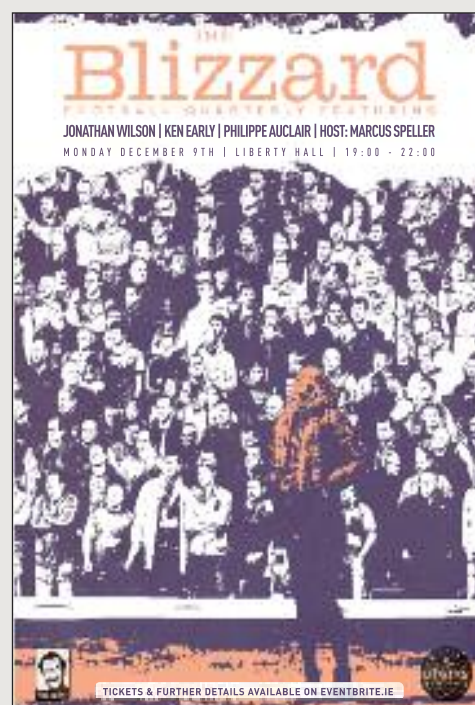
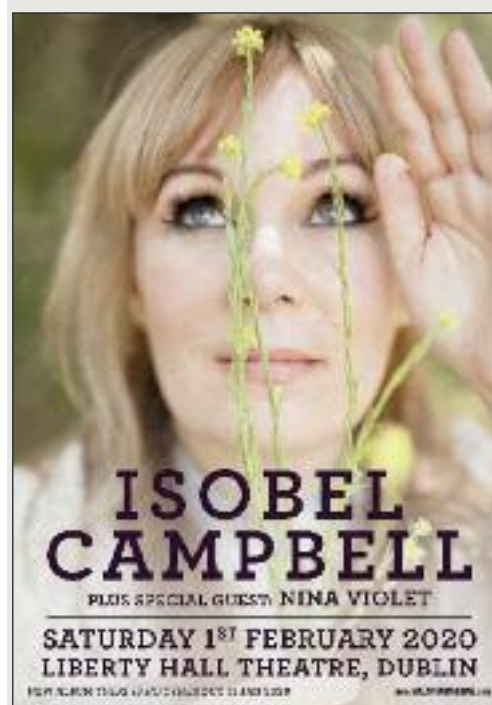
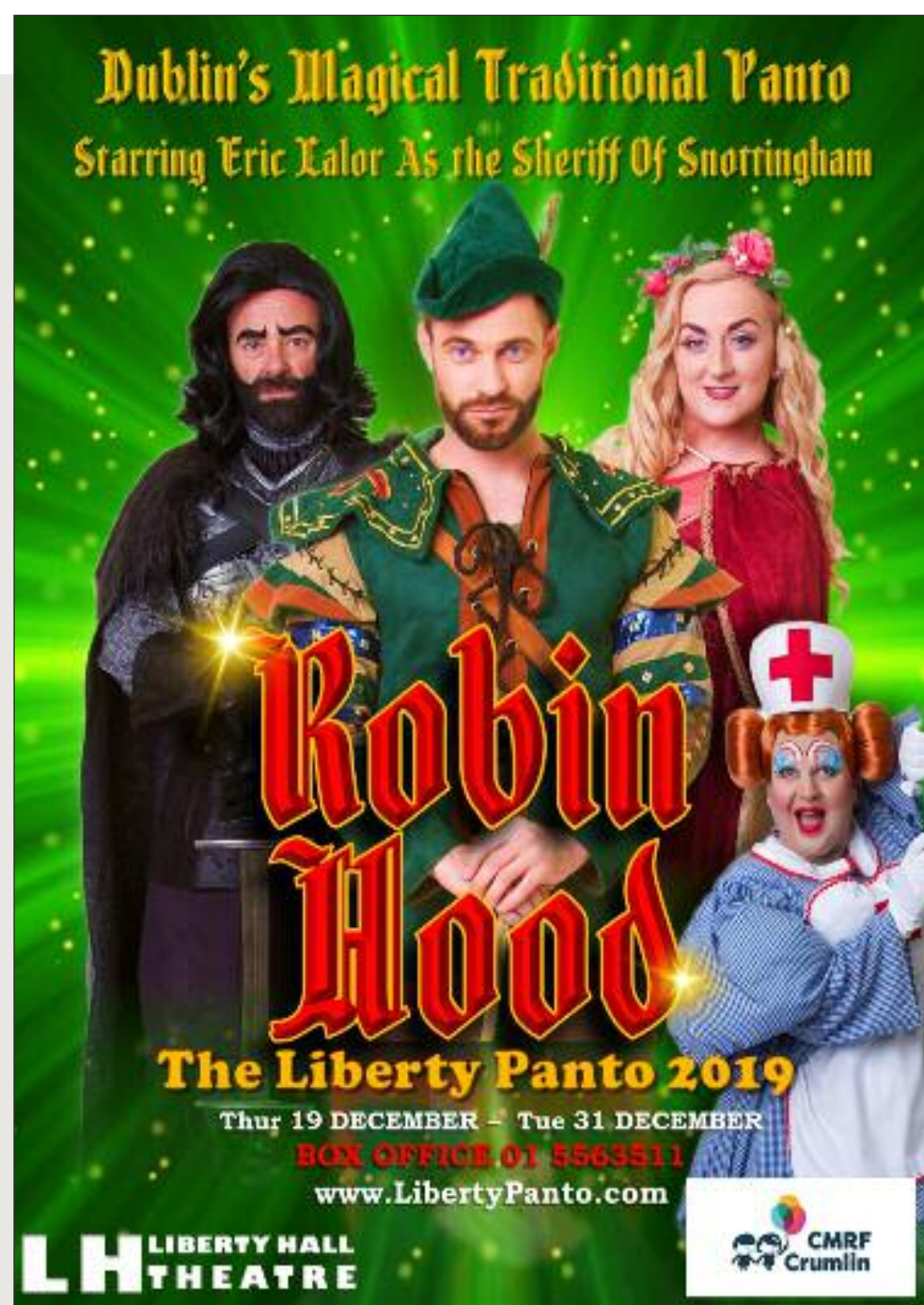
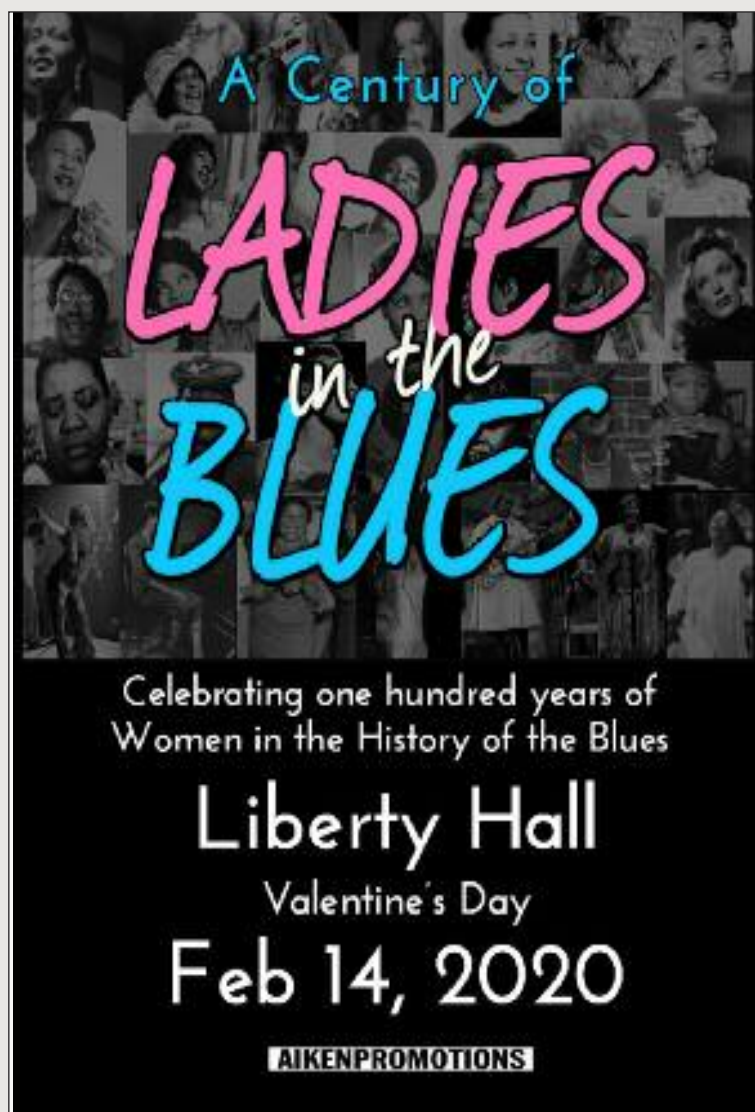
a vocal opponent of the United States' neoliberal policies on the international stage.

Evo Morales was first elected in 2006. In his three terms as head of state, poverty dropped from 59.9% to 34.6% in 2017, with extreme poverty more than halving over the same period.

His inclusive policies saw huge budgets dedicated to health, education and electrification, which resulted in illiteracy rates falling from 13.28% in 2001 to 3.8% in 2014 (census years).

President Morales has called for a fresh vote to allow the Bolivian people to make their choice – a move supported by the ITUC which has called on the international community to oversee a fresh round of peaceful elections.

A new election, without Morales or his deputy as candidates has been announced in recent days.



For Liberty Hall Theatre bookings

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

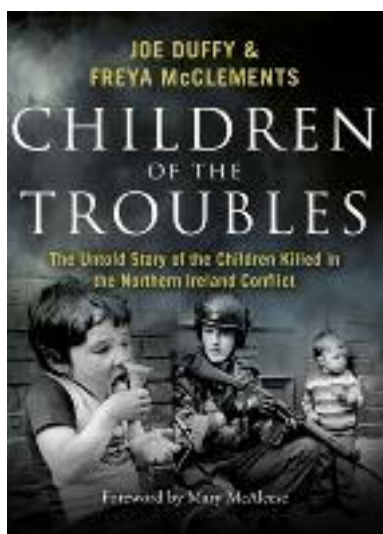
Innocent and lost lives

Children of the Troubles
By Joe Duffy and
Freya McClements
Published by Hachette
€24.99

JACQUELINE O'Brien was just 16 month old when she her parents, John and Anna, and her four-month-old sister Anne Marie, were killed when a no-warning car bomb exploded beside them on Parnell Street, Dublin on 17th May, 1974.

It was one of three car bombs in Dublin that day while another exploded an hour later in Monaghan town, killing 33 people and an unborn child. Colette Doherty was due to give birth to her second child when she was killed by the car bomb on Talbot Street. Her two-year-old daughter, Wendy, was found wandering the street an hour later.

"Mammy was blown one way and the pram was blown the other way. When the bomb went off, I was left standing," Wendy recalled. In 2003, a report by Judge Henry Barron found that it was likely that members of the British



security forces were involved with loyalists in the Dublin and Monaghan bombings.

In February 1974, Lee Haughton, aged five, and his two-year-old brother, Robert, died along with their mother, Linda, and father, Clifford – a corporal in the British army - when a bomb exploded near Bradford on the coach in which they were travelling. The IRA was believed to be responsible. An innocent young woman with a personality disorder was wrongly

convicted for the attack which killed 12 people, including nine British soldiers.

In October 1996, 12-year-old Darren Murray died when he was hit by a car near his home on the nationalist Garvaghy Road in Portadown as he ran from a group of Protestant youths who were taunting him. His mother, Marie Therese, blamed the long-running siege of Drumcree for making "Catholic children bitter and



Lee Haughton
Manchester

Protestant children bitter."

"It has cost a young life," she said. Her son, who was dark-skinned, had been the victim of sectarian and racist abuse.

In their book, *Children of the Troubles*, Joe Duffy and Freya Mc-



Barbara McAlorum
North Belfast

Clements explain how and why they have documented the tragic deaths of 186 children, aged 16 and under, who died as a result of the



Jaqueline O'Brien
Lower Gardiner Street,
Dublin

Troubles in the North, including nine whose deaths were previously unconnected with the conflict.

The beautifully-illustrated book includes photographs and profiles of many of those children who died between 1969 and 2007 and is a significant contribution to the written history of the conflict. It is also a deeply moving portrayal of these innocent and lost lives and the tragic circumstances surrounding their deaths.

Frank Connolly

Cuban President visits Ireland



During the first visit by a Cuban head of state to Ireland, Miguel Diaz Canel held discussions with President Michael D Higgins in Áras an Uachtaráin. *Photo: President.ie*



Cuban President, Miguel Diaz Canel meets SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley, Head of Communications, Frank Connolly (right) and Jack McGinley SIPTU Solidarity with Cuba Forum (left) during his state visit to Ireland in October.



Photo from left to right: Diane Jackson SIPTU Sector Organiser, Roisín Moran, Margaret Moran, Malcom Moran, Ethel Buckley SIPTU Deputy General Secretary and Christy Watters at a special presentation to Malcolm to mark his retirement and long service to the union. *Photo: Scott Millar*



SIPTU member Peter Gaskin receiving a special long service award from Deputy General Secretary John King and SIPTU Sector Organiser Jane Boushell. An activist and shop steward in Teagasc for over 20 years he has stood by our union and represented our members through thick and thin. *Photo: Paddy Cole*

William Walker: an active and worthy life



By Liam Cahill

William Walker: Social Activist & Belfast Labourist 1870-1918
By Mike Mecham
Published by Umiskin Press 2019

UNITY of the Protestant and Catholic working class in pursuit of a Workers' Republic is a long-held aspiration of socialists and Republicans.

Larkin, in 1907, mobilised the Belfast dockers and carters across the sectarian divide in a strike for union recognition and better conditions. The great Belfast engineering strike for a 44-hour week, in early 1919, is another example.

However, on each occasion, there was an Orange reaction that severed the tentative working-class alliance on economic issues.

The highpoint of the engineering strike was followed in 1920 by pogroms against Catholics and the expulsion of "rotten Prods" – active trade unionists – from the shipyards.

This meticulous biography of William Walker traces the fundamental reasons for this enduring class/sectarian dichotomy and gives insights into the Protestant working class culture that forms one half of the dilemma, through the prism of the life and work of

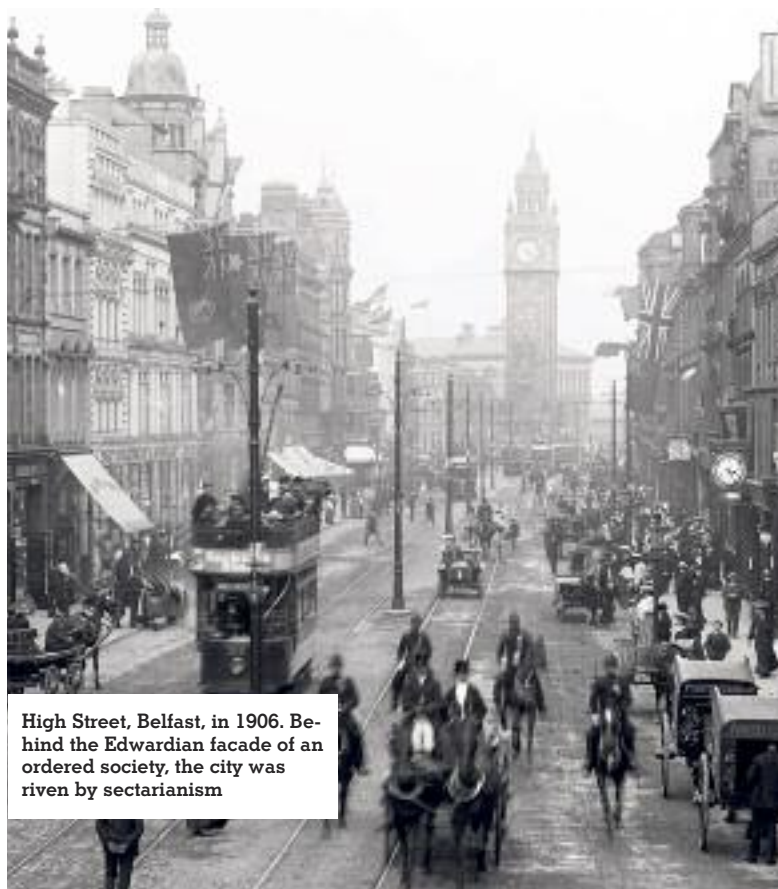


a man who most exemplified that culture.

Walker's place in labour history relies mainly on his role as the interlocutor in a debate with James Connolly in 1911 in the pages of the Glasgow socialist newspaper 'Forward'.

The key issue was whether trade unionists and socialists should unite under an Irish banner or – citing 'internationalism' – remain organically linked to British Labourism. In contrast to Connolly's flinty Marxist analysis, Walker displayed all the hallmarks of a limited municipal 'gas, water and electricity' socialism.

From an early age, Walker was a courageous and committed full-time trade union official. He was



High Street, Belfast, in 1906. Behind the Edwardian facade of an ordered society, the city was riven by sectarianism

president of a craft-dominated Irish Trade Union Congress in 1904, a Belfast City Councillor, a campaigning Poor Law Guardian, an early feminist, a magistrate, narrowly defeated for the Westminster Parliament in 1906 and vice-chair of the British Labour Party. His political aspirations and horizons were severely constrained by his upbringing, by the East Belfast Protestant evangelical culture he lived and worked in, as

well as his lack of even a basic ideological grounding for his trade union work.

After the enactment of the National Insurance Act 1911, Walker left the precarious job of a union official for the calmer pastures of a civil service position as a national insurance inspector. A life-long Temperance advocate, he ended his days ascending the ranks of freemasonry.



An active and worthy life, but hardly one that sustains the audacious claim on the back cover that he was "the most significant figure in the Irish labour movement in the early 20th century".

The real importance of this book may lie in developing a better understanding of the East Belfast Protestant blue collar mindset at a time when the tectonic plates are shifting on the issue of Unity but when adherence to the Union still seems to trump economic interest. This is a complex challenge.

Liam Cahill is author of 'Forgotten Revolution: The Limerick Soviet 1919 [The Centenary Edition]', published by Orla Kelly Publishing

The water struggle continues

A new book 'Wellsprings of Resistance, Struggles over Water in Europe' written by PhD fellow at the University of Kassel, in Germany Madeline Moore, was launched in Liberty Hall on 12th November.

The book discusses the questions of who controls water and for what purpose. Whether it is water sources, water production such as desalination plants and waste treatment, or water services, private industry and financial markets are approaching water as the

main target for commodification over the coming decade. The book deals with how risk is shifted from private investors to the public while profits are siphoned off in the opposite direction.

The book outlines how treating water as just another commodity facilitates the privatisation and outsourcing of what should be essential services as investors can now see the "value" of water and related services. Moore goes on to examine the fight back by communities against this process, including in the Republic of Ireland, where, it is argued, the campaign against water charges effectively

became the anti-austerity movement

Whether responding to ecological threats or privatisation, these movements are part of the global struggle for water justice, a struggle that begins with water, but is not limited to it. The demand for water justice captures and critiques environmental crises, health concerns, energy requirements and the dominance of economic valuation over everything else, she argues. In short, it demands the transformation of our current system.

Scott Millar



Pictured: Pablo Sanchez, (EPSU) with author Madeline Moore and Dr Imre Szabo (UCD) at the launch of Wellsprings of Resistance: Struggles over water in Europe in Liberty Hall.

Following orders



By Michael Halpenny

I Heard You Paint Houses
By Charles Brandt
Steerforth Press 2019

The Irishman
Directed by
Martin Scorsese 2019

THE writer and housepainter Brendan Behan was in McSorley's Old Ale House in downtown Manhattan in the early 1960s when the Irish-American owner declared that as far as he was concerned, Brendan was FBI.

The famous author of course denied any connection with J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation. The saloon owner, however, insisted that he was, as were all those who came over from the Emerald Isle and were known to the Irish-American 'Narrowbacks' as "Foreign Born Irish".

The central character in lawyer Charles Brandt's original 2004 book 'I Heard You Paint Houses' is not FBI in either sense. Neither is he a housepainter. His name is Frank Sheeran and Brandt's New York Times bestselling book, on which



Martin Scorsese's film *The Irishman* is based, is the result of five years of interviews with Sheeran.

In the course of those sessions, the subject reveals much, not only of his own life, but that of two others – International Brotherhood of Teamsters' legendary leader, Jimmy Hoffa, and crime boss, Russell Bufalino.

Sheeran was born into an Irish-American working class family in Philadelphia and grew up during the Depression. He served in the US forces overseas during World War Two in General Patton's 45th Infantry Division, the self-styled "Killer



Division", where he made an early acquaintance with killing and the linguistic ambiguity that invariably accompanies it – experiences which were to serve him well in later life.

He spends some time in a couple of introductory chapters to the book, justifying the casual execution of captured POWs: "The lieutenant gave me a lot of prisoners to handle and I did what I had to do."

In later life, as this "Irishman" marched to the drumbeat of the exclusively Italian-American mafia, his war experience anaesthetised him to a confessed total of 25 mob 'hits', "doing what he had to do".

With plausible deniability honed to its finest point, there is, nevertheless, little ambiguity about orders accompanying those hits, like "this is what it is".

Delivering such chilling instruc-

tions to Sheeran (played by Robert De Niro in the film) is the quietly spoken mafia leader, Russell Bufalino (Joe Pesci), whom he meets not long after his demob from the army in 1945.

The skill and allegiance he owed to Patton's "Killer Division" in Sicily and France is transferred seamlessly to Bufalino, who in turn introduces him to the other character in this triumvirate – union head Jimmy Hoffa. (Hoffa's reported first remarks to Sheeran, "I heard you paint houses" – apparently a euphemism for executing people – was the "inspiration" for Brandt's title).

In the film, Hoffa (Al Pacino), plays to the widespread public impression of a man who, in his day, was the best known, and, to some, best hated trade union leader in the States.

What most people of a certain age

know about Hoffa is the mystery surrounding his disappearance and presumed death, but little else.

While the film offers an answer to that question, which this reviewer will not spoil, it does reveal a visceral obsession on the part of Hoffa with his nemesis, US Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who conducted a sustained campaign against the "mob" and what he believed were their links to mainstream politics and organisations such as the Teamsters.

However, what emerges from the book is a more nuanced view of Hoffa, showing him as a highly effective and tireless representative of his Teamster (trucker) members.

What drives him, the "ends" of his work, is to redress the balance of power in an America where "the working man is being short-changed every day". His goal is a Teamsters national agreement, which he achieves after 20 years, delivering decent conditions and pensions for his members.

Nevertheless, however compelling this simple philosophy is, it is more than tempered by his "means" which according to Sheeran included painting houses. Hoffa summarises his approach "I do to others what they to me, only worse".

The others include employers and union rivals and along with his relationship with people like Bufalino is the source of his ultimate undoing.

The book is a compelling read on its own and is reasonably faithfully reflected in Scorsese's film, though there have been a number of criticisms as to accuracy.

The ensemble acting of De Niro, Pesci and Pacino is a tour de force and well worth the three hours and 40 minutes of *The Irishman*. The book will take slightly longer to read!

No surrender with a vengeance

Labouring Beside Lough Erne
By Jim Quinn
Published by Umiskin Press 2019

IN A speech to the British House of Commons in 1922 Winston Churchill disparagingly referred to the "dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone" and to the "integrity of their ancient quarrel" as being unaltered despite the deluge of the "Great War".

He made those remarks in the course of a debate around the boundary between the new states of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State. It was an issue only

temporarily resolved then, and to this day, never finally settled.

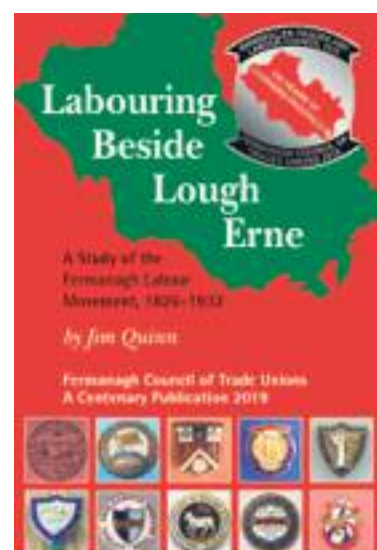
However, eloquently though he waxed on the inconvenient constitutional question raised by the very existence of those "dreary steeples", he seems to have given little thought or grateful thanks for the 582 war dead of Fermanagh or the 1,000 souls given up by their neighbours in Tyrone on the battlefields of the world to the dubious glory of empire.

Still less did he care a jot for the world of work along the shores of Lough Erne to which the survivors of the imperial war returned and that other ancient quarrel, between capital and labour.

Jim Quinn's *Labouring Beside*

Lough Erne, a Fermanagh Council of Trade Unions Centenary publication reflects a determination to redress that imbalance and to tell the story of organised labour in Fermanagh and its main town of Enniskillen between the years 1826 and 1932. A further volume is planned to cover the period 1933 to more recent times.

It is, like most local histories, dense in detail and texture and all the more interesting for that, providing as well a reflective mirror for similar experiences and struggles elsewhere in Ireland during the same period. Along with analysis of disputes such as tailoring and building strikes in the 1860s and the later expansion of organised



labour in the form of the cross-channel National Amalgamated Union of Labour and, less successfully, the more radical "bolshevik" ITGWU, there are telling anecdotes to colour the tale. One such is the

election in the early 1900s to the Poor Law Guardians and Rural Council of Lisnaskea of an Independent Socialist, Thomas Plunkett.

Another tells of the support given by Fermanagh RIC ranks to their striking Belfast colleagues who refused to protect blacklegs and strike-breakers during Larkin's 1907 Dock dispute. Their simple but forthright message of worker solidarity echoes down the years "No surrender with a vengeance!"

If the book has a weakness it is that the story of women workers is not told in sufficient detail. However, to his credit this is acknowledged by the author who promises a full telling in the next volume.

We need more such work from across the country and from within the Irish diaspora. Dreary though it might be to the other side it is not to us and helps to raise us all above the deluge.

Brutality of precarious work exposed

THE latest film by director Ken Loach and writer, Paul Laverty, is a dramatic and overdue exposure of the exploitation of workers on short-term contracts and bogus self-employment.

Sorry We Missed You explores the epidemic of precarious work and its effect on family life through the story of a worker employed as a van driver by a global corporation.

Based on the real experience of delivery drivers working for Amazon, the US online retail corporation controlled by Jeff Bezos, one of the world's richest men.

In contrast to the billionaire owner, Ricky (played by Kris Hitchen) is struggling to get decent, permanent employment after losing his job in the wake of the 2008 financial crash.

His break comes when he gets work as a self-employed delivery driver in a van he has to buy and maintain while working long and stressful hours. His partner, Abby (Debbie Honeywood) provides home care for vulnerable elderly people in Newcastle, England, where the film is located and is forced to sell her car so they can afford the

delivery van.

Laverty's powerful script provides an insight into the soul-destroying nature of the so-called gig economy on workers and their families, no more so than in the scene when the financially-struggling Ricky implodes in a deeply emotional confrontation with his son, Seb (Rhys Stone).

The makers of Irish-based films *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* and *Jimmy's Hall* and the more recent *I, Daniel*, have delivered an extraordinary account of modern day slavery and exploitation based on thorough research by Laverty.

Following a screening of the film at the Lighthouse cinema, Laverty told *Liberty*: "The curse of precarious work is spreading and affects millions of workers across the developed world. I have come across conditions of employment across the UK which are even worse than those portrayed in this film.

"Employers are undermining rights which workers have won over many decades. Organising workers in trade unions is the only way the battle against this brutal and modern form of exploitation can be won." In the

film, the effect on their children of two parents struggling to keep a roof over their heads while working excessive hours on different shifts is heart wrenching and all too real.

"The plight of this family has raised questions about the lives of modern teenagers. These parents are working all the hours they have at a time when they should be engaging and spending quality time with their kids. It raises the issue of the pressure on young teenagers and the mental health and anxiety problems that are so endemic," Laverty told *Liberty*.

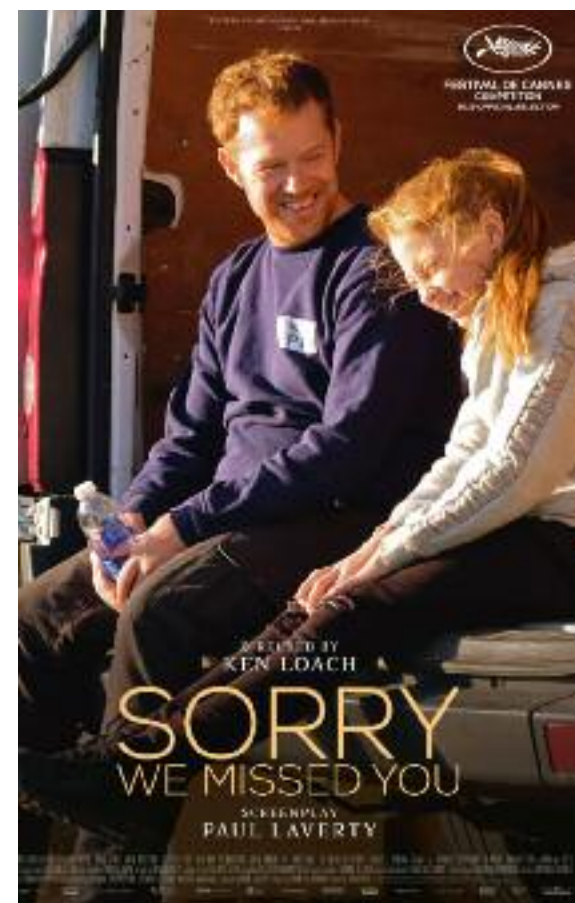
"It also taps into the lack of social housing where private rent is taking up a large part of the budget of the family income. There are 1.1 million people on the waiting list in the UK and only 6000 public housing builds last year. The conditions of vulnerable older people and what their low paid, over worked carers have to endure is another issue that resonates with audiences because so many people are touched by their needs."



Screenwriter
Paul Laverty



Director
Ken Loach



A Pilgrim's Progress on the Left side of life

From Lucifer to Lazarus
By Mick O'Reilly
Published by
The Lilliput Press

THE arrival of a new memoir by a notable personality is not just a happy occasion for his peers, but also for historians.

While Professor T.W. Moody of Trinity College, Dublin, advised his research students to "be particularly distrustful of memoirs... Memoirs are written for purposes of self-justification before posterity... use them, but with the greatest of caution", both Mick O'Reilly's contemporaries and historians can be assured that this is a deeply principled record of Irish working class life, politics and trade unionism from the 1950s to the present day.

Mick was born into a tenement in Dublin's Cork Street. After the family moved to Ballyfermot, his father died when he was still a child – as did his mother when he was 16.

He attended the local Christian Brothers' "cram shop" but after an altercation with a head Brother he left school before completing primary level.

He considers he had no formal education – a resentment he began



to put to rights in 1962 when he attended the Catholic Workers' College, and upon discovering communism, began to read "ferociously".

He was thwarted because of his youth in his first attempt to join the Irish Workers' Party or IWP (a forerunner of the Communist Party of Ireland) by its bookshop manager, Johnny Nolan.

O'Reilly recalls the encounter with a description typical of the humour that peppers the memoir: "I think that he [Nolan] was born in a Comintern filing cabinet."

He spent a formative year in

England in 1965 in the ranks of the British Communist Party and attended an anti-Vietnam War concert featuring Ewan MacColl and Dominic Behan.

A year later he was back in Dublin and could now immerse himself in the work of the IWP.

He served an organisational and ideological apprenticeship in the James Connolly school of socialism, whose essence he sums up as: "The national question is fundamentally a social question; socialists should be the best patriots as well as internationalists."

He later left the party because of its support for the Warsaw Pact's intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, but concludes: "The politics I learned in the Party are, largely speaking, the politics I have retained, with the exception of eastern Europe."

Mick campaigned against Ireland's entry into the EEC in 1973, and continues to hold that the progressive alternative to the EU is a Europe of independent and co-operating states.

However, it is for his career as a trade union leader that O'Reilly is best known. He commences with an insight from his sojourn in England with the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU)



Mick O'Reilly at an Alliance Against Nice press conference in 2002

Picture: RollingNews.ie

where he learnt a negotiating style: "conciliatory, rock solid, but never aggressive".

He unfolds a fascinating account of an incremental rise from shop steward in the Irish car industry to the Dundalk office of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union (ATGWU), to the post of Republic of Ireland Secretary, and ultimately to become the union's Belfast-based Irish Regional Secretary – the first from a nationalist background.

He feels "thoroughly vindicated" for opposing national agreements, describes partnership as "a big wet

blanket" over unions, and condemns the 1990 Industrial Relations Act which undermines many of the unions' strengths, including Larkin's great slogan: "An injury to one is the concern of all".

But it is his gargantuan struggle against the general secretary of his own union, Bill Morris, that commands the most dramatic passages in the memoir.

Suffice to say here that the record of Mick's fighting qualities and the support of comrades and colleagues are revealed in vivid detail worthy of a Hollywood thriller.

The book's abiding sense is that of an activist's trajectory from heretic to heritage, that is to say, from a life spent challenging and improving capitalist, communist and trade union structures and policies to a position where he continues as a valuable asset for progressive causes – as further evidenced by his chairing of a session of this year's Desmond Greaves School, titled 'The history and politics of the climate change crisis in Ireland.'

Dr Michael Quinn is a SIPTU member and Training Advisor in the community and voluntary sector. He is the author of *Irish-Soviet Diplomatic and Friendship Relations 1917-1991*.

TRIBUTE Larry Doyle

Gifted natural leader and compassionate man

LARRY Doyle and I had known each other for more than 40 years. Our paths first crossed in 1976, in the then Dublin County Council that was experiencing dramatic change and servicing the most rapidly growing population in the country.

It was a cauldron of militancy and intense rivalry among a myriad number of unions.

Larry, already bearing a formidable reputation, had only recently become general secretary of the Automobile General Engineering and Mechanical Operatives Union (AGE&MOU). I was a shop steward for the then-Federation of Rural Workers and later an official in the FWUI.

Over the following decade, I was to become well acquainted with his skilled leadership of a small but fiercely independent, militant and proud union and the daily threat he posed in my own industrial backyard.

We were pitted together again throughout most of the 1990s. Then he held the 'centre of the ring' in the again contentious, competitive, multi-union sand and gravel trade, in companies such as Roadstone Provinces, Readymix, and a number of others employing several hundred workers throughout the 26 counties.

I found myself assigned with the task of 'marking him', on behalf of SIPTU. Roadstone, with its huge Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, involving several unions, proved particularly challenging.

Apart from his intellectual prowess, his gifted oratory and sheer guile, he also knew the in-



Larry Doyle: skilled negotiator and gifted orator in the service of working people

dustry inside out and all the key players on all sides, as he had worked in it for several years himself in the capacity of a truck driver union activist.

For me, every meeting was an exercise in the art of survival and every negotiation an exhausting endurance test as, even in the midst of my desperation, I could only marvel at the way he played the room like an orchestra.

Yet, throughout it all, I came to respect and like this courageous, wise and deeply committed socialist trade unionist who drew his inspiration from the egalitarian aspirations of James Connolly.

Albeit warily at first, with the passage of time we became good friends. Over many conversations,

including occasionally during brisk walks in the Phoenix Park, I became a beneficiary of this older man's self-educated wisdom and acute intuition.

There were some parallels between us, as we had both left school in our early teens to go to work in agriculture in North Dublin, although he hailed from the heart of Dublin's Liberties. Moreover, both of us had cut our trade union teeth organising unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the sand and gravel and pipeline sides of the construction industry.

It was early during our many conversations that I came to understand from Larry, who had lived by the sword of inter-union competition, the utter futility of it all

and the way it compromises the very interests of the people whose cause we seek to further.

Ultimately, he was to give practical effect to his conclusions by leading his proud AGE&MOU into the merger with SIPTU, along with Tom O'Brien and the late Jack Dempsey in 1998. Larry retired from the AGE&MOU shortly after.

The Larry Doyle I knew was a bright, intelligent, wily and hugely resourceful self-educated person – well read in politics, history, economics and even law. He was extremely articulate, a gifted orator, a skilled wordsmith and a wily negotiator and advocate.

He was endowed with all the characteristics of leadership, a role

he discharged with verve and imagination. He deployed it all in the interests of his members and working people generally.

To this end, he was politically active throughout his life: suffering internment in the Curragh in the 1950s and adopting a position on the Left in the Republican Movement, in the Unemployed Protest Committee of the same decade, in the Dublin Housing Action Committee and the struggle for Travellers rights in the 1960s and later in the Labour Party, for a time.

Tragically, due to our mistakes in the last government we have failed to hold him and many good people like him.

We will all miss his wise counsel, his acute intuition, his human compassion and his warm friendship. I will always remember him with deep respect and affection and I am diminished by his passing.

However, for all the loss we feel, it will be borne so much more deeply by Marie, Aisling, Niamh and Macdara and the entire family.

We can only extend our deepest condolences to them all as we celebrate the memory of Comrade Larry Doyle and of a useful life which has been well lived!

Condolences also to Larry's surviving sisters and brother: Rita, May, Phyllis, Dorothy and Eamonn, along with nieces, nephews, cousins, sisters and brothers-in-law and a wide circle of friends.

Larry's ashes have been scattered on his much loved Glasilaun Beach, Connemara and in the Dublin Mountains.

In solidarity – SALUTE!
Jack O'Connor

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TRIBUTE Fr Des Wilson

A tireless advocate for the poor and powerless

A CHAMPION of people's rights and one of the architects of the peace process in the North, Fr Des Wilson, was celebrated at his funeral mass in Ballymurphy, Belfast on Saturday 9th November.

'Fr Des' campaigned ardently against poverty and organised education and employment training as well as music, Irish language and art events at Conway Mill in west Belfast for many years.

During the final years of the conflict, he worked closely with church and other representatives in the Protestant and loyalist community in an bid to promote common interests of working people.

Des Wilson fell out with the Catholic hierarchy and publicly questioned their refusal to challenge the poor living and working conditions that contributed to the conflict over the decades. After a time as chaplain in St Malachy's College in Belfast he moved into the staunch working class community of Ballymurphy as the Troubles erupted in the early 1970s.

His friend of many years, Fr Joe McVeigh, who gave the eulogy at the funeral ceremony recalled how Fr Wilson had questioned "the relationship of the official Church with wealth and property and the powerful in society."

"The Church authorities were not impressed. He was inspired by the worker priests in France in the 1950s and by the thinking of the Second Vatican Council.

"Like some other priests in different countries – who, even though they came from a comfort-

able background, left all that to become advocates for the poor – Des Wilson also left it all in 1971 to live among the people in Ballymurphy.

"When he went there he got his eyes opened. He had never been in the west of the city before. He had never seen such deprivation and poverty. In 1971, Des made a decision to stand with the poor and powerless against the powerful and the privileged. On 9th August 1971, the Parachute Regiment murdered 10 innocent people on the streets – including his friend, Fr Hugh Mullan.

"The following year on 9th July 1972, another priest and close friend, Fr Noel Fitzpatrick, was



Fr Des stood with the people of Ballymurphy in their hour of need

In a message delivered at the funeral mass, President Michael D Higgins said:

"As President of Ireland, may I convey my deepest condolences to his family and friends, and express my thanks for Fr Des Wilson's life of dedicated service, inspired by what was a generous vision of a new, more inclusive, peaceful and welcoming Ireland.

"During his life's work, Fr Wilson gained enormous respect for his activism, for rights, his indefatigable work in community, integrated education and in the promotion of civil rights.

"Comfortable as he was working in both Irish and English, Fr Des Wilson was referred to by so many as a true 'champion of the people'.

"In his work for the betterment of communities, Fr Wilson was unafraid to challenge figures of authority from all sides.

"It was his sense of fairness and decency that resulted in him being called upon, together with Fr Gerry Reynolds and Fr Alex Reid, to help in bringing about the negotiations that led to the IRA ceasefire.

"Síocháin shíoraí dá anam lách."

shot dead by the British army in Whiterock Drive as he went to give the Last Rites to a girl of 13 – Margaret Gargan.

"All of this tragedy and trauma inflicted on his friends and on the people he was sent to serve changed Des' life for ever and caused him to be even more determined to stand with the people against their oppressors."

Des Wilson was born in 1925 – the youngest of five boys. The others were James, Gerard, Kevin and Liam. His father was from Mul-laghhoran in county Cavan and his mother was a Turley from Saval, county Down. They both came to Belfast in the early 1900s. His father worked in the bar trade and eventually owned his own pub. Des grew up on the Ormeau Road.

"Through all these years, Des Wilson worked tirelessly for peace, justice and human rights. I doubt if anyone devoted more time and energy to this project in order to create a more humane society, a better future for all the people. During the local disagreements he was there to help heal the splits and offer people another way of settling disputes," Fr McVeigh told the packed church.

"Des has left a wonderful legacy which will be fully appreciated in the years to come: Springhill Community House, the Conway Mill, the annual Féile an Phobail festival, his many writings and books – but his greatest legacy is the example he has given of living his life in solidarity with the people of Ballymurphy in their hour of need." He was truly the soul of the struggle.



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Jubilant Shamrock Rovers fans... the club's faithful will be expecting to build on last season's success
PICTURE: Fillipi Pamplona (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

Party time down at the Rovers



By Brendan O'Brien

SHAMROCK Rovers have capped off a good season for the League of Ireland with finally landing the FAI Cup for the first time since 1987, some 32 years ago.

While Dundalk deservedly landed another league title for a fifth time in six years, most Rovers supporters would tell you landing the long-awaited 25th FAI Cup title was the one they really wanted.

The fact that they won the Cup by defeating the newly-crowned league champions made it all the sweeter and hopefully sets down a marker for the developing rivalry between Rovers and Dundalk.

More than 33,000 attended Irish football's televised blue-riband



Mick McCarthy: "We can beat anyone in the play-offs"

event at the Aviva stadium, which shows that the domestic game can command good support when the right setting is provided.

Average league attendances were up across both divisions in the league, none more so than at Dalymount Park, where Bohemians en-

joyed frequent 'House Full' signs over the course of the season.

The League's standout player this year was Shamrock Rovers midfielder Jack Byrne, whose performances has earned him a call up to the national side.

Speaking of the national sides, Mick McCarthy's team fell agonisingly short of making the automatic selection for the European Championships after their 1-1 draw against Denmark at the Aviva Stadium on 18th November. But he was upbeat following the game about the Republic's chances in next March's fixtures. A confident McCarthy said: "We can beat anyone in the play-offs."

From a League of Ireland perspective, it's encouraging to see a good sprinkling of former domestic players, such as Enda Stevens and Sean Maguire, in the senior squad. Add to that, a crop of talented youngsters such as Troy Par-

From a League of Ireland perspective, it's encouraging to see a good sprinkling of former domestic players in the senior squad

rot and Aaron Connolly looking to make their mark, the future for the international side looks bright.

The women's game in Ireland continues to grow, with the national side now playing their international matches in Tallaght Stadium. They're currently in sec-

ond place in their European Championship table behind Germany and we'll be in contention for a qualifying group runners-up place.

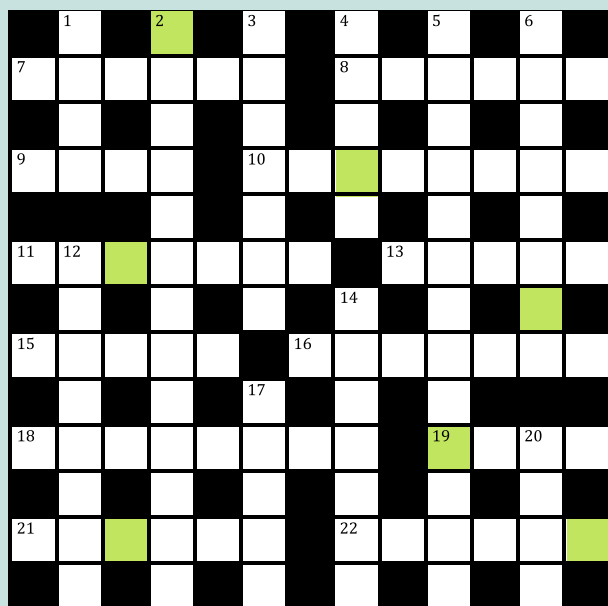
Many of the women's side have become household names, such as Katie McCabe, Rianna Jarrett and Stephanie Roche, with some playing full-time in the UK.

As for next year's domestic season? Dundalk remain the team to beat in the league. However, Shamrock Rovers will look to close the gap on them.

With Bohemians young side also rapidly improving, not to mention the return of newly-promoted Shelbourne, next season promises to be a classic.

As Christmas approaches, why not consider a season ticket for your local League of Ireland side? It's a great way to spend a Friday evening and offers a total football experience that TV can never do. Until next season!

Liberty Crossword



ACROSS

- 7 Yellow fruit (6)
- 8 Deserving (6)
- 9 Mumbai butter (4)
- 10 Mine (8)
- 11 Paint (7)
- 13 Prickling (5)
- 15 Dead, as an engine (5)
- 16 How one might be lying in the country (7)
- 18 Opensource (8)
- 19 Eye (4)
- 21 Girl's name (6)
- 22 Stage hand (6)

DOWN

- 1 Use soap and water (4)
- 2 Fireproof screen in a theatre (6,7)
- 3 Partial paralysis (7)
- 4 Two fold (5)
- 5 Of Earth's pull (13)
- 6 Impassioned (5-3)
- 12 Dealer (8)
- 14 Obscure (7)
- 17 Depth charge target (1-4)
- 20 Lion's Den (4)

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

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

*Terms and conditions apply.

The winner of the crossword competition in the October issue was Kevin Brazil, Shannonbridge, Athlone. The answer was: Climate.

SIPTU Cuba Solidarity Forum

2020 Trip to CUBA

SIPTU Solidarity with Cuba Forum (SSWCF) has arranged the following trip to Cuba in Autumn 2020 with Cuba Travel

Leaving on 25 October 2020 and covering 9 nights/10 days the trip covers the following:

- 4 days B+B in the Hotel Sevilla, Havana
- 4 days Fully inclusive Melia Hotel, Varadero
- 1 day B+B Hotel America, Santa Clara



Cuba Travel are quoting €1698 per person sharing with a single room supplement of €325

Flights will be via Paris or Amsterdam depending on whether we travel with Air France or KLM

Flight data for October/November 2020 will be loaded in early December 2019 and to avail of these COMPETITIVE prices an early booking deposit is essential.

For further details contact Jack McGinley (SSWCF) at kmcginley@tcd.ie



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