

Liberty



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We need homes for all now

by Frank Connolly

Over 15,000 people took to the streets of Dublin on Saturday, 26th November, in a Raise the Roof protest against the failure of the Government to adequately address the housing emergency.

Led by trade union leaders, including SIPTU General Secretary, Joe Cunningham, and INMO general secretary Phil Ní Sheaghda, they marched from Parnell Street, down O'Connell Street to Merion Square, where a large crowd gathered to listen to speeches and musical performances.

Addressing the protest, Ní Sheaghda condemned the failure of the Government to provide basic accommodation for workers providing essential services, including nurses and teachers, many of whom are leaving the country due to the extortionate cost of housing.

"We know that rents in this city and in other parts of our country have now gone beyond the salaries of many reasonably paid workers," she said. "We have members working in this city... nurses, midwives, teachers, guards and all other professionals that are very necessary to keep our society going, who now are paying over 50 per cent of their wages for rent. That's simply not affordable, they will not stay," she said.

She told the crowd that the aim of the Raise the Roof campaign

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SIPTU General Secretary, Joe Cunningham (in red jacket), Phil Ní Sheaghda, INMO (left) and actor Liam Cunningham (third from left), among those leading the Raise the Roof march down O'Connell Street, Dublin on Saturday, 26th November
Photo: Derek Speirs



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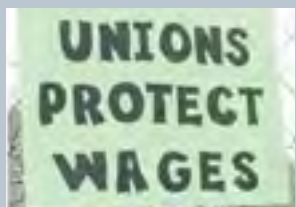
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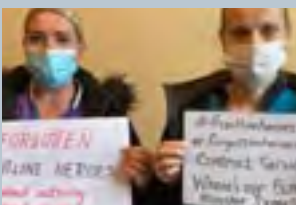
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SIPTU members at NI ICTU



Members of the SIPTU delegation with newly appointed General Secretary of ICTU, Owen Reidy, at the Biennial Conference of the Northern Ireland Committee of Congress in Enniskillen on 22nd-23rd November. Photo: Kevin Cooper.

Wexford worker awarded €40,000 for constructive dismissal

A SIPTU member secured an award of more than €40,000 at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) following his unfair dismissal by his employer, McGuire Haulage Limited, with a head office in Thomastown, county Kilkenny.

SIPTU Workers Rights Centre Advocate, Rachel Hartery, said: "This case involved SIPTU member, Des O'Farrell, who was forced to resign from his job after the company failed in its contractual duty to provide work for him to carry out.

"The problems for Des began when he entered his place of work,

the Danone food production plant at Rocklands in county Wexford, out of hours to retrieve his work mobile phone in June, 2019. McGuire Haulage which employed O'Farrell at the Donore plant, said it viewed his actions as a security breach, although employees had never been formally advised not to enter the Rocklands site after hours and off duty. The company then suggested to Danone that Des be banned from the site. When this ban was implemented, it resulted in Des being unable to carry out his work.

She added: "McGuire Haulage offered Des work in Dublin but

this was not a suitable option for him. At the hearing the company claimed that Des was still employed although it had offered work that was not viable for him. However, the WRC adjudicator found that the onus was on the employer to either provide suitable work or terminate his contract and that McGuire Haulage did neither which had effectively ended our members' 23 years of loyal service to the company.

Des O'Farrell said: "SIPTU were very helpful to me in this case. I would urge all workers to be in a union. The result of my case shows how important union membership is."

Continued from page 1 — We need homes for all now

is "fairly straightforward".

"We believe that State lands should be used to build the affordable housing we need to keep the people in this country that we need to provide the services we need. Policy must change now to allow people, from cradle to grave, to meet the very modest aspiration of having a roof over your head."

Academic and author, Dr Rory Hearne, who chaired the rally, warned the political establishment that Raise the Roof will build the "largest social movement in the history of the State", if that is required to resolve the housing crisis.

Dr Hearne criticised the failure of successive governments to build social and affordable housing over recent decades and for their reliance on the private, 'for profit' sector to meet vital public need.

He said that women, students and Travellers were among those who were bearing the brunt of the current housing crisis and described as a "disgrace" the failure of the Government to accept that it is now an "emergency".

Louise Bayliss of Focus Ireland described how the threat of homelessness was no longer confined to the poorest and most marginalised people but touching those in secure employment who were unable to find affordable accommodation.

Other speakers included James O'Toole, who is among residents facing mass eviction from Tathony House in Kilmainham in Dublin, Lucky Khambule of the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland and East Wall community activist, Joe Mooney.

Singers Lisa O'Neill, Laura

Quirke and Martin Leahy performed along with musicians Brendan Begley and Donal Lunny. Actor, Liam Cunningham, also participated in the protest and described the Government's incentives which encourage global investment funds to dominate the expensive 'build to rent' private apartment sector as "treasonous".

Eoin O'Broin, Rebecca Moynihan, Cian O'Callaghan and Richard Boyd Barrett, the housing spokespeople for Sinn Féin, Labour, the Social Democrats and People Before Profit, respectively, also appeared on the stage.

The trade union-led Raise the Roof campaign includes housing and homeless charities and NGO's, women's, student and Traveller organisations as well as progressive political parties.



"Even when you are working and have an education you can't afford a home in which to take comfort. Wages and housing prices are too far apart. Rents in this city and other parts of the country have gone beyond the salaries of reasonably paid workers."

Phil Ní Sheaghda, INMO

Photos by Derek Speirs



Photo: Liadh Connolly



Photo: Liadh Connolly



Photo: Liadh Connolly



Lisa O'Neill



Dr Rory Hearne

Call for urgent meeting with National Transport Authority on bus driver shortages

SIPTU members employed as bus drivers with Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann handed in a letter at the offices of the National Transport Authority (NTA) in Dublin, on 24th November, calling for an urgent meeting to discuss recruitment issues which are adversely impacting public transport services.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, John Murphy, said: "SIPTU representatives are seeking a meeting with the National Transport Authority over increasing difficulties in recruiting new

drivers into public transport. There is an urgent need to address this problem so as the significant investment in public transport services has the necessary professional drivers to deliver these services for all communities. Having adequate drivers for these services is also vital if we are to encourage private transport users to make the switch to public transport."

Dublin Bus worker and SIPTU National Executive Committee member, Stephen Millane, said: "While pay is a key factor in attracting new entrants to the industry, it is not the only factor. Issues such low starting rates, unsociable working hours, re-



Dublin Bus worker and SIPTU National Executive Committee member, Stephen Millane, accompanied by members of the SIPTU Dublin Bus Section, reads out a letter handed into the NTA offices at Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2, on 24th November.

duction in the working week and safety concerns should be looked at and improved as a means of attracting workers."

He added: "SIPTU representatives will continue to negotiate with all public transport operators on behalf of our more than 6000 members within the industry. However, we believe that a central discussion needs to occur with the National Transport Authority, so as the industry, as a whole, can be improved and can attract the vital skills needed to deliver a first-class service for customers into the future."

SIPTU members in Belfast City Council make gains

SIPTU members in Belfast City Council have won payments amounting to almost £2000 £3,500 to meet the rising cost of living over recent months.

"Our union representatives have negotiated a pay award of £1,925 for council staff as a response to the current cost of living difficulties. There are benefits for all staff, but our lowest paid colleagues are receiving the highest percentage increase," said SIPTU shop steward, Anto McDonald.

"Furthermore, through the efforts of our local trade union negotiating teams we secured £1,500 in cost-of-living payments to assist members in the exceedingly difficult winter months as the energy crisis bites. These were one-off payments.

"In addition, we have also secured an agreement with management that all council staff will receive the living wage of £10.90 per hour. No employee



SIPTU shop steward Anto McDonald

within Belfast City Council will now be paid below the living wage. We have also secured agreement that management will undertake a pay and grading review which will see improvements in terms and conditions of all staff."

Women members in SIPTU will also benefit from significant improvements in the policy to assist them during menopause, he said.

There are some 200 members of SIPTU working at Belfast City Council out of a total workforce of 2500.

Over the coming weeks, SIPTU members will also be supporting nurses, postal and transport workers who are taking strike action in pursuit of cost-of-living increases across the North and in the UK.

Strike notice on Zenith Energy

SIPTU members have served notice of strike action at Zenith Energy Bantry Bay Terminals Limited, located on Whiddy Island, county Cork, to commence on Tuesday, 13th December, in a dispute concerning compulsory redundancies at the energy company.

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Willie Noone, said: "A ballot for strike action was supported unanimously by our members and this decision was relayed to the company on 28th November. This action results from the decision of the company to dismiss

workers with long service on 30th November, while planning to employ contractors to do their work.

"Strike action is always a last resort but it is now obvious that the compulsory redundancies that Zenith Energy are seeking are not necessary. Efforts by the Workplace Relations Commission to resolve the dispute were unsuccessful as the company remains insistent that contractors are used to cover the work which was previously done by the workers being made redundant."

Workers' right to request remote and flexible working now on

On Wednesday 9th November, the Cabinet agreed to scrap the draft 'Right to Request Remote Working Bill' and instead deliver the new workers' rights in the Work-Life Balance Bill, which is currently making its way through the Oireachtas.

This is a result of extensive engagement between the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and the social partners.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions General Secretary Owen Reidy said: "Integrating these two pieces of legislation will deliver workers a statutory right to request remote working before the end of this year, months ahead of the expected schedule.

He added: "Congress and our affiliate unions welcome the Government's commitment, to be written into the Work-Life Balance Bill, to consider



extending the right to request all types of flexible working arrangements to all workers, not just remote, after two years of the legislation coming into effect.

"Unions have been clear that full flexibility for all workers is necessary to close the emerging work-life balance privilege gap between workers who can work

remotely and those in jobs requiring a physical presence."

Mr. Reidy said: "I want to acknowledge the collaborative approach taken by the Tánaiste and his officials to resolve the flawed draft legislation and to deliver on his commitment to a new workers' right to remote working."

SIPTU Oireachtas staff win big pay rise

SIPTU members working in the Houses of the Oireachtas have won a substantial pay rise after years of campaigning for a living wage for all political staff.

The news comes following a vote of SIPTU members to overwhelmingly agree to the terms of a deal brokered by the former Fórsa General Secretary, Shay Cody, to move Secretarial Assistants to an Administrative Assistant pay scale. Separately, SIPTU members also accepted an offer to apply the Building Momentum and successor pay deals to the Parliamentary Assistants and Administrators grades, bringing them into line with other public servants.

In a statement to staff, the SIPTU Oireachtas staff workplace committee said: "We welcome this proposal, with SIPTU members having officially endorsed the recommendations earlier this

month. The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission are now beginning work on implementation of this proposal.

"At this juncture, we would like to thank members and colleagues for their support over a long, four-year industrial relations process. From raising this issue in the chamber to putting pressure on TDs and Senators to fight for better pay for their staff, members and staff played a collective role in this process. The solidarity among staff is welcome and we hope it continues long into the future."

The SIPTU workplace committee is comprised of Chloe Manahan, Sárán Fogarty, David McFadden, Ruth Ann Lawlor, Ellen Casey, Rob Jones, Brian Marron, Leah Speight and Jessica Bray.

Brave campaigner Vicky Phelan changed our health services for the better

CervicalCheck campaigner, Vicky Phelan, who passed away on 14th November, has left a lasting legacy concerning the position of patients within the health service and in particular women, according to SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley.

During her campaign to find out how her own cancer misdiagnosis had occurred, Phelan revealed systematic failings in the CervicalCheck service. In response, she helped establish a support group for 221 women and their families affected by the CervicalCheck controversy.

SIPTU members supported her campaign and she addressed the

2018 SIPTU Health Division Biennial Delegate Conference. In a video call, she thanked delegates for their contribution to the health service and supported the union's campaign to bring all health screening back to Ireland and out of the hands of profiteers.

Phelan said: "I really appreciate all the support we have had. When it all started, all I wanted was answers for me. I never thought that it would actually make change happen. It is not that I want to see punishment of individual doctors or clinicians, what this is about is changing the culture so that patients will always be put first.

"We have actually got some answers, I still have some questions, but also results that will change the culture in this country



From left to right: Journalist Susan McKay, CervicalCheck campaigner Vicky Phelan, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Ethel Buckley and SIPTU Health Division member Rosie Condra in Liberty Hall, Dublin in 2018.

going forward for all of us and for our children."

Buckley commended Phelan, and the bravery of other women affected by the cervical smear controversy in their fight for justice and change. She said that the human tragedy of outsourcing was laid bare by the scandal and their campaign.

She said: "Women were yet again let down badly by the State. SIPTU stands in solidarity with these brave women. The bravery and resilience of Vicky Phelan in fighting a High Court battle to uncover the real reason why she had been misdiagnosed - resulting in a fatal delay in her treatment for cervical cancer - revealed the appalling impact of creeping health privatisation."

Dáil backs demands of Valuing Care, Valuing Community campaign

THE Valuing Care, Valuing Community campaign has made significant progress in its fight for pay justice for care and community sector workers following several days of strike action by SIPTU members across the country.

On Wednesday, 12th October, the Dáil voted in favour of a motion supporting the demands of the campaign.

The motion, sponsored by Labour Party health spokesperson, Duncan Smith, called on the Government to fund pay rises for workers in the care and community sector in line with recent public sector pay agreements, and to set up a standing forum and mechanism for collective bargaining on pay.

Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, and Anne Rabbitte, Minister of State at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, both spoke in



Western Care workers on strike in Castlebar in October, 2022. Photo courtesy Mayo News.

support of addressing care and community sector workers' pay. The Government did not oppose the motion.

In September, hundreds of SIPTU members in care and community organisations took to the picket lines across counties Cork, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Donegal during three days of strike action. The action highlighted the workers' campaign for pay justice, receiving overwhelming public support and positive media coverage and prompting further political backing.

SIPTU Public Administration and Community Division Organiser, Adrian Kane, said: "At this juncture, plans for industrial action have been paused in the hope that the Government is sincere in its claim that it wishes to deliver a forum for pay justice for care and community sector workers."

County Registrar seeking €25k compensation owed to sacked worker

THE Kilkenny County Registrar is seeking to enforce €25,000 in compensation from Harrington Bookmakers, county Kilkenny, awarded by the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) to a worker sacked in early 2018 after it found she was discriminated against due to a disability.

SIPTU Workers' Rights Centre Advocate, Anne Flynn, said: "Aneta Jachowicz, a SIPTU member, was

discriminatorily dismissed by Harrington Bookmakers after its failure to reasonably accommodate her return to work after she was out on sick leave.

"Aneta suffers from chronic back pain and is receiving ongoing medical support to enable her to manage the condition. She began work in the Kilkenny branch of Harrington Bookmakers in March 2016.

"Despite her employer being

aware of her condition she was provided with a high stool to sit on. When Aneta requested to be provided with an ordinary chair which allowed her to place her feet on the ground, management ignored her request.

"Due to a deterioration in her condition she took periods of certified sick [leave]. When she sought to return to work in February 2018, her employer ignored her and then advertised her cash-



ier role in the local press." She added: "Following a hearing at the WRC, which the company failed to attend, it was ruled that Aneta be awarded €25,000 in compensation because of the seriousness of the discrimination she had suffered which had resulted in her losing her job.

"As of June 2022, Aneta has not been paid the award and the matter is now with the local County Registrar for enforcement."

Shannon Heritage workers protest over funding delay

SIPTU members working for Shannon Heritage protested at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park on 28th October to highlight the Government's continued failure to release funds to bring about the transfer of Shannon Heritage tourism sites to Clare County Council.

SIPTU Organiser, Rachel Keane, said: "Our members are extremely worried about their future. They have been waiting since June 2022 for the interdepartmental working group to approve the necessary multi-million euro funding to en-

sure a smooth and successful transfer of Shannon Heritage tourism sites to Clare County Council.

"All stakeholders have been working diligently on this project since 2021 and the Council is ready to take over. The only missing component is the funding."

SIPTU member, Dolores Broderick, told Liberty: "For the third year in a row, our members are facing uncertainty. These heritage sites could face closure again in January and we will be out of work again."

Caroline O'Sullivan, also a

member of SIPTU, said: "Every day, we hear of workers fleeing the hospitality and tourism sector. I don't blame them. Our sites have seen record numbers of visitors this season."

"We should be excited for our future but we have never seen such low morale on site. We are again calling on all our local politicians to represent our voices with the Government, and expedite the funding required for the transfer."



Workers and supporters protest outside Bunratty Castle and Folk Park at the failure to transfer the management of the tourist attraction to Clare County Council on 27th October, 2022.

Collective power forces reversal of management decision in Kostal.

Earlier this year SIPTU members in Kostal Ireland GmbH voted overwhelmingly in favour of taking industrial strike action in defence of their agreed terms & conditions. Ballots were held over two days in both Abbeyfeale and Mallow plants resulting in an outcome of 98% in favour of industrial action and 94% in favour of strike.

Agreements were reached several years ago under the auspices of the WRC Conciliation Service which afforded SIPTU members in non-production roles bonuses related to performance appraisals and a further bonus for members who are at the top of their pay scale and no longer require appraisals. Kostal management made a unilateral decision to not pay these bonuses.

Ciara McMahon Flavin, SIPTU shop steward said "none of our members wanted to be in this position but when our terms & conditions were being stripped it left us with no option. This was a disappointing situation but the members in Kostal stood united."

Joe Kelly, SIPTU Industrial Organiser said: "This cut to our members' hard-fought terms and conditions was deeply felt as can be seen by the ballot results. Prior to ballot, management was given the opportunity to honour the



Ciara McMahon Flavin

existing agreements and enter meaningful negotiations. Its refusal to do so left our members with no choice but to take this course of action. There is an agreed procedure in the Company/Union agreement to address any issues which management ignored by making this cut.

Following the ballot, management sought the assistance of the WRC but ultimately reversed the decision in the face of a united workforce determined to stand together to protect their terms & conditions of employment

McMahon Flavin added "even though this issue only affected non-production grades, the solidarity and support offered by other grades sent a clear message to management that this behaviour will not be tolerated by SIPTU members."

New tipping legislation

ONE Galway has welcomed the announcement that new tipping legislation will be in place for the busy Christmas season.

Clement Shevlin, a spokesperson for ONE Galway, the group that has campaigned on this issue since 2018, said: "This legislation is a good start on improving the conditions and the lives of workers in the hospitality sector. But we mustn't stop there. Whilst electronic tips are protected for workers, there re-

mains ambiguity about cash tips which don't appear to enjoy the same protections. However, the service charge is returned to workers in full, a move which is welcomed by workers and unions alike'.

Shevlin acknowledged the support of ICTU in the fight for better working conditions, saying "the tipping law shouldn't be the end of improvements for the hospitality sector. For the lowest-paid workers in our economy, there is a lot more which can be done, starting with a living wage, and better terms and

conditions so that they can build sustainable careers.

"We'd urge customers to be vigilant whilst enjoying themselves during the Christmas period, check their bills, and ask their server where the tips and charges go.

"We'd also urge the Government to give hospitality workers a real meaningful gift this Christmas by tackling the inequities and bad practices in the industry, thus improving the opportunities and conditions in which they work, changes that are not just for Christmas".

Reidy condemns Twitter lay-off announcement

Congress General Secretary Owen Reidy said on 4th November that "the decision by Twitter given its recent takeover to restructure and lay off some staff is not in itself unusual.

"But what is appalling is the manner and approach the company has taken. The social media platform has become incredibly successful, in no small part to the contribution of its employees globally. But the approach today, as reported in local media is all about shock and awe, it's about destabilising

and undermining workers' confidence and their capacity to react and challenge, in any way, this brutal decision.

"There are clear similarities with the approach recently taken by P and O Ferries which was roundly condemned by many. This action highlights the need for fair and strong labour standards globally. It again highlights the need for collective organisation and voice for all workers who choose it, including those working in social media tech."

"These workers should have had the right to consultation and the consideration of alternative decisions. In most unionised environments, including many global cutting-edge companies, collective engagement and consideration of alternatives take place before such a decision. This decision highlights the need for stronger workers' rights and in particular the right for workers to organise and ensure that their collective voice is heard and heeded," Reidy said.

Unions launch joint campaign to 'Keep Water Public'

SIPTU has joined a coalition of trade unions to launch a 'Keep Water Public' campaign calling on the Government to set a date for a referendum on the public ownership of water services.

The campaign is supported by SIPTU, Fórsa, Unite, Connect and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Speaking at the 27th October launch, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, John King, said: "Union members have been fighting for years to make sure that water services are delivered for the public good and not private profit.

"We now need the Government to live up to its commitments and name the date for the referendum."

Claiming the campaign represented a shared commitment by trade unions to ensure the future of public ownership of water services, ICTU President, Kevin Callinan, said: "It's time now to end any lingering uncertainty about the future of water services in Ireland."

He added: "A referendum would give people the opportunity to have their say, in addition to providing us all with a unique opportunity to safeguard public



Name the date! SIPTU's John King, Catherine Keogh, Fórsa, ICTU President Kevin Callinan, and Ed Thompson, UNITE, at the 'Keep Water Public' campaign launch on 27th October.

ownership of water for future generations."

After years of campaigning by water services workers and others, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, has given a commitment to bring proposals to government for a referendum on the

We now need the Government to live up to its commitments and name the date for the referendum

public ownership of water services.

As recently as 9th November, Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Malcolm Noonan, confirmed to the Dáil a plan to "bring forward a referendum proposal on water ownership for consideration by the Government". However, no date has been set for a referendum.

SIPTU Head of Strategic Organising, Darragh O'Connor, said "It's time for government to name the date of the referendum, and we're campaigning to make that happen. We must make this an issue that government cannot ignore. Already over 10,000 people have signed the online petition and more actions are planned over the coming weeks."

He added: "There is strong support for our campaign from political parties, including Sinn Féin, the Social Democrats, Labour, and People Before Profit / Solidarity. It's time the Government lived up to its commitment and named the date."

Check out the online petition at www.keepwaterpublic.ie

'Forgotten heroes' of pandemic deserve recognition payout

CONTRACT cleaners, security staff and caterers who served on the frontline in healthcare facilities throughout the pandemic have yet to receive their €1,000 Pandemic Special Recognition Payment.

More than 10 months after the pandemic bonus payment was announced, SIPTU representatives are still trying to ensure that all contract workers in the health service, who were on the frontline during the pandemic, will be covered by the Government scheme.

During a SIPTU-organised visit to the Oireachtas on 8th November to brief elected representatives on their position, contract workers talked to Liberty about their belief that they have until now been "forgotten frontline heroes".

SIPTU member and contract cleaner at Cavan General Hospital, Lisa Stenson, recalls experiencing feelings of "pure stress, pure terror" in the early stages of the pandemic during which she cleaned out rooms used to treat Covid-19 positive pa-



SIPTU members and contract workers (pictured centre, left to right) Eoin O'Brien, Suzanne Hales, Lisa Stenson and Anne Marie Mulroe, surrounded by SIPTU Officials, TDs and Senators during their 8th November visit to Leinster House to brief Oireachtas members

tients.

"Nobody knew if you caught it whether you're going to die," she said. "It was a very, very scary period. It's hurtful to think that there was so much camaraderie between all the disciplines during the height of the pandemic. Now contract workers are being left on the back foot again. We want our work during this period to be recog-

nised."

SIPTU member Suzanne Hales, a contract cleaner at St James' Hospital, was one of the frontline workers who appeared on the Late, Late Show and met with President Michael D Higgins in Áras an Uachtaráin. She also has not yet received the payment meant to recognise the role she played during that time.

She said: "We would have been

probably one of the longest in the Covid-19 rooms. We were there for 15 to 20 minutes to clean them. It is just unacceptable that we are now being ignored in relation to this payment."

SIPTU member Anne Marie Mulroe worked in contract catering in Mayo University Hospital throughout the pandemic.

She moved out of her parents' home because she was worried about giving them Covid-19. Her father later died from the virus.

"You went home and the next morning patients you served the day before were gone," she said. "We were a team but then at the end, some of the team was left out."

SIPTU member Eoin O'Brien, a contract security worker at University Hospital Limerick, said: "I would have been on the main doors, on the A&E doors, helping to transport patients and bodies to the morgue.

"We were dealing with aggressive patients who didn't want to be in the hospital. We were getting hit, kicked, spit at by Covid-19 positive patients on a regular basis who were

highly strung. I have three kids, two girls and a boy. At the time, my youngest was only one. I didn't even want to pick her up when I got back in the evenings in case I passed Covid-19 on to her."

The Department of Health has confirmed to the health sector trade unions that the Government's decision is that "subject at all times to fulfilling all the eligibility criteria for the recognition payment, contract staff (e.g. cleaners, catering, security staff etc) are to be included in the process".

SIPTU Sector Organiser, Ed Kenny told Liberty: "We will not believe it until these workers have received the payments due to them in recognition of their public services during one of the darkest periods of our State's history.

"Until then we will be organising these workers into the Forgotten Frontline Heroes campaign to ensure they receive the recognition and respect they deserve in relation to this issue and into the future."

Conference reports by Scott Millar

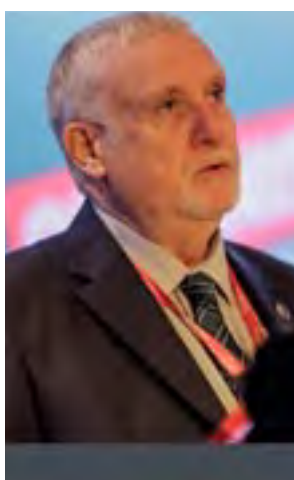
Industrial action key weapon to secure pay rises in private sector

SIPTU representatives will authorise industrial action in order to secure adequate pay rises across the private sector delegates were told at the union's Services Division Biennial Delegate Conference in Kilkenny on 5th – 6th October.

Addressing over 100 delegates from workplaces across the services sector, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Gerry McCormack, said: "This idea that workers have to pay the cost for rising inflation is absolute nonsense. We have a policy in our union that across the private sector where our members are dissatisfied with any issue in terms of their pay and once they have gone through the due procedures but are unhappy with the outcome, we will sanction a dispute.

"We have had a number of such disputes and we will continue to do that. SIPTU members are going to stand up and defend our livelihoods."

Addressing delegates, SIPTU Contract Services Sector President, Bernie Casey, said: "We must organise throughout the contract



SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Gerry McCormack



Delegates consider motions at the SIPTU Services Division Biennial Delegate Conference in the Newpark Hotel in Kilkenny City, on 5th October.



Former Kilkenny Hurling manager, Brian Cody, who led the county to 11 All-Ireland titles delivered an address on the importance of team work to delegates at the at the SIPTU Services Division Biennial Delegate Conference.

services. In the catering and cleaning industries, workers have faced major challenges both at the height of the pandemic and as it has lessened. It is time for our union to put the resources into organising these key sectors of our economy."

Among the motions passed at the conference was one noting the difficulties facing hospitality workers, with



SIPTU Contract Services Sector President, Bernie Casey, addressing delegates at the SIPTU Services Division Biennial Delegate Conference.

over 62% of workers in the industry paid less than €12 per hour. In response, the motion called for a union campaign for a Joint Labour Committee (JLC) and an Employment Regulation Order (ERO) for hospitality workers.

Another motion passed calls for support for a campaign by SIPTU Contract Services Sector to compel employers to agree Long Covid paid leave due to the

number of members in this sector affected by the condition. The SIPTU Services Division Biennial Delegate Conference took place in the Newpark Hotel in Kilkenny City.

Organise to win is SIPTU Honorary President's call to members

It was a case of bringing the message back home for SIPTU Honorary President, Mary O'Sullivan, when she addressed members at the Biennial Divisional Conference in Kilkenny on 5th October.

O'Sullivan said: "I was elected Honorary President of SIPTU in March this year and I wish to thank all my colleagues in the Services Division, our Division, for your support which made my election possible.

"It is crucial that Service Division workers have as powerful a voice as possible within our Union. While, as Honorary President, I seek to advance the interests of all SIPTU members, I believe my experience in the Services sector of the economy, where we have long had to battle to organise workers, often against hostile employers, greatly assists me in fully understanding the scale of the



SIPTU Honorary President Mary O'Sullivan

fight our Union is currently involved in.

"That is the fight to organise as many workers as we can into the One Big Union – a struggle which began with Jim Larkin and James Connolly more than 100 years ago but remains just as vital now in our age of precarious work, low wages and right wing government."

She added: "There is only one way you can make people, whose pay

packets depend on their ability to not notice the struggles of ordinary workers, take notice of our demands.

"That is to organise! Organise! organise! We all need to organise workers, organise workers to join our union.

"Comrades, our union's strength is its members, we gain strength by increasing our membership. In strength, we can create a decent society for everyone, for our children and our grandchildren. From this conference you must go back to your workplaces, thinking a afresh about how we can reach our fellow workers, who we can organise effectively.

"How we can build a Union which can best adapt to our new post-pandemic economy and workplaces, but remain true to the message of those who founded it over 100 years ago. These are the issues that we must consider at this conference so we can Organise to Win".



SIPTU Services Division Organisers Claire O'Connor, Irene Tiernan, Mary Mullen and Hugh Kennedy at the Services Division Biennial Conference in Kilkenny.

Just Transition and transport safety debated at TEAC BDC

THE TEAC Divisional Biennial Delegate Conference held in Dublin on 23rd and 24th September included the launch of the 'Safe Journey' campaign aimed at improving safety for commuters and workers on the public transport system.

SIPTU TEAC Division Organiser, Karan O'Loughlin, said: "While anti-social behaviour on our public transport system and infrastructure is not a new problem, it does appear to have recently escalated. Unfortunately, no adequate or lasting solutions have been put in place at government level that is why the 'Safe Journey' campaign has been launched to highlight this issue and demand action."

SIPTU Construction Sector Committee member Anton Blake proposed a motion calling for "a

campaign to have the minimum 39-hour working week applied to all construction workers regardless of whether they work for main contractors, sub-contractors or agencies."

Blake told delegates: "This motion hits at the core issue for workers in construction, as most don't have a 39-hour working week on an ongoing basis for 52 weeks of each year."

"This is mainly because the main construction companies do not hire full-time, direct employees, they rely on agencies to supply the labour who are hired for the duration of a project – meaning when the project ends, in a lot of cases so does the employment end." He added: "This precarious employment impacts on basic living standards, by not being able to get a loan – for example, a mortgage for



Delegates gathered for the TEAC Biennial Delegate Conference in the Green Isle Hotel, Dublin, on 23rd September

a home, [or] a loan for a car. These are the basic requirements to get by in Ireland, and there are many other basic rights construction workers are being denied." The

motion was carried. An Energy Sector Committee motion on the challenges faced by workers "associated with the greening of the energy sector" and calling for sup-

port "in ensuring that they have a voice in the transition process so that the transition can be a just transition" was carried unanimously.

RMT's Eddie Dempsey in call for united action

RMT Senior Assistant General Secretary Eddie Dempsey, a leading voice for workers in Britain during the ongoing rail strikes and a leading figure in the Enough is Enough movement was the keynote speaker at the TEAC Divisional Biennial Delegate Conference.

Dempsey is also a leading member of the Connolly Association which has brought together Irish emigrants and others in the

UK since the 1960s.

In a powerful address, Dempsey, called for support for his striking members as well as for all trade unions fighting for the public control of utilities and services.

He told delegates: "We are the people who created pensions, built the hospitals, schools and social housing, the things they have taken away. We are here to take them back."

"But our strength comes from unity. That is why governments and the media try to keep us di-

vided. They want teachers fighting health workers, rail workers fighting nurses, and all of us fighting immigrants.

"They want us turning on each other so that we miss the trick – those at the top making the money while we fight each other."

He asked: "Who runs our society? A bunch of multi-national corporations? I feel change is coming. But we have got to get people to act. The next step for our movements must be collective, united, non-violent action."



SIPTU Honorary Vice President John Montgomery, Honorary President Mary O'Sullivan with RMT Assistant General Secretary, Eddie Dempsey, at the TEAC BDC

Innovative pay deals secured across the private sector

Members across the private sector from contract cleaners, to aviation workers and pharmaceutical operatives have been securing new pay deals that take account of the rising cost of living through various means including increased healthcare contributions and vouchers.

In the Atlantic Aviation Group, a two-year deal was concluded which will see SIPTU members benefit from a 4% annual pay in-

crease as well as significant increases to employer health scheme and pension contributions.

The construction sector saw deals in companies including BD Flood in Oldcastle, county Westmeath, and O'Reilly Concrete in Kingscourt, county Cavan. The latter agreement includes a STAR (Safety, Time Keeping, Attendance and Retention) bonus scheme for production staff which will see workers who maintain set performance mini-

The construction sector saw deals in companies including BD Flood in Oldcastle, county Westmeath, and O'Reilly Concrete in Kingscourt, county Cavan

mums receive additional quarterly payments.

Among a number of pay deals within the Services Division there is a 5% annual increase for members at Punchestown Racecourse, 4% for members employed by The Irish Times and 4.3% for members employed by South Coast Tankers in Cork and Galway.

Across the Manufacturing Division, pay deals in numerous companies including Lacpatrick Lakeland dairies, Edward Dillon

& Co and BASF Ireland saw basic pay rises supplemented by increases in tax free vouchers and other benefits.

Following industrial action, members in county Cavan distribution transformer supplier Kyte Powertech voted to accept Labour Court recommendations on pay proposals. Apple workers in Cork are also set to receive a €1,000 voucher before the end of the year as part of a pay package that includes a 9% wage increase.

Employers should use tax-free €1k voucher to help workers

SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, Gerry McCormack, has called on employers to use a rise in the tax-free limit for once-off voucher payments, announced in the Budget, to give workers €1000 to help offset the rising cost of living.

He made the comments in an address to more than 200 trade unionists gathered for the SIPTU Manufacturing Division Biennial Delegate Conference in the Tower Hotel, Waterford, held on 13th and 14th October.

McCormack told delegates: "We are calling on employers to take advantage of the additional €500 of tax-free vouchers they can now give in order to alleviate the huge pressures that workers are under."

"We encourage SIPTU shop stewards to push for this method of assisting workers during current wage-agreement negotiations and those taking place in the near term."

In his address, McCormack also called on unions to begin serious consideration of the impact possible constitutional change will have in Ireland.

He said: "Whatever way we might vote on the issue of one state on the island of Ireland, it is up to unions to ensure that the interests of workers are at the centre of any possible new constitutional arrangement."

"The trade union movement has largely absented itself from constitutional issues for more than 100 years. The day that James Connolly was shot was the day the trade union movement lost its influence on constitutional issues in this country. We can't afford for that to happen again."

Delegates at the conference passed a number of motions.



Delegates gathered for the SIPTU Manufacturing Division BDC held this year in the Tower Hotel, Waterford, on 13th and 14th October



Divisional Organiser, Greg Ennis, presents Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment official, Paul McMahon, with a copy of 'Organising History', at the conference in Waterford

These included a call for the introduction of fixed penalties on employers where dismissals are found to be unfair, and in support of industrial action in pay disputes aimed at combating the cost-of-living crisis.



European Federation of Food, Agriculture, and Tourism Trade Unions General Secretary, Kristjan Bragason, addresses conference on 13th October

Low paid workers falling further behind Living Wage level

Workers paid the minimum wage are seeing their wages fall further behind the level which is adequate to even maintain a basic standard of living following the announcement of a new Living Wage level of €13.85 per hour.

SIPTU Services Division Organ-

iser, Teresa Hannick, said: "The release of the 2023 Living Wage in late October made for grim reading for hundreds of thousands of workers caught in the low-pay trap."

"The Living Wage Technical Group estimates the Living Wage

to be €13.85 per hour. This represents a 95 cent increase. Unfortunately, the recently announced minimum wage increase was only 80 cent. Not only is the minimum wage failing to keep up with inflation, it is falling further behind the Living Wage.

She added: "The Government should introduce a supplemental increase in the minimum wage next year. The two trade union representatives on the Low Pay Commission recommended in their minority report that the minimum wage should be in-

creased by €1.50 per hour.

"This would ensure that the lowest paid workers in the economy are protected in some way from inflation. It would also mean that the Government's own goal of reaching the Living Wage by 2025 can be achieved."

Pay review success but future for public sector still difficult

The review of the Public Service Agreement secured some successes for workers but the longer-term future of the public sector remains difficult, SIPTU Deputy General Secretary, John King, told the SIPTU Health Division Biennial Delegate Conference at the Tower Hotel in Waterford on 26th October.

Addressing more than 200 delegates, King said: "On the Public Service Agreement, the combined terms of Building Momentum for the three years of 2020 – 2023 will provide long lasting real improvements to the pay and conditions of our members. When taken in the round, the pay increases, the reversal of the austerity measures on



Deputy General Secretary John King

Overtime, Twilight Shift, Tool Allowance, Implementation of the Hours Body – Building Momentum will be seen as a good agreement.

"The Public Service unions were able to use the provisions of the Building Momentum agreement

concluded in early 2020 to force a review that delivered a revised pay offering. The focusing of the pay awards in this agreement in favour of those on low and middle income earners and the retention of the protections against outsourcing are significant takeaway points for our members in Public Administration and Health."

He added: "I know they don't match the unprecedented high rates of inflation at the moment, and the projections for next year would indicate that the crisis has still some time to run. The review clause that got us into negotiations this year to improve the pay terms remains in place and can, if necessary, be triggered again, but more importantly, it is likely that the public service trade unions, includ-

ing SIPTU, will be back in talks over the Summer of 2023 for a new agreement to commence in 2024."

However, King pointed out that funding for the public sector faces a 5% cut in real terms by 2025, which will result in a decline in services. He said: "The figures would indicate that nominal expenditure on public services will increase by 6% between 2022 to 2025. However, when inflation is factored in, spending falls by 3%, and when population growth is also factored in, spending actually falls by 5%. These outcomes are about the implementation of political choices.

"The effect is not good for public servants and it is not good for wider society. They will lead to poorer services for the less well-off

and the marginalised in key areas of public service provision."

King added: "We need to significantly increase our public spending to achieve the quality of service which citizens in our EU peer group enjoy."

He also highlighted the failure of the Government to adequately fund organisations that provide services on behalf of the HSE but are not formally part of the public sector.

King said: "The denial of funding for these community and Section 39 organisations for pay increases for their staff, who provide essential public services to our most vulnerable and marginalised citizens and communities, will have profound negative consequences for our society."

SIPTU delegates debate the future of the Health Service

MORE than 250 delegates and observers from across the health service gathered in the Tower Hotel, Waterford, for the SIPTU Health Division Biennial Delegate Conference under the theme, 'Shaping the Future – A Health Service for All'.

Motions focused on calls for greater investment in public health services to make them accessible to all. A motion from the



By Aileen Carberry

Nursing and Midwifery Sector Committee called for an increase in the number of places on the nurse sponsorship programme to help with recruitment and retention issues within the sector.

The Allied Health Professional

Sector Committee had a motion calling for money allocated to the National Treatment Purchase Fund to be used instead to fund in-source services provided by directly-employed public servants.

A motion submitted on behalf of the National Ambulance Sector sought a doubling of investment in the service to provide better healthcare to communities.

There was also debate on work within the health service as well as

wider societal issues. The Health Division Committee tabled motions calling for a concerted initiative to highlight the cost-of-living crisis and to put in place a campaign to extend industrial democracy within the public health service.

Meanwhile, the Intellectual Disability Sector put forward a motion seeking a guarantee that managers would be appropriately trained in dealing with Trust in Care com-

plaints. They also submitted a motion calling for a job evaluation scheme for carers in the sector. All motions tabled at the conference were passed.

The conference also acknowledged all those, including healthcare workers, who lost their lives to Covid-19. It was a poignant moment for Health Division activists, who were gathering in person for the first time since the onset of the global pandemic.

SIPTU health workers will assist with Sláintecare reform policy

SIPTU health workers will assist with the implementation of the Sláintecare policy of reform of our health and social care services, SIPTU Health Division Organiser, Kevin Figgis, told the SIPTU Health Division Biennial Delegate Conference on 26th October.

He said: "Change is an integral part of working within the health service. Our members have demonstrated their ability to work in a changing environment over many, many years. They will not be found wanting when it comes to engaging with the implementation of Sláintecare.

"However, as we begin to grapple with what this entails, we will be doing so from the principled position that we will not be

engaging with any programme that could be seen as eroding the hard-won terms and conditions for which our members have fought.

"SIPTU will not be engaging with any reform agenda that includes the outsourcing of our members' roles to third parties." Addressing delegates as a guest speaker at the conference, Social Democrats co-leader, Róisín Shortall, called for urgent action to fully implement the Sláintecare policy. Shortall said: "Sláintecare is a 10-year roadmap for reform of our health and social care services, to get us from the current two-tier unfair and unequal and, in many ways, dysfunctional, health service to a universal single-tier health and social care service where people can access timely care on the basis of health need and not on their ability to pay.



SIPTU activists, Mary Dolan McLoughlin, Racheal Chukwuemeka and Yvonne Mefor at the SIPTU Health Division Biennial Conference in Waterford.

"The Sláintecare report was published in May 2017 so we're now coming to the end of year five, and

the question is 'What have we got to show for it?'

"The first two years consisted of

lip-service from the Fine Gael government where the Minister for Health talked the talk but didn't actually walk the walk. The term Sláintecare became a convenient brand for him to wrap himself in.

"It seemed that most senior government politicians assumed that Sláintecare would go the way of those other health reports and be forgotten. However, when it came to the general election in early 2020, Sláintecare was adopted as official policy by all parties. No one had a Plan B."

She added: "Like many things in life, the causes of the dysfunction and inequality of our health service are down to political choices, bad choices, which favour vested interest over the public interest."

Range of issues crucial to public sector workers up for debate

A NUMBER of motions dealing with issues across the public service were debated at the Public Administration and Community Division Biennial Delegate Conference.

Among them was a motion calling for the insourcing of local authority services which was endorsed by delegates. The motion stated that, "In light of the 'Framework for Future Delivery of Water' document which was overwhelmingly endorsed by our Local Authority Sector Committee, the requirement to rebuild local authority direct labour services is needed now more than ever."

It continued: "We are calling on the Government to deliver this through specific and targeted commitments through the Public Service Agreement, to build and sustain an agile public service through a combination of an innovative up-skilling programme and new apprenticeship and traineeship initiatives, and by increasing

the number of direct labour staff operating across the Local Authority Sector."

Proposing a motion supporting remote and flexible work arrangements, Dublin City University worker and Education Sector Committee member, Kirsty Rickard, said: "We believe that all workers should have the right to access remote or flexible working as a standard condition of employment."

"We want to see the introduction of a fair and transparent application process which includes the right to appeal to an impartial party in cases of refusal. We also want to see the restoration of flexi-time and flexi-leave arrangements as per the pre-Covid rules."

She added: "The benefits of remote working and flexi for our members include fewer commutes, savings on fuel costs and increased productivity due to fewer interruptions and improved work-life balance."

"No commute means more time to devote to caring responsibilities

and the potential for involvement in the volunteering sector in our communities."

A motion on combating the spread of precarious work practices in the Education Sector was proposed by Trinity College Dublin worker and Education Sector Com-

mittee member, William Bissett.

He said: "I believe we would be much better off having permanent members of staff, working shoulder to shoulder, instead of creating a two-tier system that disadvantages the contractors working alongside us. We need to defend and extend

public jobs. We need make sure that there are good, secure jobs for the kids coming up after us."

Other motions dealt with a range of issues, including the cost-of-living crisis and the future of work.



Panel discussion on the future of work involving (left to right) Campaign and Activation Officer of 4 Day Week Global, Hazel Gavigan; Labour Party Health, Transport and Communications spokesperson, Duncan Smith; and ICTU General Secretary, Owen Reidy; chaired by SIPTU Public Administration and Community Division Organiser, Adrian Kane at the SIPTU Public Administration and Community Division BDC at the Talbot Hotel in Wexford

Ó Broin commits to water and housing referendums

Sinn Féin spokesperson for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Eoin Ó Broin, addressed the conference with a focus on the housing crisis and the campaign to ensure the public ownership of water services.

Following an address in which Ó Broin outlined the scale of the housing crisis and the litany of missed opportunities for the



Eoin Ó Broin TD

Government to address it, he took questions from the audience to which he gave detailed replies.

Ó Broin said the Housing Commission, which is due to shortly release its report, will include a recommendation for a referendum to enshrine a right to housing in the Constitution. However, he was less confident about the how soon such a vote would be held. He was also sceptical about

the Government committing to hold a referendum on the public ownership of water services at the same time as a possible housing referendum.

Questioned further about referendum on keeping water services in public ownership, Ó Broin said he could unequivocally make a commitment that if Sinn Féin is part of a future government such a vote will be taken shortly after the party tak-

ing office.

The Sinn Féin TD thanked the SIPTU Public Administration and Community Division for the opportunity to address delegates and take questions. He added that he hoped "that dialogue between your union and Sinn Féin will continue to develop so that progress can be made on our many shared concerns".

Put focus on rolling back privatisation of public services

SIPTU activists must focus on bringing community services back under public control as part of a global shift away from the privatisation model, the SIPTU Public Administration and Community Division Biennial Delegate conference heard.

Addressing the more than 150 delegates gathered in Wexford on 11th November, SIPTU Public

Administration and Community Division Organiser, Adrian Kane, said: "The future is public. Our focus is on how we grow a direct labour model in the public service. Over the last number of years, we have worked very hard to advance this project."

"Unfortunately, we are faced with some senior public servants who are still wedded to the concept of outsourcing even as the rest of the world begins to de-privatise public services and bring back into public

ownership public goods."

He said that this move towards collective approaches had been assisted by changing attitudes during the pandemic. He said: "The pandemic allowed the State to assume powers in Ireland that, in the abstract, citizens would never have accepted for the common good. But also, policy goals such as a universal basic income in the form of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, a single health service with private hospitals temporarily procured by the

state and nationalised childcare in the direct state subvention for childcare providers, proved possible after all."

Kane also said that the push to return services to public control was being assisted by a wider revitalisation of trade union activity.

He added: "Trade unionism is coming back across the globe. In the UK, Mick Lynch, the leader of the RMT has through the tactical use of the strike and adept media performances popularised trade

unionism among a whole new generation.

"In the US, Amazon workers in Staten Island were successful against all the odds in winning union recognition. There have been successful union campaigns in some of the most hostile union environments such as Starbucks."

The conference was held in the Talbot Hotel in Wexford on 10th-11th November.

Joining the dots on rising profits, falling wages



By
Michael Taft

THE share of wages in the economy is falling as profits are rising. This has been the trend since 2000, and even more so since the financial crash.

The proportion of net revenue that a business earns that is going to workers is shrinking. And whatever doesn't go to wages, goes to profits. The accompanying graph charts the decline. (See Fig 1)

At the beginning of the millennium, 60 per cent of business revenue went to wages; only 40 per cent went to profits. By 2019, the year before the Covid crisis, labour's share had fallen to less than 52 per cent while profits had increased to more than 48 per cent.

To give an idea of what this means, if the share of business revenue going to labour had remained constant, workers would be earning 16% today. Workers are producing more (that is, more productivity) while earning proportionately less. Owners and shareholders are taking an every higher share in profits.

Some would argue that growing profits is a sign of a healthy economy, part of that 'making-Ireland-the-best-little-country-to-do-business-in'. Clearly, there is a need for enterprise profits – to pay for the cost of borrowing, to fund investment, and to provide a reasonable return to investors (a reasonable return is usually arrived at through collective bargaining – remember, whatever doesn't go on wages, goes on profits).

But once the cost of capital is paid, once investments are made, once a reasonable return has been negotiated – any profits above that are excessive and potentially harmful to the economy. These excessive profits serve no social function. They provide benefit to a small class of highly wealthy individuals and institutions at the cost of higher inequality.

In Ireland it might even be worse than that. Yes, profits are needed to fund investment. And profits in Ireland have been rising much faster than wages. So, has investment been growing? It doesn't appear to be. Private sector investment fell between 2000 and 2019, as a proportion of national income.

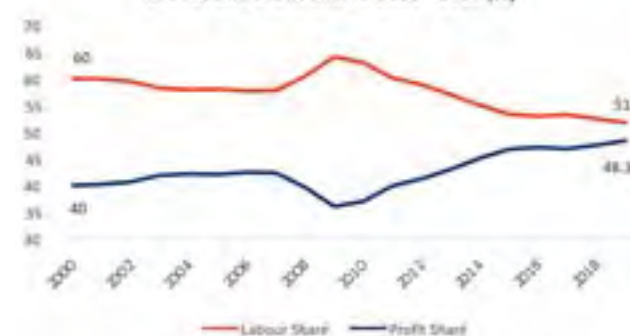
It's bad enough that excess profits are made after investments. But what if profits are rising on the back of suppressed investment? And suppressed wages? And suppressed working conditions? Wel-



Being in a union pays...

Fig 1:

Labour and Profit Share: 2000 - 2019 (%)



But what if profits are rising on the back of suppressed investment? And suppressed wages? And suppressed working conditions? Welcome to large parts of the Irish domestic economy

come to large parts of the Irish domestic economy.

How do we compare with our peer group in the EU, other high-income economies? We're at the bottom of that table. Employee compensation (which includes wages and in-work benefits) would have to rise by more than 14 per cent to reach the average of our peer group – countries such as Finland, Germany, Belgium, France, Denmark, etc.

There is rarely a single explanation for complex economic interactions. But falling trade union membership must be a major contributing factor.

Trade union membership has fallen from 36 per cent of all employees in 2000 to 25 per cent in 2019 – a proportionate decline of 30 per cent. While there is some slight good news in recent years as the decline has stopped and slightly reversed, there is still a long way to go to return to 2000 levels. And even further to reach the 80 per cent benchmark established in the recent EU Directive on Adequate Wages.

This obviously poses a challenge for employees in the workplace – to organise through trade unions to capture a higher share of the net business revenue that they, them-

selves, generate. It also poses a challenge to trade unions to reach out to those workers. In a recent survey of workers' attitudes to trade unions, conducted by John Geary and Maria Belizon of UCD, it was found that 44 per cent of non-union employees would like to establish a union in their workplace if given a chance.

So there is an open door. Workers should be getting a much higher share of the business revenue that they are generating. And a very high proportion of non-union workers would support setting up a union in their workplace. We need to connect these dots.



This poses a challenge for employees in the workplace – to organise through trade unions to capture a higher share of the net business revenue that they, themselves, generate

Is Ireland heading into a slump?



By
Michael Taft

IS IRELAND falling into a recession?

- There could be a 'technical' recession (two consecutive quarters of negative growth), but the impact on the economy is limited.
- We could avoid a recession because of the strength of our multi-national export sector, but the domestic economy could take a severe hit in terms of jobs and incomes.
- There could be a brief recession but the economy bounces back quickly.

At this stage we don't know. One thing is sure: if we fall into recession while inflation is high (what economists call 'stagflation'), the impact could be severe and difficult to reverse. There are a number of warning signs we should be looking out for.

Falling consumer spending...

Consumer spending is a key indicator as it makes up over half of national income. The retail sales index measures spending in all retail outlets including pubs. (See Fig 1)

Consumer spending has been falling over the last year. Proportionately, the Index has fallen by 6.4 per cent in the year up to September. While this is not as bad as falls of nearly 10 per cent in the dark days of austerity, it is worrying that it is heading in that direction. The big difference between then and now is the high level of savings households accumulated over the Covid lockdowns. But not all households have this savings cushion.

Falling employment...

Understandably, a lot of attention has been paid to the job losses in the tech companies, especially given the treatment of Twitter workers. However, we are in danger of overlooking a larger, potentially more dangerous development – the considerable reduction in employment throughout the economy in the last three months. There has been a decline of 56,000 employees between May and August. (See Fig 2)

So far, the unemployment numbers have not matched this reduction. The CSO's monthly unemployment report shows an increase of only 4,700 in the numbers unemployed.

There are a number of reasons why falling employee numbers don't automatically translate into an increase in unemployment. People could be leaving the labour market for caring duties or education. Others might be leaving the country. Some might be taking up self-employed work.

Whatever the explanations, we should be alert to this potentially emerging trend, especially as to where it is impacting.

In the hospitality sector, the numbers employed have fallen 33,000, with 16,000 more in wholesale/retail and arts and entertainment sectors. Together, these three low-paid sectors made up nearly 90 per cent of the reductions in employees.

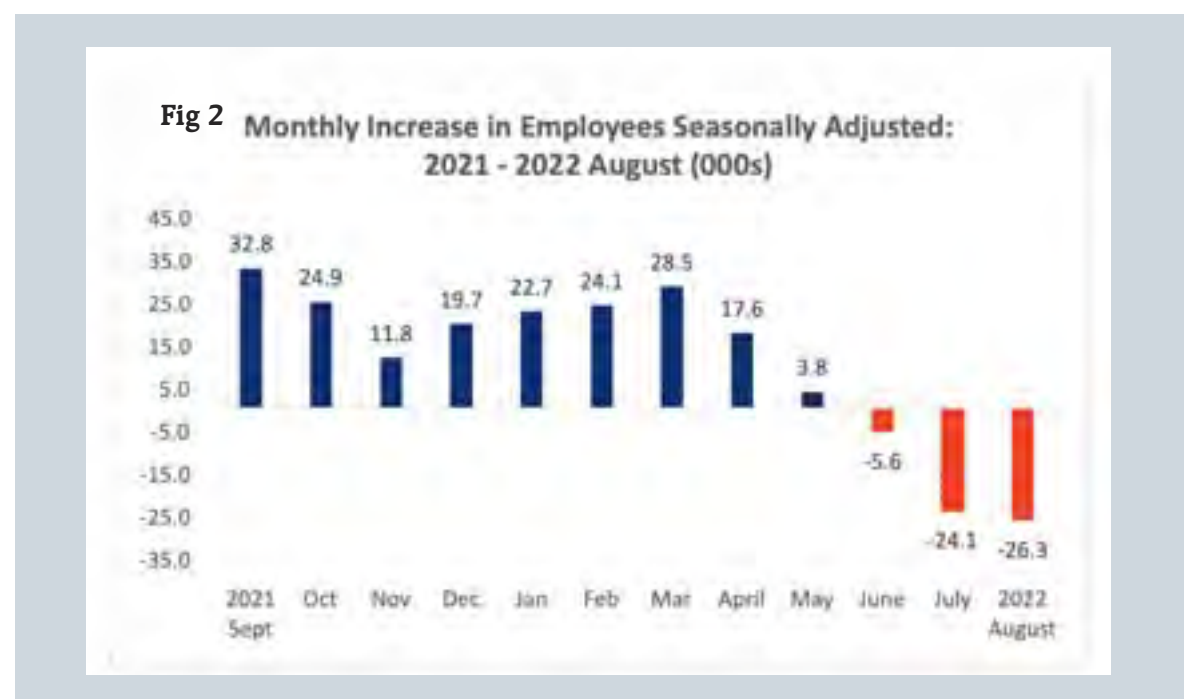
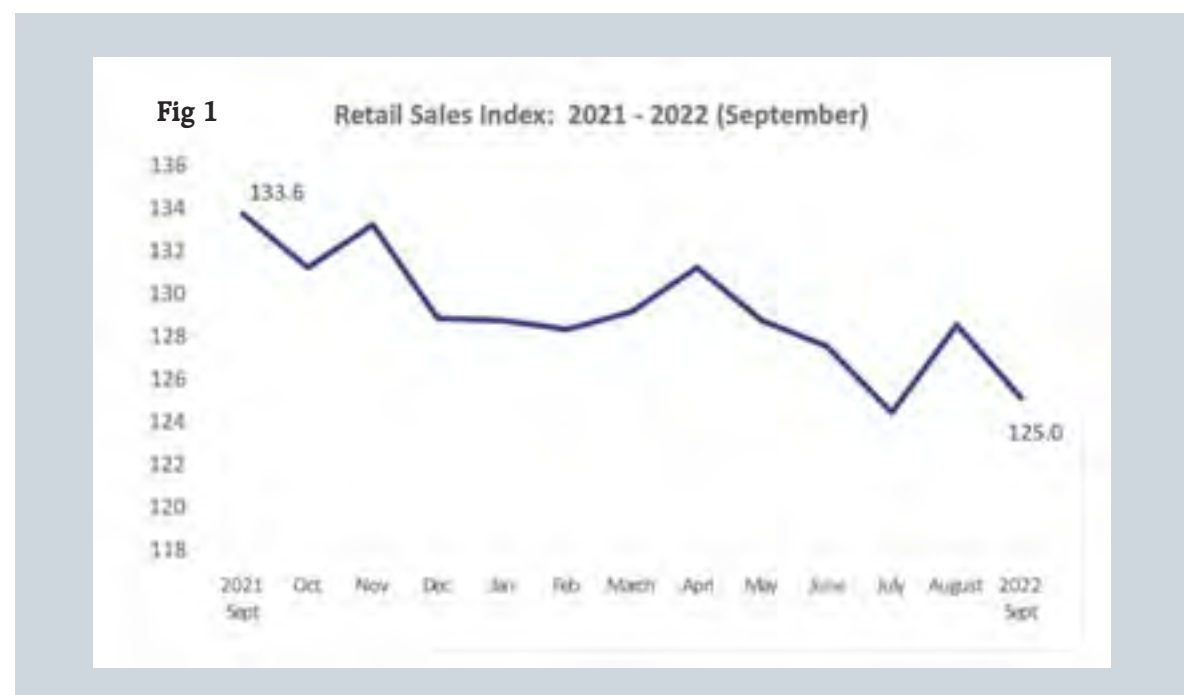
And as often happens, it is young people and women who take the first and significant hits. While there was an overall 2.4 per cent decline in employee numbers, among 20–24 year olds,

However, governments can influence domestic economy and they can help mitigate the damage.

the reduction was 7.7 per cent. And women were more than twice as likely as men to suffer a reduction in employee numbers.

If there is a 'correction' in the tech or other multi-national dominated sectors (code word: job losses), ministers can do little to influence what is a global process. However, governments can influence domestic economy. And they can help mitigate the damage.

This requires measures to ensure that consumer demand is maintained. Boosting wage and income floors – namely, the minimum wage and basic social



protection rates – is one effective measure as low-income groups spend most of the additional income they receive. Another measure would be to introduce a pay-related unemployment benefit as SIPTU argued in its submission to the Commission on Taxation. This would help households maintain consumer spending in the short-term, rather than see their disposable income fall over a cliff, risking debt or significant cuts in their consumption. The Government's recent announcement that they will introduce a pay-related element to unemployment benefit is good news.

Hopefully, this fall in consumer spending and employee numbers is only a blip with growth returning in the months ahead

Unfortunately, this will take time. In the intervening period, the Government could re-introduce the staggered payments under the pandemic unemployment scheme which would provide some support.

Hopefully, this fall in consumer spending and employee numbers is only a blip with growth returning in the months ahead. But we should prepare for the worst. And the worst is that we are heading into a recession driven by job losses in both high-value and low-paid sectors. It's not like we haven't been warned.

Liberty View

The greatest emergency of our time



By Joe Cunningham

The housing crisis is the public emergency of our time. It affects almost every family in the State. It has forced

over 11,000 people into homelessness, including almost 3000 children. High rents have ushered a new generation of emigrants. Young people cannot afford to live in our cities and large towns. This has caused a shortage of school-teachers and nurses across the country.

Only very few, with access to finance, can afford to buy a house while new apartments are out of reach for most young people as prices continue to escalate. Many older renters are under threat of losing their homes as pensions don't meet the cost of a roof over their heads. Travellers and those in direct provision are among the most vulnerable and the most neglected when it comes to shelter.

Meanwhile, the Government has failed to meet its targets for housing supply. It continues to rely on the private market to meet demand. It is blindingly obvious that private builders and developers cannot deliver the amount of affordable and social housing that is required.

Rising house prices boost the value of a developer's assets as they increase the worth of their landholdings and give them more leverage to secure bank finance

The current model has hardwired rising prices into the system. Rising house prices boost the value of a developer's assets as they increase the worth of their landholdings and give them

more leverage to secure bank finance. Falling prices can lead to lower housing output by the private sector.

Rather than invest in public housing, resources since the financial crash have been diverted to tax breaks for big institutional investors, generous leasing deals for developers and state subsidies reaching €1 billion last year for private landlords.

Local authorities have been discouraged from building cost rental, affordable and social housing by successive governments over three decades. They have lost the skill sets, including tradespeople, engineers, architects and others that organised the construction and management of decent housing since the foundation of the State.

House prices rose by 77% between 2012 and 2020 while incomes rose by just 23%. Rents are now 40% above the levels of the so-called Celtic Tiger years

As a consequence of a misguided and ideological devotion to the private sector, the cost of housing has literally gone through the roof.

House prices rose by 77% between 2012 and 2020 while incomes rose by just 23%. Rents are now 40% above the levels of the so-called Celtic Tiger years. Average rents are consuming more than half the average national industrial wage.

Some 350,000 people aged between 20 and 35 years are forced into living at home. An entire generation has been locked out of the housing market. Student accommodation, when available, is over-priced and out of reach.

It is time for a radical new deal on housing. A time to prioritise public good over private profit to deliver secure, affordable homes for all.

A new state agency should be established to co-ordinate a massive house building programme across all local authorities, in mixed communities, over the next five to ten years.

There must be an immediate rent freeze and a complete ban on 'no fault' evictions, along with measures for long-term rental security.

A legal right to housing must be guaranteed in

A legal right to housing must be guaranteed in the Constitution through a referendum

the Constitution through a referendum.

These are the among the demands of the Raise the Roof coalition, a trade union led campaign comprising the housing charities and NGO's, the women's movement, students, Travellers, those in direct provision and the main progressive political parties.

Over the coming months, the campaign will come to your town, your workplace, your community for organised meetings and protests.

This is not just a rainy day. It is lashing out there.

Raise the Roof.

Joe Cunningham is the General Secretary of SIPTU



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From all of us at Supporting Quality, a Very Happy Christmas & New Year
Now more than ever we need you to support quality jobs by choosing the products & services of this campaign.

Christmas Recipe JAMESON DISTILLERY WINTER PUNCH

INGREDIENTS

200ml Jameson
40ml Manzanilla Sherry
125ml freshly squeezed Lemon Juice
125ml Apple Juice
125ml Orange Juice
100ml Honey Syrup
125ml Soda Water
1 Spice Pouch

TO GARNISH:

A whole star Anise
A wedge of Fresh Orange

METHOD:

1. Add all non-alcoholic ingredients to a pot on an induction hub.
2. Increase the heat to bring the liquid to a simmer and cover.
3. Return to the pot after 25 minutes before adding the Jameson and sherry.
4. Bring the contents of the pot back to a simmer.
5. Garnish each glass of punch with a whole star anise and a fresh orange wedge.
6. To make the spice pouch, take a precut square of cheesecloth and add two cracked sticks of cinnamon, two cracked nutmeg, four whole cloves. Tie the above spices with a piece of twine.

For a non alcoholic version, replace the whiskey & sherry with apple juice.



JAMESON



IRISH WHISKEY



Christmas Recipe ODLUMS CHRISTMAS MOCHA BOMBE

WHAT YOU NEED:

1 x 2lb Madeira Loaf
50g/2oz Shamrock Flaked Almonds
125g/4oz Dark Chocolate
250g tub Mascarpone
50g/2oz Shamrock Golden Caster Sugar
450ml/¾ pint Double Cream
150ml/¼ pint Strong Black Coffee
4 tablespoons Tia Maria
Icing Sugar, to dust



MADEIRA

200g/7oz Odlums Self Raising Flour
125g/4oz Margarine
2 Eggs
25g/1oz Shamrock Ground Almonds
125g/4oz Shamrock Golden Caster Sugar
3 tablespoons Water

HOW TO:

1. Make Madeira using All-in-One Method. Put all the ingredients for the Madeira into a bowl and beat until smooth. Transfer to a greased 2lb loaf tin and bake in a preheated oven 170°C/325°F/Gas 3 for 40 to 45 minutes approx. Cool on a wire tray.
2. Toast the flaked almonds in a dry pan or under the grill, watching carefully as nuts can burn easily.
3. Chop chocolate and mix with the cooled almonds. Keep about 2 tablespoons of this mixture for decoration.
4. Beat the mascarpone until softened, then beat in the sugar. Whip 300ml/½pt of the cream until it just holds its shape, then fold into the mascarpone.
5. Mix coffee and Tia Maria together in a jug.
6. Cut the cake into 15 slices. Line a 1.4lt/2½pt pudding bowl with cling film. Line the base with a few pieces of cake, then sprinkle over a little of the coffee mixture to moisten. Spoon in about 2 tablespoons of the mascarpone and chocolate and almond mixture. Smooth the top.
7. Do two more layers, adding a little more coffee, mascarpone and chocolate and almond mixture to each layer. Finish with a layer of madeira, moistened with the remaining coffee mixture.
8. Cover the top of the dessert with cling film and chill for at least 4 hours and up to 2 days.
9. To finish remove the cling film covering and turn the bowl over on a serving plate. Peel off the cling film and cover bombe with the remaining whipped cream. Scatter over the reserved chocolate and almonds and lightly dust with icing sugar.

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Forgotten Heroes tackle Minister for Health on Covid-19 payment

SIPTU worker representatives met with the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, during a visit to University Hospital Galway to open a new unit on 21st October, to demand the Covid-19 recognition payment is paid to frontline healthcare workers employed by contract companies.

The Minister met two SIPTU shop stewards, Michelle Greer and Ewelina Dziadyk, who are employed at University Hospital Galway as contract services healthcare workers.

Michelle, who is a contract catering worker, said: "I asked the Minister why have I and my colleagues not yet received the Covid-19 recognition payment. I explained to him that the only difference between me and other workers who have received the payment is that I am a

contract services worker, that is someone who works fully within the hospital but is employed by a company contracted to carry out work by the HSE."

She added: "It was my understanding following the meeting that the Minister believes that we should be eligible for the payment and he directed us to contact the HSE in relation to receiving it."

SIPTU Organiser, Mary Mullin said: "Contract cleaning, catering and security healthcare workers worked in clinical settings and were exposed to patients with Covid-19. In the beginning, they had little or no PPE, at a time when there were no vaccines. They later wore masks and gowns as they continued to be exposed to Covid-19 patients on every shift."

SIPTU Organiser, Claire O'Connor said: "At the height of the pandemic, there was no doubt that



SIPTU members Michelle Greer and Ewelina Dziadyk at University Hospital Galway on 21st October.

these contract healthcare workers were on the frontline keeping our healthcare system running during the most trying of emergencies. However, when it now comes to their bravery and commitment to

doing their duty being recognised, it would seem that these frontline heroes have become forgotten heroes to the Government and HSE."

SIPTU representatives have called on the Rehab Group to honour a Labour Court recommendation that it should pay outstanding redundancy payments due to 38 workers formerly employed by one of its subsidiaries in county Limerick who lost their jobs in 2021.

SIPTU Organiser, Robbie Purfield, said: "These workers were employed by Rehab Enterprises and the recommendation states that the collective agreement our members had with that entity should be honoured by its parent company which is the Rehab Group."

The workers were made redundant by Rehab Enterprises in early 2021 when it closed its logistics centre in Raheen, county Limerick. They were paid their statutory redundancy entitlements and let go.

The march goes on in security sector

Mickey McGloin served for 16 years as a SIPTU shop steward in the security sector. His service to the union was recognised with a presentation from the Services Division on 1st November following his retirement during the pandemic.

Talking to Liberty, Mickey outlined his long commitment to trade unionism. He said: "I've always been a union man, right back to 1972 when I joined the National Union of Seamen while serving as a galley boy in the Merchant Navy

after leaving my native Belfast for Kent. I did ten years there and then was in the United States for 20 where I was a member of a hospitality sector union.

"When I started work as a security guard on the railway in Dublin in 2005, I was quick to ensure we got the union in. The organiser then of the security section was Ed Kenny and he marched with us all the way. There was no organisation at all in my workplace before this.

"The railway is a very hard job. When these lads go out at night they get abuse and worse. There should



Mickey McGloin

be a railway police. There was one period in Connolly Station when two of our members were assaulted in succession while doing 'one man' security work. With the union, we fought and succeeded in moving to having a two man team at all times."

"From 2005 to 2013, I lived in Dublin. I moved back to Belfast but stayed in Dublin for four days weeks for the job," he said.

When the pandemic hit, Mickey found himself off the frontline due to a medical condition. He said: "However, I continued to do

a shop stewards work and advise the members."

Looking back on his career as an activist, Mickey said: "The union needs to rebuild itself in the security sector. With its high migrant workforce, it is proving more difficult to organise.

"There is no such things as victories while being a union activist, it is about just keeping marching on. At the end of the day I'm a militant and believe the fight will always be ongoing to improve and defend pay and terms and conditions of employment."

Unions attend IHREC conference

SIPTU attended a recent one-day conference on the theme of 'Achieving Gender Equality At Work: Care Policy and Practice'.

The conference, on 9th November, was organised in collaboration with the Worker Employer Advisory Committee of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC).

It discussed recommendations made by the Citizens Assembly

on gender equality including issues relating to care work, both paid and unpaid, which will be central to the debate around next year's constitutional referendum on the place of women in the home.

The conference was addressed by a number of trade unions both in the plenary session and in the workshops.

SIPTU's Darragh O'Connor spoke in the 'Gender Equality At Work: Early Childhood Education

& Care' workshop and outlined the unions' contribution to the successful campaign to progress gender equality in childcare.

And, in some closing remarks to the conference, Deputy General Secretary Ethel Buckley emphasised the role collective bargaining can play in addressing gender inequalities. She also spoke of the opportunity the transposition of the EU directive gave in strengthening collective action by workers in the future.



Trade union activists with Deputy General Secretary Ethel Buckley (second left) at IHREC conference on 9th November.

'Serious but calm' negotiator mourned

The death of trade unionist Raymond (Ray) Mitchell at age 53 on the 25th October 2022, brought a feeling of great sorrow to his many colleagues and friends in SIPTU, the trade union movement and the wider community.

The large attendance at his funeral in Limerick, which included trade union colleagues, shop stewards, employer representatives, Na Piarsaigh GAA club members, and his many friends and neighbours, bears testament to the love, respect, and esteem that people held for him. His loss is more deeply felt by his own family; his loving wife Catherine and sons, Jamie, and Steven; his mother Helen (Nellie); brothers Paul, Derek and Robert and sisters Marion, Caroline, Eleanor and Siobhán, and his wider family and friends.

Ray was a SIPTU member for over 30 years and while he always had a strong interest in trade union matters, it was in SPS International Shannon where his leadership qualities came to the fore. His colleagues elected him as

their shop steward, and it is fair to say that his pragmatic approach to matters clearly earned the respect of both workers and management.

Ray was committed to lifelong learning and in 2012 attained a BA (Hons) Degree in Human Resource Management at UL. A testament to his commitment and talent was

Ray was a SIPTU member for over 30 years and while he always had a strong interest in trade union matters, it was in SPS International Shannon where his leadership qualities came to the fore



Ray Mitchell

in 2016, he completed a Higher Diploma in Learning and Development Practice in UCC. Armed with these educational accolades, Ray's career path led him to work for several years with Barnados in both Limerick and Cork.

Ray's love of trade unionism brought him back to the movement, this time in the form of an appointment as a full-time Indus-

trial Organiser with SIPTU. Starting off initially in the Agri Ingredients Food & Drink Sector, then to the Electronic, Engineering & Industrial Production Sector, he later joined the Pharmaceuticals Chemicals and Medical Devices Sector, where his dedication and application to the job saw him earn a well-deserved promotion.

Ray was held in high regard by all who worked with him where he was always willing to share his knowledge and experience for the benefit of others. He further demonstrated his belief in lifelong learning and encouraging others to embrace further education when he volunteered to become a lay tutor in SIPTU College. He delivered the HRM module on the Trade Union Studies course, in his spare time, where he guided and helped union activists and officials with great wit and good humour. It was with members however that Ray was most at home. He will be fondly remembered as a hardworking man of great integrity with a strong sense of duty and fairness. Ray was a proud son of Limerick who loved his hurling, who

travelled Ireland supporting the green and white of his beloved senior hurlers. He was an Executive Committee Member of Na Piarsaigh GAA Club in Limerick and spent many years patrolling the side-lines supporting his sons as they donned the club's blue colours.

Ray will be remembered by all for his serious but calm negotiating skills when working and his good company when socialising. However, it was clear to all who knew him that his greatest passion was his family. Everyone knew of their exploits on the playing field and running tracks of Ireland. The tribute paid to Ray by his sons at his funeral was evidence of the great love and respect which his family held for him. A loving husband, father, son, and brother. For the trade union movement his loss will be deeply felt but for his family their loss is immense.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Teresa Hannick

ICTU supports Colin Harvey



Professor Colin Harvey

Congress General Secretary, Owen Reidy issued a statement of support for Queens University Belfast (QUB) professor, Colin Harvey, in early November "NIC-ICTU and its affiliated trade unions and trades councils stand in support with the internationally respected legal academic Prof Colin Harvey."

"Professor Harvey is a legal human rights expert of many years standing and active in his trade union, UCU. As both, he has stood up for the rights of other people. Now that his right to exercise both free expression and academic freedom are under attack, the trade union movement supports Professor Harvey."

"The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement advocates and guarantees the right to

pursue the constitutional aspirations of either remaining in the UK, or changing through constitutional means a united Ireland.

"Every citizen presently enjoys that right, and a campaign of vilification towards one citizen undermines that common benefit for everyone."

"The trade union movement will universally support the right to free expression within a framework of respect for the rights of other citizens, be it in academia, the media or any public sphere."

Professor Harvey, who spoke at a recent event organised by Ireland's Future in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, has for several months been subjected to a vicious and sinister campaign of abuse on social media. Some unionist politicians, including DUP leader, Jeffrey Donaldson, have raised questions with QUB about his work. The university has since issued a statement confirming its commitment to academic freedom.



Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Note to Affiliates

National Childcare Scheme – Reduce your Childcare Fees

The **universal childcare subsidy** is now available for all children up to age 15. It was previously only available for babies and toddlers.

Every family using a registered childcare service provider is entitled to this subsidy to reduce their childcare fees. It doesn't matter how much you earn or how much money is coming into your household.

It is worth 50c for each hour your child is in childcare up to a maximum 45 hours a week. If one or both parents are not working, studying or training, the maximum number of subsidised hours is 20 hours a week.

Working families using full-time childcare can **get up to €22.50 a week or €1,170 a year per child to help with the cost of your childcare fees.**

The subsidy can also be used to reduce the cost of afterschool and out-of-term childcare fees for school-age children using a registered provider.

You can apply online for the subsidy [here](#). Or to make a paper application, contact the NCS Parent Support Centre on 01 906 85 30.

There is also a top-up **income assessed childcare subsidy** for families with a yearly household income below €60,000 after tax and other allowable deductions. There is subsidy calculator [here](#) to check to see what further financial help you might be eligible for.

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

September 2022

The 'Trump of the Tropics' is gone but trying times ahead for Lula



By
Vic Duggan

THE election of Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva made for a Red October, and a political comeback for the ages. But, it was a close-run thing, while the second go on the merry-go-round will be far more challenging than the first.

At the fourth time of asking, former trade union leader Lula was first elected President of Brazil in 2002, and re-elected in 2006.

Governed successfully from the progressive left, sharing the fruits of economic growth more broadly and lifting 20 million Brazilians out of poverty while reducing inflation and government debt.

One of his flagship policies, since copied elsewhere, was the conditional cash transfer known as Bolsa Família. This welfare programme channeled cash to poor families on condition that their children were vaccinated and attended school.

Lula's hand-picked successor, Dilma Rousseff, sustained his legacy by winning the Presidency in 2010. By the time Brazil hosted the 2014 World Cup, however, the wheels had begun to come off.

The end of the commodity boom that had coincided with Lula's terms in office had ended, while the fallout from the global financial crisis continued to weigh on the economy.

Although Rousseff won re-election in October of that year, the World Cup was marred by protests at perceptions that her government had spent money hosting the tournament rather than funding public services.

Rousseff was ultimately ousted via impeachment in 2016, while things



President 'Lula' narrowly defeated right-winger Bolsonaro in October's polls to head up Brazil for a second time but the country is bitterly divided and Conservative opposition is entrenched in both chambers of Congress

went from bad to worse for the Workers' Party (PT) in 2017 when Lula himself was convicted for corruption and money-laundering in 2017.

His imprisonment scotched a planned political comeback in the 2018 election, the selection of a much weaker PT candidate paving the way for the election of far-right Jair Bol-

sonaro.

Long on the fringes of Brazilian politics, Bolsonaro came to power with the moniker 'Trump of the Tropics', powered by a coalition of rich landowners, Christian evangelicals and middle-class conservatives.

He lived up to his billing, supercharging deforestation in the Ama-

zon, trampling on indigenous rights, and botching Covid crisis management.

A former army officer, he nurtured close links with the military, giving rise to fears that he may use the armed forces to retain power in the event he failed to secure re-election. These fears have, thus far, proved unfounded.

Brazil's Supreme Court freed Lula in 2019, concluding that his trial and incarceration were unlawful. The Court later held that the judge, Sergio Moro, in the original case was biased against Lula. This is hardly surprising given that Moro later served as Minister for Justice under Bolsonaro.

Now free to challenge Bolsonaro in the 2022 election, Lula would prove to be his nemesis, albeit only narrowly prevailing over the incumbent despite polling well-ahead throughout the campaign. On election day, many Lula supporters were prevented from voting by illegal blockades erected by Bolsonaro militants.

When he is sworn in on New Year's Day, Lula will preside over a deeply-divided country with public finances

in a perilous state, lacking a Congressional majority, and facing a global economic slowdown. There will be few 'easy wins', while the entrenched Conservative opposition will try to thwart him at every turn.

An early hurdle will be the planned expansion of Bolsa Família. In line with campaign promises, Lula wants to expand the welfare budget by maintaining recently-increased welfare rates and giving extra child benefit to low-income families.

Brazil's budget process is characterised, however, by binding constitutional limits and other rigidities that complicate the introduction of new spending measures.

The necessary constitutional change requires a three-fifths majority in both chambers of Congress, in each of which Bolsonaro's party recently won the most seats.

Unlike in 2003 when Lula first came to power, Brazilian politics is highly polarised while right-wing parties in Congress are less willing to work with the incoming President.

A further complication is a potential capital strike in financial markets.

...we can cautiously rejoice for Brazilian democracy, the strength of its institutions, protection of the Amazon, and better treatment for indigenous peoples

Even though the Brazilian currency and stock market have been among the strongest performers in the world in 2022, even while Bolsonaro was busy ramping up spending in an attempt to secure re-election, both took a big hit when President-elect Lula announced his proposed welfare changes.

High public debt coupled with rising interest rates may be a further constraint on Lula's fiscal agenda.

Troubled waters lie ahead. But, in this interregnum between electoral victory and messy governing reality, we can cautiously rejoice for Brazilian democracy, the strength of its institutions, protection of the Amazon, and better treatment for indigenous peoples.

As Lula himself recently told the COP 27 climate summit in Egypt: "Brazil is back."



Ex-US President Donald Trump with former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, dubbed 'Trump of the Tropics'



Brazilian protestor with 'Fora Bolsonaro' placard, which translates as 'Get out Bolsonaro'



Newly-elected ITUC General Secretary Luca Visentini at Melbourne Congress PICTURE: ITUC

ITUC congress plans future campaigns

THE 5th world congress of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) took place in Melbourne, Australia, from 17th – 22nd November.

Nearly 1,000 delegates from more than 120 countries took part over five days of debate setting the shape of the next four years of action by the global trade union movement.

As well as a statement on a new social contract, Congress passed emergency resolutions on Iran, combatting

the far right and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Delegates considered union responses to a series of global shocks: historic levels of inequality, climate crisis, Covid-19, increasing conflict and the inflationary pressures of rising prices and declining real incomes exacerbated by the war in Ukraine.

The Congress sought to identify key priorities for trade unions in supporting a robust and inclusive recovery from the global shocks, as well

as what measures are needed to build resilience against future crises.

It debated how unions have acted to shore up many elements of a new social contract to secure quality jobs, decent wages and social protection.

The Congress discussed examples of innovative organising from around the world focusing on issues such as Just Transition, organising gig workers and making the most of the new ILO fundamental right by organising around Occupational Safety and Health. Frameworks for social dialogue and collective bargaining were central to discussions.

Sharan Burrow stepped down as general secretary after leading the ITUC for 12 years. Luca Visentini was elected as the new general secretary. In his closing remarks, Visentini said "We are a movement that is ready to deliver, ready to fight for our objectives, ready to negotiate and ready to organise, organise, organise."

"Together we will win this battle because we stand together and we are ready to include everyone in our movement, no matter their background, no matter where they are."

Irish unions welcome Supreme Court ruling on CETA

SIPTU and the wider trade union movement welcomed confirmation by the Supreme Court that the Government's move to ratify the 'Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement' (CETA) between the EU and Canada is unconstitutional under Irish law.

Irish trade unions and civil society

organisations have campaigned for a number of years on the issue, calling into question aspects of trade agreements such as CETA.

In 2016, ICTU published a report into CETA and the then-proposed EU-US 'TTIP' agreement. The report's authors argued that contro-



versal provisions to set up an 'Investor Court System' – giving multinationals the right to sue governments for alleged breaches of their rights – was an affront to democracy and could breach the Irish Constitution.

ICTU has underlined trade union support for trade agreements that are

fair, create better jobs, protect fundamental rights, including workers' rights, and public services and which promote climate action, not deals that privilege investors over democracy.

Following the ruling, the Government must now consider the Supreme Court's ruling in full and with all stakeholders, including trade unions, before deciding its response.

COP27 sees mixed results on climate and workers' rights

COP27, the UN's annual climate conference held from 6th-18th November at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, delivered mixed results for workers but did put in place a long-awaited 'loss and damage' fund for developing countries impacted by climate change.

Trade unions welcomed the setting up of a work programme, the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, on just transition – with social dialogue and social protection being recognised for the first time.

Unions had argued that there was an urgent need to scale up levels of social protection in those countries most affected by climate change.

It is estimated more than four billion people do not have any type of social protection and the most vulnerable in society in both the Global North and South need health care, unemployment and other benefits to deal with the impact climate change is having on their livelihoods.

However, progress was undermined by the watering down of commitments to workers, with final decisions omitting references to labour standards and workers' rights. These included crucial decisions on mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, loss and damage, as well as carbon markets.

Talks on the New Collective Quantified Goal, the climate finance



target, set to come into force in 2025, highlighted how labour rights were being sidelined.

This sets the level and form of future climate financing, shaping action on climate change in the years ahead. It was critical that just transition, in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement, was embedded within the process. It is a huge concern it was removed from the final text.

There was further disappointment on climate mitigation with countries backtracking on commitments to phase down coal given at COP26 in Scotland. This opens the door for a



Trade union delegates at Climate Justice March during COP27 PICTURE: Phil Lapointe

focussing on "low-emission" rather than renewable energy and forms part of a continuing undermining of objectives set out in the Paris Agreement. Governments will now have to step up mitigation ambition as a priority for COP28 in the United Arab Emirates in 2023.

The devastating floods that hit Pakistan during the summer – killing more than 1700 people and inflicting \$30 billion of damage and economic loss

– were a stark reminder of the urgent need for action on the issue.

At the Sharm el-Sheikh negotiations, Pakistan led the push to move beyond talk to broker an agreement on a funding facility, though it lacks detail about how much will be contributed, or how funds will be allocated.

The next 12 months will be critical to deliver on the initial promise.

Meanwhile, Egypt, under the re-

game of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, is ranked as one of 10 worst countries in the world for working people and anti-trade union discrimination is rife.

Public gatherings of more than 10 people and displays of political messaging are forbidden. Despite this, activists at COP27 organised a Climate Justice March to vent their frustrations at negotiators and world leaders attending the event.

Opening of new Ringaskiddy terminal includes improved deal for workers at the port

THE new deep-water facility at the Port of Cork in Ringaskiddy can accommodate some of the world's largest container ships.

Officially opened in late September, the €89 million Cork Container Terminal will allow the Port of Cork company to target global routes served by massive ocean-going vessels, including Panamax-class container ships.

It can also store hundreds of refrigerated or temperature-controlled units, which are crucial for the transportation of food stuffs, ingredients, pharmaceuticals and raw materials.

SIPTU Organiser, Sharon Ryan, told Liberty: "The official opening of the Port of Cork's Ringaskiddy container terminal is a hugely important milestone and represents the largest single investment in marine infrastructure of any Irish

port over the last 100 years.

"SIPTU has full density in this section and the opening of the deep water berth was successfully negotiated between union representatives and the company."

During the talks, a new shift pattern – two days, two nights and four days off – was agreed along with a health care package.

Ryan added: "Pay increases [were also agreed] of 2.75% in base pay for the period 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021, a 3% increase in base pay for 1st January 2022 to 31st December 2022, [and] a 2.25% of base pay for 1st January 2023 to 30th September 2023.

"There will also be an payment of a tax-efficient €250, plus an additional €250 at Christmas in 2022 and 2023."



Photo above: The 220m long Independent Vision container ship docks at the new deep water facility in the Port of Cork in Ringaskiddy.

Photo left: Eugene Dorney, Adrian O'Donovan Shop Steward, Fabia Gavin Supporting Quality, Sharon Ryan SIPTU Oroganiser and Cliff Notley.



Pilgrim Foods



Photo from left to right: David Kavanagh, Gavin Doyle, Paul Byrne, David Burnell, Andy Breslin (in the back), Gerard McNally and Damien Egan.

SIPTU Shop Steward, David Burnell, said: "We are committed to working with the company to ensure it not only produces high quality products but also remains a high quality workplace and an important contributor to the economy in Ireland."



CETA should go to referendum, argues Green TD

by Patrick Costello

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union (CETA) has taken a knock back in the courts. This is an important win for anyone who cares about workers' rights, housing, the environment, or any area of progressive legislation. International trade agreements are spun as complicated but the issues, and the dangers, are straight forward. While CETA has been slowed, the fight isn't over.

CETA is a mixed agreement and contains both rules around trade and investment and an Investor Court System. The trade elements of the agreement have been in place since 2017, the benefits of which we are already reaping. This also means the argument that opposition to CETA is blocking trade is not true. The Investor Courts on the other hand remain a significant problem.

Investor Courts, while new to Ireland, have been around for a long time. They have been consistently used by large companies to block progressive legislation. For example, we have seen the Netherlands and Italy sued for billions for trying to stop the burning of fossil fuels in order to fight climate change. In the area of housing, a



large number of the Real Estate Investment Trusts in Ireland are Canadian and could use Investor Courts to challenge laws around rent control. Workers' rights would also be a target for such courts.

Our constitution sets out the structure of the court system. It clearly states that no court outside of those in the Constitution can legally operate. Ireland has both created new courts (such as the Court of Appeal) and signed up to International Courts (such as the Courts of Justice of the European Union and the International Criminal Court), but each time it was via a referendum and a constitutional amendment.

With this in mind, I did not accept that Ireland could now sign up for new investor courts, outside of our constitution, without a referendum. This concern was the cornerstone on my legal challenge. While there were differing legal opinions on this issue, such opinions only become legal facts in a court room. Therefore, a high court action was the only route open to ensure the government was acting within the constitution.

The High Court ruled that the CETA agreement could be ratified by the Government. It was a comprehensive judgement, that rejected many of the state's arguments. However, in the end it

found that a Dáil vote on CETA was legally permissible. In my appeal to the Supreme Court, a majority of the judges held that CETA could not be ratified by a vote in the Dáil. The judgement did state that changes to our legislation dealing with international trade disputes could make it constitutional.

The work to push back against investor courts isn't finished. The Government has said it wants to ratify CETA and will now look at the legislative amendments to make this happen. This will not be as simple and straightforward. This will be a complicated legal knot to unravel, and any changes

will have consequences for the international agreements we are seeking to ratify and may, in fact, not be possible at all. Even if that is possible, there may still be constitutional issues and challenges. The Government will need to take its time if it wants to get this right.

The Government should use this time to reflect on whether we want to even be part of Investor Courts. The Energy Charter Treaty is falling apart with countries pulling out. When Canada, America and Mexico were renewing their trade agreements, Canada removed itself from Investor Courts. The new Australian Government has set up a unit in its Department of Foreign Affairs to remove Australia from Investor Courts. If the world is moving away from them, why are we signing up now?

If the Government decides to push ahead with signing up to CETA and to investor courts the best way forward is a referendum. This would cut off any potential legal challenges and would be the best option to protect the integrity of our courts and of our constitution.

Whatever happens next, CETA hasn't gone away, and the work to stop CETA must continue.

Patrick Costello is a Green Party TD for Dublin South-Central.

Irish Distillers plan €250m investment in new distillery

IRISH Distillers announced in September that it will invest €250 million to build a new distillery in Midleton, county Cork, in order to meet demand and ensure the necessary future global production capacity for its portfolio of Irish whiskeys.

The distillery will produce some of the world's most well-known and successful Irish whiskeys, including Jameson, Powers, Redbreast, Midleton Very Rare, the Spot family and Method and Madness.

SIPTU Organiser, Terry Bryan, said: "This is a welcome expansion by a company whose workforce is well organised into their trade union and has a long association with the Supporting Quality campaign. We look forward to continuing to work with the company into the future to ensure it produces

the best products and retains its reputation as a good place to work."

The new distillery will be situated adjacent to, and connected to, the existing Midleton Distillery. Subject to a successful planning application and meeting all licen-

sing requirements, the new distillery will distil pot still and grain whiskey with grain intake, brewing, fermentation, and distillation facilities incorporated into a new 55-acre site.

The new distillery is expected to generate up to 100 highly-skilled

new jobs once operational in 2025 and up to 800 jobs during the construction phase. The new site will also incorporate various environmental projects which will be developed in order to enhance biodiversity and protect local wildlife.

An expanded distilling capacity is expected to increase Midleton Distillery's requirement for barley and malted barley by up to 50%, which the company intends to source from Irish farmers.

Operations Director at Irish Distillers, Tommy Keane, said: "Whiskey has been distilled in Midleton for almost 200 years and, as such, it has always been our desire to secure the future of distilling in East Cork. We are incredibly proud of Midleton's well-earned reputation as the home of some of the world's most-loved Irish whiskeys.

"Through the delivery of this distillery, we also plan to play our part in supporting Ireland's decarbonising strategy while also aligning with Pernod Ricard's commitment to follow a Net Zero trajectory by 2050."



The Old Midleton Distillery where whiskey has been produced for nearly 200 years – now Irish Distillers are planning to build a new plant close to the site which will be operational by 2025

Helping direct the gateway to Ireland

Dublin Port plays a uniquely crucial role within the economy of Ireland as the main gateway for freight in and out of the island. SIPTU members are key to the operation of the port carrying out numerous functions. Among them is the recently elected Dublin Port Company Employee Director, Bernard Power, who told Liberty about his new role and the importance of the Port.

He said: "I'm a pilot working in harbour operations. Myself and my pilot colleagues go onboard ships and work with the Captains to berth and unberth the vessels."

Harbour operations is comprised of the 12 pilots employed in Dublin Port, along with Vessel Traffic Services, whose role it is to monitor and ensure safe shipping movement in the port area. Marine Operatives, who operate the ports various work and pilot boats as well control

boarding operations in the bay and work with the tugs and Port Tug Captains, who provide critical berthing assistance to the various ships berthing in the port.

"To run for the position of Employee Director, a nomination by your union is required and it is then the company that conducts the vote by all staff, for the position. Day to day the role transcends that of being a union member and is to do with all employees", said Bernard.

"While you are the Employee Director, your first responsibility is to the company when you are serving on the board. However, of course, I will retain more of a connection with employee concerns that other directors."

Bernard has worked with the Dublin Port Company for nearly ten years and prior to that he was in the private sector working for shipping companies. He believes in the medium term the Port will continue



SIPTU member and Dublin Port Company Employee Director, Bernard Power.

to operate in a manner similar to it does currently but longer term there is "big changes on the cards".

Brexit required the port and employees to find ways to work around the changes it necessitated, supply chains were modified and new regulations enforced.

"Where major change will have to occur quite quickly is in relation to environmental concerns and regulations. These are really going to shape the path the port takes."

He added: "A master plan for the Dublin Port which takes us up to 2040 is focused on maintaining it as a competitive and innovative facility. There is already huge competition from other ports in Ireland but Dublin remains our country's main gateway and with that there are huge responsibilities in relation to keeping the economy going. People should never underappreciate how important the work of the Port is, not just to Dublin but the country as a whole."

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Diageo maintains history of community engagement by joining Supporting Quality

Diageo Ireland, the producer of some of the world's leading premium drink brands, has joined the Supporting Quality campaign.

Diageo Ireland Communications and Engagement Manager, Lisa Cashin, said: "Diageo is delighted to join the Supporting Quality campaign. As one of Ireland's largest and best performing drink exporters, we understand that our long-term success depends on the

people around us. In the same way that Arthur Guinness instilled a sense of pride in Irish communities through his philanthropic ethos, we want to be a company where everyone is proud to work."



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Net Reward	€ 1,000.00
Employer PRSI @ 11.05%	€ 230.21
Total Reward Cost to Employer	€ 2,313.54

Vs

Net Reward paid through Payroll

Reward Value	€ 1,000.00
Income Tax @ 40%	€ -
USC @ 8% + PRSI @ 4%	€ -
Income Taxes Paid by Employer	€ -
Net Reward	€ 1,000.00
Employer PRSI @ 11.05%	€ -
Total Reward Cost to Employer	€ 1,000.00

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Retired members call for improved State support for older people

THE SIPTU Retired Members' Section attended the annual meeting of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament held in Liberty Hall on 15th November.

Motions were debated on a variety of issues including the need for the appointment of a dedicated senior minister for older people given that, in the next 20 years, one in four people in Ireland will be over 65.

Attendees supported SIPTU's call for the Government to put public service ahead of private profit and to fully restore the HSE Home Care budget so as to enable older and vulnerable people to remain in their own homes. Among speakers at the event was SIPTU's research officer Michael Taft who spoke on the current situation regarding pensions in Ireland.

NEC member Pat Lamon, who attended the event, said: "With the rising cost of living, we must explore how we can link the old age pension to the average industrial wage to prevent the increasing prevalence of

economic, energy and food poverty among older people in Ireland."

In relation to the continuing housing crisis, SIPTU members proposed a motion that sought to highlight the growing number of people over 70 and 80 years of age who are being given notice to quit by their landlords.

Many older people have nowhere to go and have no alternative but to look for another rental accommodation.

Most of our older people, especially women, are on fixed incomes and cannot afford high rents demanded by landlords. The meeting called on the Government to take urgent action to address the housing crisis affecting older people.

If you are a retired member of SIPTU and wish to be active in the union's Retired Members' Section, you can join today by simply emailing retired@siptu.ie or phone 01-8588261



SIPTU Retired Members' Section attendees at annual meeting of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament in Liberty Hall on 15th November



SIPTU

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Trip 2023**

8 nights

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(Transfers included throughout)

Havana Airport to Hotel Sevilla (B&B)
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2nd Nov: Havana to Cienfuegos
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3rd Nov: Cienfuegos to Trinidad
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7th Nov – Trinidad to Havana Airport,
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* People whose doctors believe they are fit to travel. Please note if you use a medical device or aid, it must be registered with the airline in advance of travel.





*Nothing tops
Avonmore cream
at Christmas*








Ireland's Favourite Cream

SIPTU Basic English course helped me grow in the workplace

by Scott Millar

SIPTU activist, Raimonds Zvanbergs, came to Ireland from Latvia in 2001. He credits the SIPTU Basic English scheme with giving him the language tools which have allowed him to develop in his workplace and socially in Ireland.

He said: "I worked in a meat factory in Gorey in county Wexford when I first came to Ireland. It was there that I did my first English language course. This was a group course and I actually did not find it very helpful. At that stage I could only count up to 10 in English and used to get my colleagues to write words on my hand so I could look at them and learn them.

"We organised a union in 2004 when I started work in Beaumont Hospital as a caterer and we

quickly became involved in SIPTU. With the help of the union we protected our conditions of employment.

"It was only after joining SIPTU and doing an online Basic English course that my ability with the language really began to improve. I found the webinar approach to learning much better than attending courses.

"My first teacher online with SIPTU was Conor. He understood what I needed to be able to understand and say and taught me it. This was the best jump I had with my English language, I learned grammar and a lot of vocabulary.

"Conor was a brilliant teacher as was my next tutor, Mary Bambrick. With their help I was able

to reach quite a high standard. I was able to write a story about a trip I made to Sligo during Storm Ophelia. It was seven pages long and I went through all that with my teacher, correcting and learning from my mistakes that they pointed out."

Zvanbergs told Liberty: "It was a flexible course for me that did not necessitate me travelling for an hour to sit with other students in a classroom where you often do not get the individual attention that is needed.

"I would like to attend webinars again to improve my English. I am now going through what I learned in the last few years so that I can improve my

language with the information that I have been provided with through the SIPTU Basic English course."

He added: "For members who need to improve their language I would highly recommend the SIPTU Basic English scheme. It has helped me greatly with my work and growing in the workplace. I was regular caterer assistant and I am now a catering assistant team leader. I could still improve on my technical language to assist with negotiating with management.

"However, the English I have now mean I am more than able to get by, and that is because of the SIPTU Basic English course."



SIPTU members at the union office in Wexford following on the Shop Steward Introductory Course on 28th September.



Meath District Council President Anton McCabe (left) receiving a presentation from Palestine Director of Al Haq & Secretary General of the international Federation of Human Rights, Dr Shawan Jabarin.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF ADULTS IN IRELAND

Are you aged 45-64 years?

TILDA Health & Life is inviting new study participants

TILDA Health & Life is an internationally recognised study that aims to understand and improve life and health in Ireland. The study is currently bringing in new participants, between the ages of **45-64 years**, who want to play a role in shaping a brighter future for adults in Ireland.

We are working with trained interviewers from Behaviour and Attitudes (B&A) and are knocking on doors of **pre-selected** homes all over the country.

If you have been selected and have received an invitation letter and wish to learn more about what is involved, please don't hesitate to get in touch:

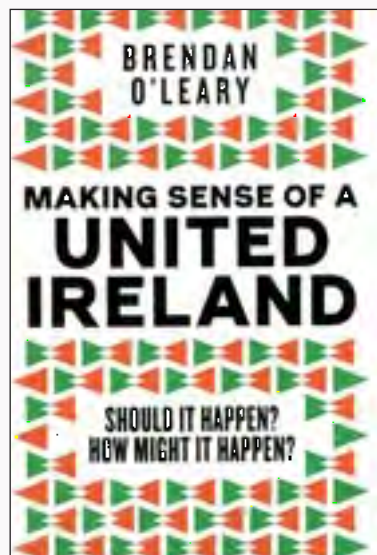
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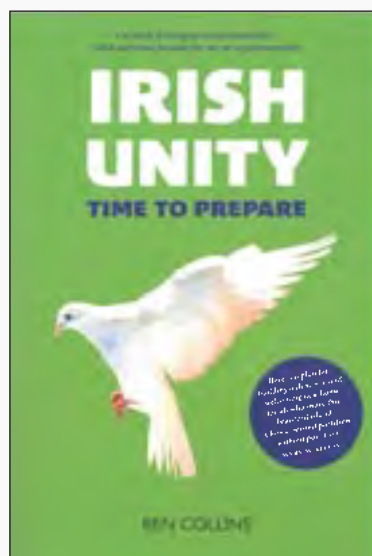
tilda
Staidéar Fadaimseartha na hÉireann um Dhul in Aois

The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing



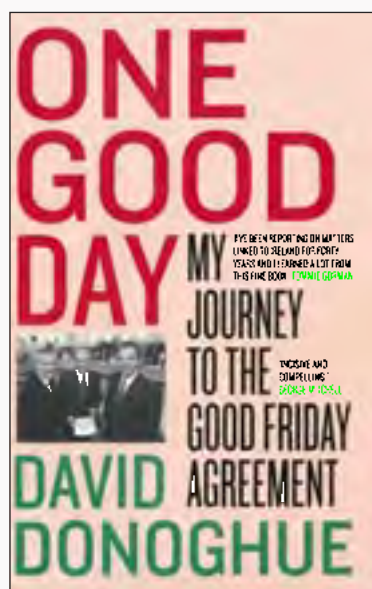
Making Sense of a United Ireland

Brendan O'Leary is one of Ireland's leading historians and experts on constitutional change and for some years has been leading research on the potential political structures and institutions of a new Ireland. "Making Sense of a United Ireland" is a detailed examination of the challenges joining the political, policing, educational, constitutional and other systems on the island and of the experience of national reunification in other countries. It is an indispensable read for those who seek to understand what is, for O'Leary, an almost inevitable consequence of Brexit but which cannot be achieved without planning and preparation.



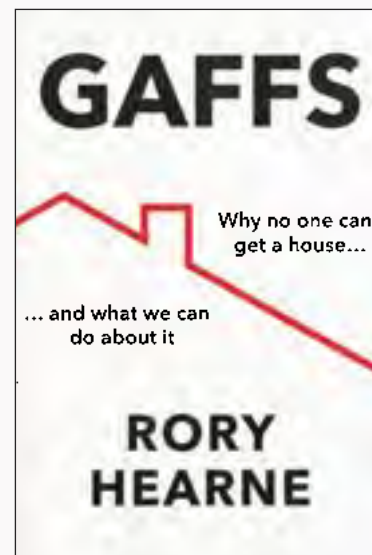
Irish Unity - Time to Prepare

Ben Collins grew up in largely protestant and unionist East Belfast and campaigned for the Ulster Unionist party. Now he is advocating for a united Ireland which, he believes, can benefit all who live on the island. "I studied Irish history a bit (which I did not get to do at school, unfortunately) and realised partition has been a disaster for both parts of the island: normal politics, without the traps of constitutional debates, will only happen after the island is reunited," writes Collins in "Irish Unity - Time to Prepare."



One Good Day

In "One Good Day", former Irish diplomat, David O'Donoghue, offers an account of the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement from the perspective of one of those involved. As head of the Irish delegation at the Anglo-Irish secretariat, known as 'the Bunker' in Belfast during the late 1990's, he provides an insight into the then comparatively good relations between the Irish and British governments that led to the 1998 breakthrough under the chairmanship of US senator, George Mitchell.



Why no one can get a house.... and what we can do about it

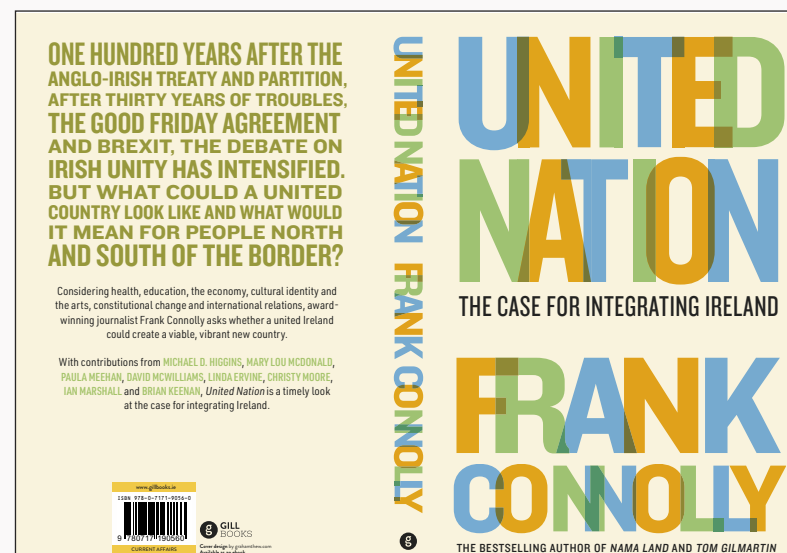
Housing costs are the highest in the EU, rents in the private rental sector have spiralled with young people forced to live at home or leave the country in a new wave of emigration. In "Gaffs", Rory Hearne sets out the reasons for, and the route out of, the housing crisis. He describes how "Generation Locked Out, the first since the foundation of the Irish state" are the real victims of the current unprecedented housing crisis.

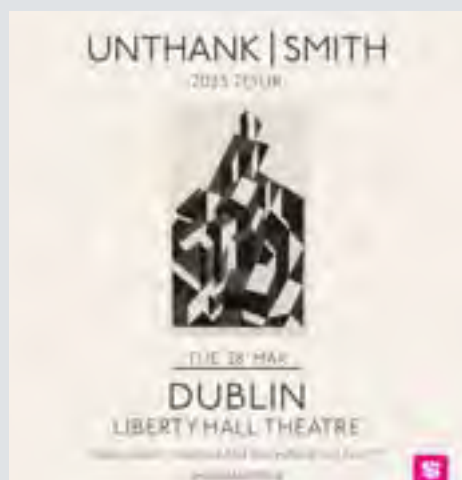
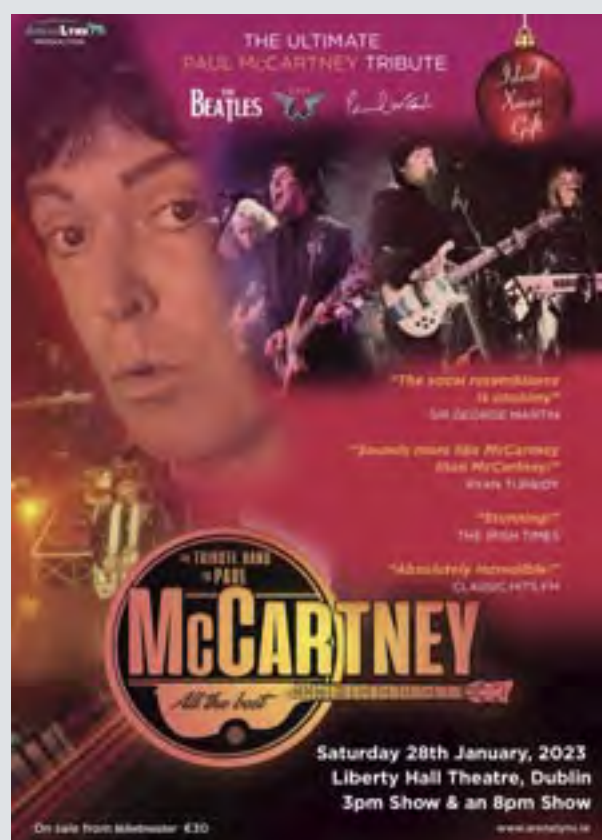
"The housing market is a fire that government has poured fuel on, rather than quenching the flames. It has handed over the market to vulture funds. House prices and rents have more than doubled in the last decade while wages have only increased by a fraction of that," writes Hearne, Assistant Professor of Social Policy at Maynooth University.



Childhood Memories

A new collection of poetry by Gerry Daly seeks to capture aspects of a childhood in Galway City. Gerry was the youngest in a family of 14. Brought up in Shantalla, a 'Corporation' estate of 200 houses, it is now one of the most sought after locations in Galway City. Daly, a SIPTU member with Galway City Council, said: "At the age of twelve I left school. This was a normal practice for kids who grew up in corporation estates in the 60's. Households had to be provided for, especially when one's father passed away while working abroad." Childhood memories is published by Tribes Press.





For Liberty Hall Theatre bookings
contact Laura Woods, E-mail : lwoods@suptu.ie or Tel: 01 858 6354 for more information.

So, what next for football?



Fans hold a banner reading 'Boycott Qatar 2022' during the Bundesliga match between Borussia Dortmund and VfB Stuttgart at Signal Iduna Park in October 2022.



By
Kevin
Brannigan

In a recent *Guardian* article Johnathan Wilson outlined tech strategist, Gareth Edwards, theory of "trust thermocline".

A thermocline is the narrow transition layer in a body of water between the surface, where waves keep the temperature relatively warm, and the much cooler water below. It is where the temperature suddenly plummets.

Edwards' theory was focused on Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter. Edwards uses the natural phenomena of suddenly plummeting water temperature as an analogy for users abruptly fleeing from a social media platform when a critical mass of frustration is reached.

If everyone else is gone, why aren't?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a lot of people are operating various

levels of personal boycotts of this World Cup.

From the cliched weathervane of the late-night taxi man, to friends discussing events over drinks, the word boycott keeps cropping up in my social circles.

Even if this self-imposed restriction isn't enforced to the full, the fact that people are openly suggesting swerving what is meant to be a once every four years period of joy, shows that a critical mass of frustration is building with the corporate version of the game.

So, what next for football?

The 1934 World Cup, played in Italy, helped cement Mussolini's Fascist regime. The final of the 1978 World Cup took place in Estadio Monumental, River Plate's stadium, located a 10-minute walk from the Navy Petty Officers School of Mechanics, an infamous torture site during the days of the, then reigning, Argentinian Military Junta. The 2018 World Cup took place in Russia. And well...

The 1985 FA cup final took place seven days after 56 supporters had burnt to death in the Bradford City stadium fire. The European Cup

final of the same year played on despite the deaths in the Heysel stadium in Brussels of 39 fans. The Port Said Massacre of 2012 saw 72 Al-Ahly fans either beaten or crushed to death inside the Egyptian stadium. The tournament continued as eight fans died in a crush during the 2022 African Cup of Nations. In October of this year, 125 fans were killed in a crush as Indonesian police fired tear gas into packed terraces.

So, what next for football?

I recently met with Neville Southall, the great Everton and Welsh goalkeeper of the 1980's, now turned social worker and activist. Given his patronage of 'Rainbow Toffees', an Everton LGBTQ+ supporters group, Neville won't be going to Qatar. He gets hypocrisy.

When I spoke to him about the 1985 FA Cup Final, in which he kept goal for Everton, I asked him how heavy was it to be a player in the violent world of Thatcher's England where, just a week previously, 56 supporters had burnt to death in a football ground.

Neville reckoned I was giving

him and his colleagues of the time too much credence. They didn't think of that at all. They simply kept going. Kept playing.

As the English, Belgian, Dutch, Swiss, German, Danish and Welsh footballers of 2022 abandon their protest to wear the LGBTQ+ supportive 'One Love' armband,

As the English, Belgian, Dutch, Swiss, German, Danish and Welsh footballers of 2022 abandon their protest to wear the LGBTQ+ supportive 'One Love' armband, it's hard not to feel let down by these millionaires,

it's hard not to feel let down by these millionaires, yet they are simply carrying on in the footballing tradition of keeping going, keeping playing.

So, what next for Football?

The Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, sat next to FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, at both the opening game of the 2018 World Cup and this Winter's version. Bin Salman is accused of ordering the murder and dismemberment of journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, in Turkey in 2018.

It is rumoured that Infantino supports a Saudi Arabian hosted World Cup in 2030. A decision will be made in 2024.

If this winter World Cup in the absolute monarchy of Qatar does not prove to be football's "trust thermocline" moment surely a tournament in Saudi Arabia would do the trick?

By 2030, Saudi owned Newcastle United will have a few Premier League and European Super League titles under their belt. By then long since normalised, hosting a World Cup really won't be a leap.

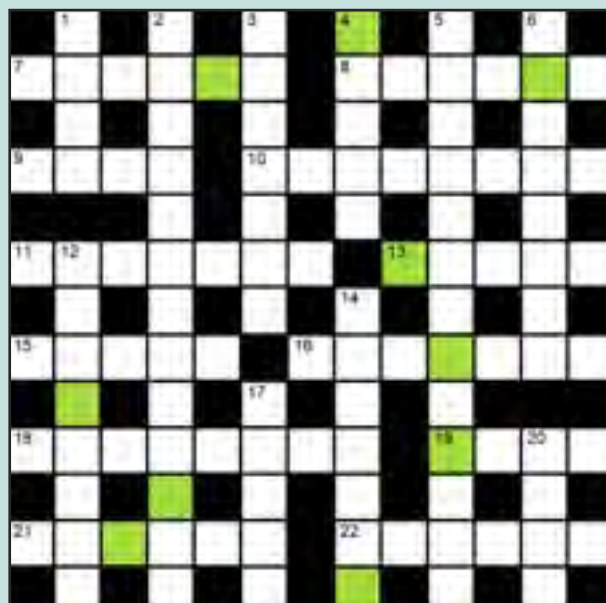
So, what next for football?

Australia v Ireland. July 20th, 2023 when the women take to the pitch.

Liberty Crossword

PRIZE DRAW

To win a hamper to the value of €200 courtesy of MARSH
(see back cover)



ACROSS

- 7 Casual eatery (6)
- 8 Sports venues (6)
- 9 Food for sea urchins (4)
- 10 Saudis and others (8)
- 11 Diplomatic (7)
- 13 Ancient Celtic priest (5)
- 15 Kitchen appliance (5)
- 16 Seaborne infantry (7)
- 18 Where you leave valuables in the nightclub (8)
- 19 Farsi-speaking land (4)
- 21 No longer of use (6)
- 22 Latitude (6)

DOWN

- 1 ... waits for no man (4)
- 2 Can help you cross a river (8,5)
- 3 Country in southern central Europe (7)
- 4 ___ bar (5)
- 5 Over 65 years old (6,7)
- 6 The route from one large city to another (8)
- 12 Handel work (8)
- 14 From whales to shrews (7)

*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 hamper to the value of €200**. The winner of the crossword quiz will be published in the next edition of Liberty.

*Terms and conditions apply.

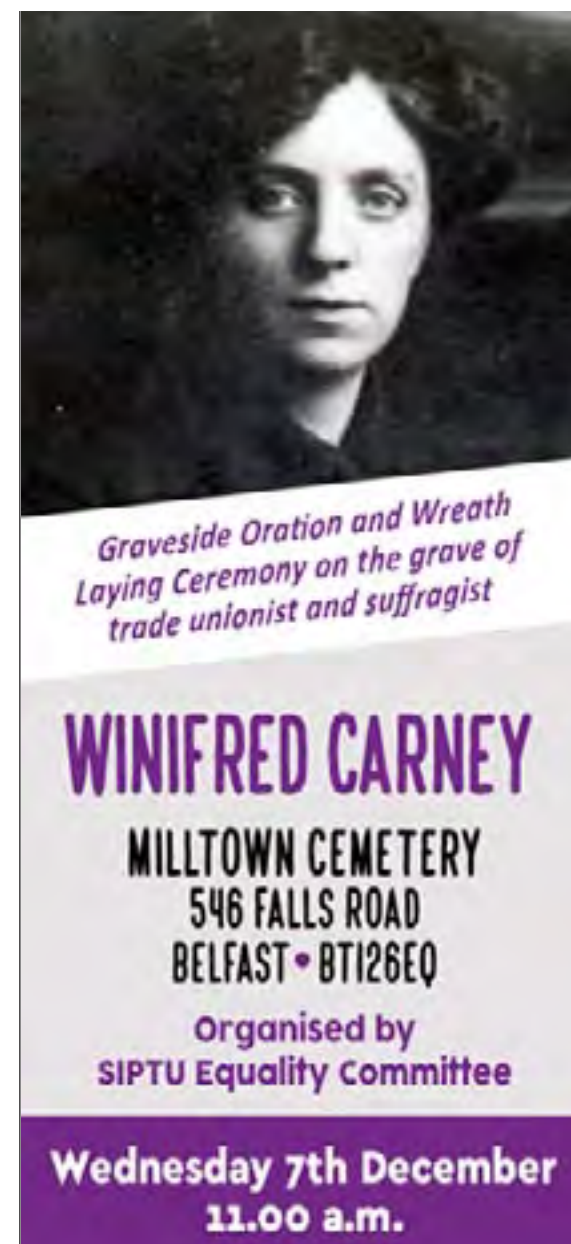
The winner of the crossword competition in the September edition was Warren Clarke from County Monaghan the hidden word was: CRISIS



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