

MANDATE TRADE UNION

JUNE 2016

SHOPFLOOR

30%

BETTER OFF!

	RATE PER HOUR AVERAGE	PAY SCALES WITH SERVICE INCREMENTS	FLEXI CONTRACTS AVERAGE HOURS PER WEEK	ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS
UNION	€ 13.03	100%	24	0%

VERSUS

NON- UNION	€ 10.04	14%	16	16%
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retailsurvey.org



Retail workers **30%** better off if they are in a unionised workplace

SURVEY
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STRAIGHT TALKING

Respect is a union virtue

UNIONS are groups of workers who come together as brothers and sisters to improve and protect their pay and conditions of employment and to campaign on social and political issues. Workers form unions because they rightly understand that they are stronger together, particularly when faced with a powerful employer.

But for unions to be successful, it requires unity and activism by which we mean that workers are active in their union locally and nationally and support their shop stewards and officials. In the absence of this unity unions are weak and are no more than a collection of self-interest groups, often dictated by those who can shout loudest.

The last eight years have been difficult for Irish workers faced with the biggest economic crash this country has ever witnessed with many losing their jobs, emigrating or having their terms and conditions reduced. In the last two years there have been signs of a very tentative economic recovery, unions are attempting to restore and improve workers' living standards. In recent years, Mandate, for example, has secured pay increases across all major retailers on an annual basis, removed incremental freezes and secured certainty of earnings, while socially and politically campaigning for an end to zero-hour contracts, water charges and seeking investment in housing etc.

Have we achieved everything? No, but we have made a start thanks to the brave stance taken by retail workers across Ireland who on many occasions have stood on picket and protest lines to win a just and fair settlement.

Central to our campaigns and negotiations are the unselfish shop stewards and house committee members who volunteer to work on behalf of their fellow workers to improve the lot of all. Together

with you, they have engaged with management negotiating teams to secure the best proposals possible at the negotiating table.

It is important to understand that the "best proposals achievable at the negotiating table" are not necessarily the "best proposals". Every set of negotiations has two sides – the employer and your representatives and rarely in a set of negotiations does either side achieve one hundred per cent.

But what your representatives do is bring back for your **consideration and decision** the best proposals they could achieve at the negotiating table. It is then up to the members to make the decision – after hearing all the facts – about whether or not these proposals are acceptable. This decision is made by way of a secret ballot – it's called the democratic decision of the collective membership. Undoubtedly as in any ballot there will be those who will be happy and unhappy with the outcome, but that's how the collective works and this goes to the very heart of trade unionism.

In cases where members reject a set of proposals – which is their right – then there arises a number of options (besides doing nothing): you can go back to the negotiating table to see if there any more, you can go to the Labour Court to see if they will award more and, of course, if all else fails, the members in a secret ballot can decide to take industrial action to win more.

Personal attacks

All of the above is normal and acceptable, but what is not acceptable and is becoming far too common is the unwarranted and often deeply personal attacks on the members of the national negotiating team, both officials and shop stewards who you have asked to go out and get the best deal possible for you for **your consideration**.

In good faith and often on their own time, your representatives engage with management on your behalf. What they bring back is in their opinion the "best proposals" achievable at the negotiating table. As I pointed out earlier, these are not necessarily the "best proposals" but they have fulfilled the task you have charged them to do. Once this is done, it is up to you and fellow members to make the final decision after listening to all the facts, debating and probing the circumstances, certain in the knowledge that you have the right to vote 'yes' or 'no'.

The workers we send out to do this often thankless job deserve our respect. It is grossly unfair and cowardly to attack them at work, at meetings, or on social media etc. You are attacking your union, your collective, you are doing the job of the employer – divide and conquer. Bullying and intimidation have no place in trade unionism. So, yes, have a certain view, express that counter-view, canvass support for that counter-view, partake and vote in your democratic ballot, but always respect and support those whom you have asked to work on your behalf.



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NEWS



● Certainty of earnings key requirement

Labour Court hears Dunnes workers' plea

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

THE Labour Court held a preliminary hearing on June 1 between Mandate and Dunnes Stores. This is one of the first Labour Court hearings under the new *Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2015*.

The hearing was in relation to the ongoing refusal of Dunnes Stores management to provide certainty of hours and earnings for their workers. According to Mandate, the company can still do the "decent thing" and resolve the dispute by sitting down and negotiating with the workers through their union.

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas told *Shopfloor*: "While we welcome the Labour Court's preliminary hearing, it is very frustrating that it has come to this."

"The refusal by Dunnes Stores to honour their existing collective agreement with their workers' representatives, Mandate, is a disgrace and they should be ashamed of themselves."

"All Dunnes workers are looking for is a little bit of decency and certainty in their weekly income. It's not too much to ask to know from one week to the next that you will be able to pay your bills and feed your children."

More than 6,000 Dunnes Stores workers took industrial action last April in pursuit of secure hours and incomes, after which the company began a campaign of retribution including cutting hours and changing

“All Dunnes workers are looking for is a little bit of decency and certainty in their weekly income. It's not too much to ask to know from one week to the next that you will be able to pay your bills and feed your kids”

rosters for some, and dismissing others. After the strike and a national protest march, new legislation was passed that would allow the Labour Court to issue binding determinations that would be enforceable in the Circuit Court. This will be one of the first major cases of its kind in the Labour Court.

Meanwhile, Mandate have lodged a claim for a 3% pay increase at Dunnes Stores but have so far not heard back from management. The union has won 9% in pay increases over three years at the company and the current pay arrangement expired on May 12th.



Dunnes Stores workers won the inaugural Madiba (Nelson Mandela) award at the Mandate Trade Union Biennial Delegate Conference in Galway on April 18th. The award was given by the union's National Executive Committee to the 6,000 Dunnes workers in recognition of the courage and conviction during their dispute in 2015.

Reality bites for Govt on workers' rights

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

MANDATE has claimed there is evidence of a new post-election “political reality” after the Government lost its first vote in the new Dáil term over workers’ rights.

Fine Gael and its independent allies were defeated after putting forward an amendment to a Labour Party motion on workers’ rights. The Labour motion – which urged the

Government to increase the minimum wage, introduce a living wage of €11.50 per hour across the public sector, an end to so-called ‘if and when’ contracts and to tackle bogus self-employment – was passed with the support of Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin TDs, among others.

The motion also proposed the implementation of recommendations set out in the review of employment law commissioned last year after more than 400 Clerys staff in Dublin

were sacked without notice when the store closed. A counter-motion by the Government was defeated by 78 votes to 58, highlighting the vulnerability of the new minority administration.

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas pointed out that the new political reality of this Government is that the Opposition can have legislation implemented if they can act collectively. He told *Shopfloor*: “Workers have

never been so hard-pressed. And the new political reality is that the Dáil can provide workers with improved living standards.

“Mandate will be lobbying strongly for improvements to workplace legislation, progressive taxation measures and increased spending on vital public services, including childcare provision, healthcare investment and affordable housing.”



Talks continue at WRC in a bid to settle dispute

IN JANUARY, Tesco Ireland attempted to cut pay and conditions for 6% of their workforce, stating that flexibility was their main objective.

These cuts affected those workers employed prior to 1996 and included:

- 15%-35% pay cuts;
- Removal of overtime;
- Cuts to Sunday and unsociable hours premiums from double pay to time and a half;
- A reduction in the annual bonus; and
- Changes to rosters.

Tesco workers, through their trade union, immediately responded by balloting for industrial action which was firstly voted in favour by a margin of 99% by those directly affected by the cuts and then supported by 88% of those not affected by them in a clear show of solidarity.

Many of the workers facing cuts took a redundancy package and left the business, but for those remaining, Mandate has been adamant that no changes should occur without the agreement of the workers concerned. This type of action would set a very dangerous precedent for all workers in Tesco.

In April, Mandate communicated to the company that a strike would take

place if the company went ahead with any changes to contracts of employment.

This strike was deferred so talks could take place in the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC).

Those talks broke down without any resolution and a strike was back on the cards, scheduled to take place on Monday, May 16.

WRC intervention

The WRC intervened for a second time and talks commenced between company representatives and Mandate officials. But again those talks broke down and another strike date was set for Thursday, May 26.

On the eve of the dispute the WRC called for more talks and the company agreed to fully exhaust all procedures, which includes attendance at the Labour Court, should the discussions break down. This was a key demand set down by Mandate from the onset of the dispute.

Those talks are continuing at the WRC, as *Shopfloor* goes to print, with the provision that neither Mandate nor Tesco engage in hostilities until the procedures have been fully exhausted.

Mandate will keep all Tesco workers updated as the talks progress.

● ‘Valuable tool for workers’ – Mandate ● Shock results in NERA report

Bill, if passed, could help tackle rogue employers

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

SINN Féin TD for Waterford David Cullinane has launched the *Industrial Relations (Right to Access) (Amendment) Bill 2016*, which, if passed, would allow workers to access a trade union official at work for collective bargaining purposes, health and safety inspections or employment legislation compliance inspections.

The Bill comes following a cross-party briefing in Dail Eireann on the Dunnes Stores and Tesco Ireland disputes where trade unions now have limited or no access to their members.

Mandate has welcomed the Bill and say it could provide workers with a very valuable tool in terms of extending democracy in the workplace in some of the most precarious employment sections of Irish society.

General Secretary John Douglas told *Shopfloor*: “Exploitation in the workplace is rife in Ireland in 2016. We have employers underpaying their workers, abusing health and safety laws and refusing their workers their democratic right to be represented by a trade union of their choice.

“This Bill could help tackle those problems and offer workers a bit of dignity in the workplace.”

He added: “Despite having a collective agreement with Mandate, Dunnes Stores refuse to allow their workers to be represented by Mandate officials for grievances or for collective bargaining purposes.

“There is nothing worse than being called for a disciplinary but not having the experts at your side, while the employer has trained and educated human resources professionals and solicitors at their disposal. It’s a complete mismatch.”

Highlighting the fact that this piece of legislation is used in other countries, Mr Douglas pointed out that it has helped create fairer workplaces in countries such as Australia and New Zealand.



‘Dignity’: John Douglas Bill: David Cullinane

“All workers in Australia and New Zealand have access to their trade union because of similar legislation. This has served both the workers and the employers well. It has meant more compliance with workplace laws, allowing for a level playing field.”

Meanwhile, the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) recently published its annual report

for 2015 which contained some shocking results:

● Out of 285 inspections in the retail sector, there was a 48% compliance rate, meaning 52% of retail employers were in breach of employment legislation. These inspections led to €255,893 of recovered wages being awarded to workers.

● In the food and drink sector, including bars, there were 565 inspections with a compliance rate of 35% meaning 65% of employers were not abiding by workplace laws. This led to €283,237 in recovered wages.

John Douglas said: “It makes sense for trade unions to assist in workplace inspections to ensure compliance levels are increased and workers are paid the correct wage. This would help level the playing field but it would also ensure the State is receiving the correct Employers’ PRSI rates.”

Summary of inspections & breaches detected by industry sector to Sept 30, 2015

Sector	No of Inspections Concluded	Compliance Rate%	Unpaid Wages Recovered (€)
AGRICULTURE	40	45%	3,626
FOOD & DRINK	565	35%	283,237
WHOLESALE & RETAIL	275	48%	255,893
HOTELS	46	46%	48,174
CONTRACT CLEANING	18	44%	4,616
SECURITY	18	56%	0
CONSTRUCTION	54	54%	8,625
ELECTRICAL	3	87%	10,341
MANUFACTURING	62	58%	73,841
TRANSPORT	46	33%	27,109
HAIR & BEAUTY	73	30%	9,754
HEALTH, NURSING & CHILDCARE	66	64%	6,815
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	78	64%	29,340
DOMESTIC	43	56%	2,020
OTHER	239	51%	134,421
UNANNOUNCED VISITS	1,309	67%	N/A
Total	3,535	67%	667,411

Ex-Clerys workers get compo payouts at WRC

THE WORKPLACE Relations Commission has awarded 61 former employees of Clerys compensation payments of between €1,000 and €3,500 each after it found that OCS Operations Ltd – which had been in provisional liquidation – was in breach of S.I. No 488/200 EC (Protection of Employment) Regulations in its failure to consult with the workers or their representatives.

The case had been referred to the WRC by Mandate and SIPTU in July 2015. Some 56 complainants were represented by SIPTU with five being represented by Mandate.

Welcoming the ruling and the payouts, Mandate Divisional Organiser Michael Meegan outlined to *Shopfloor* the background to the case: “What is important about this ruling is the fact that this legislation also applies in a situation

where the Courts appoint a provisional liquidator.

“The European Court of Justice in the joined cases of David Claes v Landsbanki Luxembourg SA, in liquidation, found that as long as a management remained in place – even if it had limited powers of management – it had to fulfil its obligations under Article 2 and 3 of the Directive.

“This also applied in the Clerys situation where the management was taken over in its entirety by a liquidator. This applies to all collective redundancies whereby a provisional liquidator is appointed by the High Court.”

He continued: “It is important to note that as a result of the European Courts decision, the provisional liquidator must fulfil the obligations arising under Directive 98/59. This is the posi-



Picture: jaqian (CC BY 2.0)

tion until the legal personality of an establishment, whose dissolution and winding up have been ordered by the Courts, has ceased to exist.

“Therefore, in the Clerys situation, the High Court appointed the provisional liquidators on June 12, 2015, but the business did not go into full liquidation until July 6, 2015, when the company was wound up and the High Court appointed the joint liquidators.”

Mr Meegan pointed out that it also meant that there was only short period of time within which the case had to be lodged with the WRC.

“It had to be lodged before the company was formally wound up and the High Court had formally appointed the liquidators. In the Clerys situation this meant that the claim had to be lodged with the WRC before July 6, 2015.”

After Clerys... why the clock is ticking on unscrupulous employers

IT IS a year since the closure of Clerys department store on O'Connell Street in Dublin.

On that day – June 12, 2016 – loyal members of staff at Clerys were treated in a despicable and bullying manner when they were forced to leave their place of employment and their jobs with no notice or consideration given to them

by the new owners Natrium.

Following the disgraceful way Clerys staff were treated, Mandate has been to the fore in actively lobbying politicians and local city counsellors for changes to the legislation to prevent such deplorable treatment of workers happening ever again. Mandate also put forward a very detailed submission to

the Duffy/Cahill review group. Subsequently, the Duffy/Cahill review group published a report that took on board all the points put forward by the union.

And when this report is enacted into legislation, it will in the future substantially curtail the activities of unscrupulous employers and capital vultures in their treatment of

workers. Mandate along with SIPTU successfully lodged a claim on behalf of the Clerys workers to the Workplace Relations Commission resulting in an additional pay-out to the workers of €120,000.

Some 12 months on and a number of these workers are still without a job but the courage and fortitude of the Clerys workers is ad-

mired by fellow trade unionists across the world.

Thanks to the Clerys workers' persistence – with the help and support of both Mandate and SIPTU – the unsatisfactory treatment has been highlighted at the highest levels and has resulted in commitment being given by Government to the Duffy/Cahill report.

Shining a light on a grave injustice to workers...

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

MANDATE and SIPTU members marked the first anniversary of the closure of Clerys Department Store with a demonstration outside the company's old premises on O'Connell Street in Dublin. On the eve of the demonstration, the Justice for Clerys campaign projected an image with the slogan 'Time for Justice' on to the front of the building.

On June 11, 2015, Natrium – the new owners of Clerys – shut the iconic store and more than 400 workers, many with decades of experience, lost their jobs without warning.

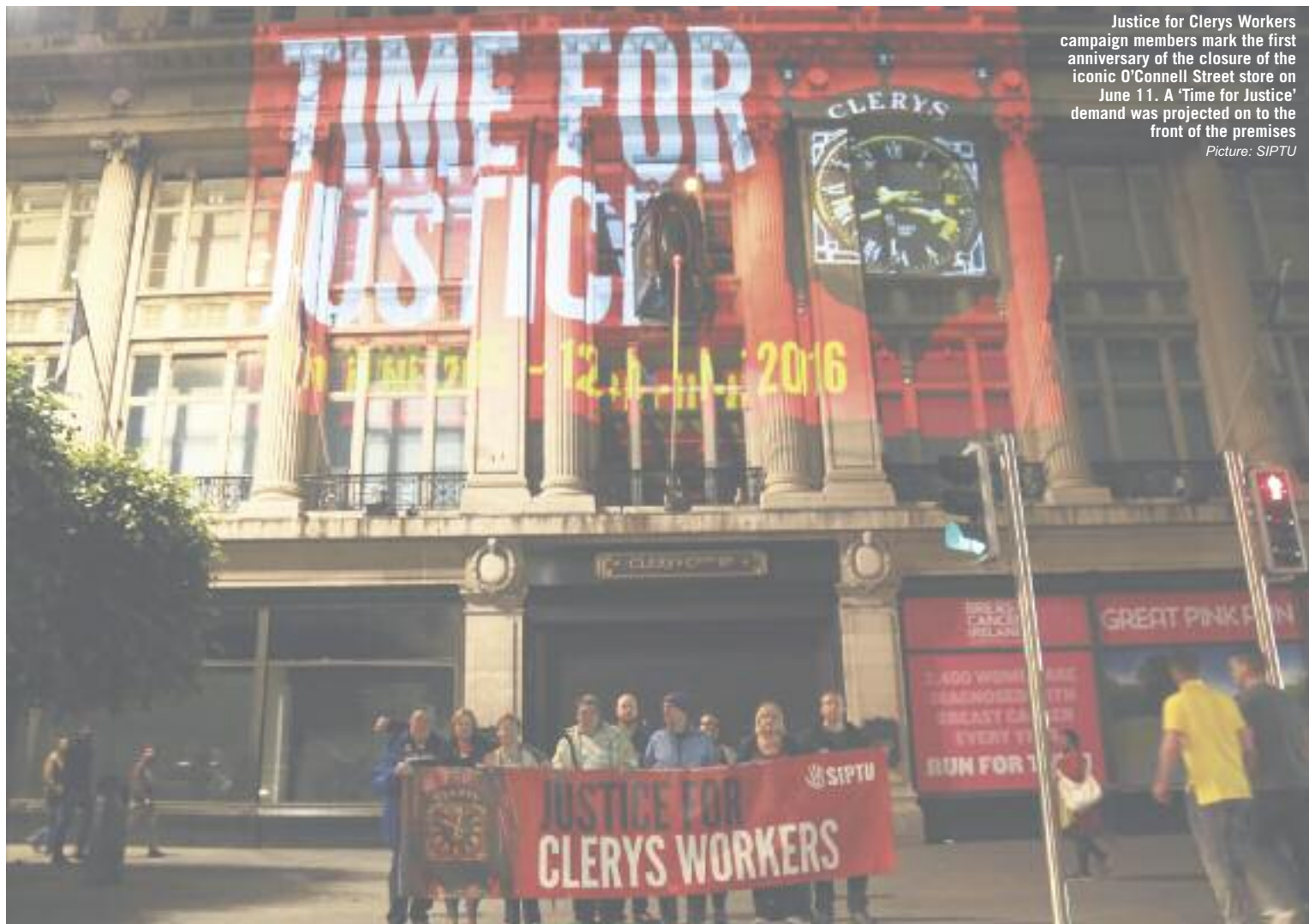
The owners also denied payment of their workers' outstanding wages or redundancy entitlements. Natrium, who had purchased the business that day, immediately appointed new directors and transferred the company's assets to a 'distinct and separate' trading company for €1. Later that day, it successfully sought the appointment of a liquidator.

“Disgraceful behaviour”

Coincidentally, the same week saw the two-year anniversary of the Paris Bakery closure where more than 40 workers were left without wages or redundancy.

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas claimed it was “beyond time that politicians played their part and made sure this disgraceful behaviour by employers cannot happen again”.

He continued: “We've been warning successive governments about this type of behaviour, whether it's in Connolly Shoes, La Senza, Vita Cortex, the Paris Bakery or Clerys, but still employers can walk away from their obligations and force the taxpayer to pick up the tab for unpaid wages and redundancies. This must be resolved immediately.”



Justice for Clerys Workers campaign members mark the first anniversary of the closure of the iconic O'Connell Street store on June 11. A 'Time for Justice' demand was projected on to the front of the premises

Picture: SIPTU

CLERYS ONE YEAR ON

CLERYS was a household name nationwide. My earliest recollection of being in the store was to see Santa – Clerys always had the best Christmas windows.

My mother, who is 96, still tells me of the times she bought tweed fabric to make suits for herself. She was 16 years of age when she first shopped in Clerys.

My father bought us our first bikes in Clerys. Our toys came from Clerys. I always wanted to work in Clerys – I loved the way they sent the money on the shoots across the ceiling to a cash office that was on a height and I always wondered how the change was never mixed up.

I got my only fur coat in Clerys (not p.c. now). My first real pearl necklace and my wedding headdress came from Clerys. I bought my son's first walking aid in the Toy department when he was nine months old and every year he went to see Santa.

I went to work in Clerys in 2000. I worked in the Curtain Department. I know everyone says working in Clerys was like one big family, but that's the way it was.

Clerys looked huge from the outside but inside everyone knew everyone. When I started working in Clerys it was great, from senior management down.

The store manager at that time stood behind the counter beside me, he didn't know the ins and outs of curtains but he would answer the phone and take messages, which was a great help because the department was so busy.

In later years the management changed and things went steadily downhill. Departmental managers with long service and experience were no longer allowed to make decisions – they were told what to do and put under a lot of pressure.

In 2012, Clerys Department Store on O'Connell Street went into receivership and At Home with Clerys in Leopardstown and Nass went into liquidation. Guineys on Talbot Street also went into liquidation. At Home with Clerys in Blanchardstown had already closed.

Told on Teletext

I found out what had happened from Teletext, even though I had been at work earlier that day. The manager from Guineys got a phone call from senior management as he was driving home to tell him his job was gone and he was to let the rest of the staff know.

The staff member with the least amount of service in Guineys had 30 years service given, and this was the way they were treated.

The manager of Guineys had to come to Clerys every morning to collect the cash bag and returned the cash bag every evening with no security system in place.

All of these workers were Mandate members. They were left with statutory redundancy. We, the staff were not told this was happening. After 42 years you get a phone call. A disgrace.

Gordon Brothers took over the O'Connell Street store. I now worked for OCS Operations Ltd. Things got worse from then on.

I worked on the second floor. There were two full-time women, two part-time women, two full-time men working as sales people and we had nine managers – all men.

People with years of experience in some departments were moved to other departments where they had no experience and no training.

It is my belief that the management were trying to unsettle people to get them to leave under constructive dismissal. Longer serving staff were ignored; their input was not wanted. We had people on six-hour contracts, three-hour contracts and some with no contracts at all.

In my opinion, if you were liked, you got more hours but if you weren't, your six hours could be spread over a number of days.

I became a shop steward in December 2014. The previous shop steward retired and the assistant shop steward was off sick. I couldn't become shop steward until I had completed the Introductory Shop Steward course even though we had no union representative for months.

There were reports in the papers about the store. I knew something wasn't right and I



Maureen Deans, right, at the June 12 protest

Ex-Clerys shop steward **Maureen Deans** recalls the shocking events of last year when the iconic department store closed its doors and staff were literally given minutes notice...

What the closure of Clerys has meant for me and why our fight for justice matters...

asked Mandate to write to the management to ask them if the store was for sale.

Mandate received a reply stating that when management knew something they would let the union know, they also said that the union would know what was happening before it was released to the press. So it went on for weeks.

On June 12th, 2015 the shop stewards were called to a meeting at 1.30pm to be told that the store was sold to Natruim. This was the first I heard of the sale – but the sale of the store was an item on the One O'Clock News.

We were told that our contracts would trans-

fer to the new owners. I asked if the senior management were working for the new company and they said no, they were only on contract as advisors.

I asked where the new owners were and we were told they hadn't come into the store as yet. This set the alarm bells ringing. We hadn't been given the four weeks' consultation that we should have been given. At this time there was no-one running the store.

We were told at 5.15pm that the store was closing at 5.30pm and there was a staff meeting at the main staircase.

Then we heard our fate. The shop was closing and our jobs were gone. It was well set up, that particular Friday we had the least amount of staff working than what was the norm.

My son worked in Clerys and I phoned him as he finished at 4.30pm to tell him his job was gone. There were many families who had more than one person working in the store.

As you can imagine everyone was upset, some in shock and some crying. There was a lot of long-serving staff in Clerys. The assistant shop steward met his wife in Clerys. He had more than 40 years' experience and his wife over 30 years. A total of 460 people lost their jobs.

I never thought that the store would close. I did believe that the company wanted to reduce the number of staff but I did believe that this would be carried out by negotiation.

When OCS took over they wanted to change our contracts. When they changed the way we got paid the amount of compensation offered was a €50 gift voucher for full-time staff and €25 for part-time staff. You had to sign up to this. The majority of staff did so because they were afraid because of their age they wouldn't work again.

Some of the Mandate staff didn't change their contracts and our contracts were breached. No-one wanted to know. At the time I couldn't understand why everything had to be rushed, and the issue wasn't taken to Workplace Relations after all, this was a multi-billion dollar company we were working for, and our contracts were to have been transferred intact. This was not the case.

All the staff in Clerys were the best people. They always put the customer first. We all had our regular customers. The customers knew our names and we knew theirs.

Experience lost

The amount of experience that was lost with the closure of the store, will never be replaced. Someone once said I ran the corner shop because when they asked some customers who was serving, every one of the customers knew my name.

When the other stores closed, I was left to sort out the made-to-measure curtains and blinds orders. I had to become Sherlock Holmes, because I had no details to contact the suppliers and makers to find out where these orders were placed. In the end, all the customers got sorted.

Many people don't know that the staff helped to get the store up and running after the roof fell in. We wore hi-vis jackets, steelcapped boots and hard hats. We worked in very bad conditions, but we loved our jobs and we wanted to get back to work.

I can't believe the store is still closed. When I go to Dublin the first thing I do is to look across at Clerys. Natruim was so anxious to get rid of us and a year later the shop is empty.

Many people used to claim Clerys was haunted – it may be the ghosts are running the business now.

I am still a union member, as is my son. Working as a group, it may be that there can be change for the better in the future.

Without proper contracts, relevant pay and knowing what your payslip is every week, plans can't be made. This helps the economy as well. On short hours, no-one can get a loan for a car or buy a house. I would also like to thank SIPTU, Congress and the Labour Party for the all the support they have given over the past year.

Gordon Brothers walked away with millions while the taxpayer paid our redundancy. The concession holders were left out of pocket. We continue to protest for justice for Clerys workers so what happened to us cannot happen to others in the future.

On June 12th, 2016 we protested outside the store. We are very grateful for all the support we have and the continuing support we are getting from the public. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support.

Water charges suspended for nine months

THE Cabinet has approved the text of the *Water Services Bill* to suspend water charges for nine months as part of the Fine Gael-Fianna Fáil facilitation deal.

It said that within six weeks the Government would bring in legislation to suspend water charges for nine months and possibly longer if required.

It also stated that within eight weeks it would appoint an expert commission to look at the funding model for Irish Water, which will report within five months to a Dáil committee. The committee will then report

back within three months and its recommendation will be considered and voted on within a month by the Dáil.

Mandate's David Gibney said the proposed terms of reference for the 'expert commission' needs to be amended.

He told *Shopfloor*: "The terms of reference for the expert commission are completely out of line with what's necessary in a broad democratic debate about water.

"They exclude any reference to the social implications of domestic water charges, including water poverty or water shut-offs for those who are un-

able to pay – like we're seeing in Rome, France and in the USA. They also omit any real conversation on the best way to conserve water."

He claimed that thousands of Mandate members and retail workers had mobilised against these charges because they could see the real agenda and what will happen if these charges go ahead.

"The original plan for our water services would've seen households pay approximately €600 for their annual water bill – as a starting point. But the question was, who would pay more?"

Mr Gibney explained: "If you charge by the litre, then those who spend most of their time at home pay disproportionately more. That's pensioners, its unemployed people, people with disabilities and underemployed people. So they face a double whammy of having lower incomes – yet, they'd have to pay higher bills.

"The triple whammy is that to buy water-saving devices like energy and water efficient appliances, including dishwashers and washing machines, you have to pay three times the price of an ordinary machine. That's something low paid workers and those who

are underemployed simply cannot afford to do.

"For Mandate members working in the retail sector – such as Dunnes and Tesco – it would've meant 5% of their income would be spent on water. For the non-union retail worker it would've meant 6.1% of their income spent on water – more than twice the internationally recognised water poverty rate of 3%.

"A more economically efficient, environmentally sound and socially productive way to pay for our water is through general taxation, which is progressive and fair."

● Survey reveals workers in unionised workplaces earn **30%** more than counterparts in non-union employments



If you work in retail, it's better to be in a union...

By David Gibney

Mandate communications officer

IF you work in retail, it pays to be in a union.

Results from a survey conducted by Mandate and released in April show that workers in unionised employments in the retail sector earn a staggering 30% more than their counterparts in the non-union sector.

The findings also reveal that union workers in the retail sector tend to have more secure hours and better contracts of employment.

Approximately 1,000 workers from 200 companies completed the survey, 59% from the non-union sector and 41% from the union sector.

Key results from the Retail Workers Survey Ireland show that:

- Retail workers in unionised employments earn an average of €13.03 per hour compared to €10.04 for non-union workers.

- 100% of unionised retail workers have pay scales with service increments, compared to only 14% in the non-union retail sector.

- The average minimum hour contract for retail workers in unionised employments is 24, compared to 16 hours in non-union employments. A difference of approximately €100 per week.

- 16% of workers in the non-union sector say they work under zero-hour contracts, whereas there is no evidence of zero-hour contracts in the unionised retail sector.

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas claimed the results of the survey flag up the importance of being in a trade union.

He told *Shopfloor*: "The retail sector is one of the most precarious industries in Ireland with a high



prevalence of low-pay and insecure work. However, the results of this survey show that if you are in a union, you do better in almost all categories of employment."

Mr Douglas added: "Union workers earn more, they have more secure hours, have better pensions and most importantly, they have a voice at work."

And he pointed out that Mandate members had won more than €36 million in pay increases over the last four years, which is further evidence that workers are better off in a trade union.

John Douglas: 'union workers earn more, have more secure hours, better pensions and, most importantly, they have a voice at work'

Illustration: KoiQuestion (CC BY-SA 2.0)

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If things are getting to you



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Registered charity

John Lewis set to trade in Ireland

JOHN LEWIS, the British department store chain, will enter the Irish retail market later this year in a partnership deal with Arnotts. In October Arnotts will open a John Lewis section spanning two floors of its Henry Street store in Dublin, with about 2,000 sq ft

of retail space. It has struck an exclusive deal with John Lewis to sell 700 products from the UK chain's own-brand home and lifestyle range, including furniture, lighting and kitchenware.

The agreement marks the first major initiative for Arnotts since it was acquired by Selfridges group in November. It will also be the first time that John Lewis products have been available in-store in the Irish market.

Picture: Elliot Brown (CC-B-SA 2.0)

Banded Hours Contract Bill backed by Mandate

A NEW *Banded Hours Contract Bill 2016* has been moved in the Dáil by Deputy David Cullinane which would allow workers more certainty of earnings in the weekly income.

If passed, it would mean workers could apply for a new contract that reflects the hours that they are actually working.

In companies such as Dunnes Stores, workers may have a 15 hour contract for more than a decade but are in reality working 30-35 hours per week.

In many instances, employers use this flexibility in their contracts to control the workers. Some 85% of Dunnes Stores workers say their local managers use these contracts in this way.

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas told *Shopfloor*: "This Bill would go some way towards tackling the enormous exploitation that is currently rife in retail and services sector."

"Ireland has gone from the lowest level of underemployment in the EU15 to now being the second highest with more than 100,000 workers saying they want more hours at work. This has to be challenged now."

Mandate, along with many other trade unions in Ireland, fully supports the *Banded Hour Contracts Bill* and is urging all members to contact their local politicians to demand that this Bill is implemented as a matter of urgency.

Go to www.mandate.ie for more on this issue as it progresses through the Dáil.

M&S workers reject proposals

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

TWO-THIRDS of Mandate members in Marks & Spencer have rejected a series of proposals which would have seen all workers at the company receive a pay increase, adjustments to the sick pay scheme, along with other changes.

The pay proposals would have meant a 2% pay increase backdated to April 2016 with a further 1% increase from October 31, 2016. In exchange, the company was seeking more flexibility from workers, including a reduction to the sick pay scheme.

John Douglas, Mandate General Secretary John Douglas told *Shopfloor*: "Our members in Marks & Spencer clearly value their current conditions of employment and have now rejected the proposals put forward by the company. We will be communicating the results of the ballot to Marks & Spencer management as soon as possible."

Letter to members 'Minimise change' top priority Debenhams Examiner talks

MANDATE has been in talks with the Examiner appointed to oversee business at Debenhams Ireland which operates 10 stores across the Republic.

Union officials held the latest meeting with the Examiner on June 22.

At the meeting Mandate sought crucial background financial information about the company in order to properly assess and respond to demands being made of members working for the troubled retailer.

Mandate Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light said: "The company/Examiner have outlined a number of areas where they are seeking labour cost savings in order to ensure the survival of the Irish business. These include a reduction in full-time workers or their equivalent, pay harmonisation, annual pay agreements and more flexibility."

He added: "It is vital to stress that the list of changes the company are demanding constitutes an opening position and during the course of negotiations it is liable to change."

Mr Light wrote to workers in Debenhams, assuring them that it was the negotiating team's "number one priority" to "minimise any changes which are being sought".

He continued: "Therefore, given the preliminary nature of the negotiations, it is important that you adopt a cautious approach to what has been proposed thus far and rest assured when we are in a position to so, a definitive set of proposals will be brought to you and your fellow members for consideration."

As *Shopfloor* goes to press a further meeting between the parties is to take place on Thursday, June 30.



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Hickeys members accept 3% pay rise

MANDATE members in Hickeys have accepted overwhelmingly a 3% pay increase.

Mandate Official Michael Meegan, who negotiated the deal on behalf of the members, told *Shopfloor*: "Our members in Hickeys have over recent years worked with the company through difficult times.

"We welcome that fact that through constructive engagement with management staff have now been rewarded for their loyalty and hard work."

**GOT A
MANDATE-THEMED
STORY?**

Email *SHOPFLOOR* at news@mandate.ie or post your article to *Shopfloor, Mandate Trade Union, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1*



Boots pay rises should be in keeping with profit levels

MANDATE officials met with management at Boots recently to discuss a range of issues, including a pay increase for all members, outstanding pay increments and the harmonisation of the two pay scales currently in operation.

It is understood further meetings have been scheduled for the coming weeks.

Divisional Organiser Brendan O'Hanlon pointed out that there were a number of issues outstanding from previous agreements, such as dealing with increments and pay scales.

He added: "In addition to these, it is important that a pay increase is achieved in keeping with the profitability levels of the company.

"We will continue to engage with Boots over the coming weeks with a view to achieving an acceptable outcome to these discussions."

Arcadia Group talks on pay

DISCUSSIONS are continuing with the Arcadia Group on pay. The issue had been referred to the Workplace Relations Commission as part of the company/union procedures.

In addition to a pay rise, Mandate is seeking a review of pay structures with a particular focus on the "rest of the country" rates (all areas outside Dublin).

Divisional Organiser Brendan O'Hanlon, who leads discussions on behalf of Mandate said: "We continue to engage with the company on the issue of an increase and review of pay scales and hope to bring these to a successful conclusion in the near future."

'Milestone' move on pay restoration at DAA

IN WHAT Mandate has described as a "significant milestone", Dublin Airport Authority officials have confirmed that a full and permanent restoration of basic pay levels will take place.

This welcome development brings to and end the pay cuts that were taken by staff under the Cost Recovery Agreement from early 2010.

The pay cuts at the time had been worth between 4.7% and 10%, and the pay scales before these cuts will be implemented with effect from January 1, 2016, along with incremental progression since then, plus the 4% in pay increases recommended by the Labour Court in 2015.

The *Cost Recovery Programme* had provided for an Employee Investment Recovery Contribution (ERIC), which allowed for gradual pay restoration once certain profit targets were reached.

Profits

The Dublin Airport Authority recently announced profits of €61 million at the commercial semi-state airport operator for 2015 – up 47% on its €40 million profit in 2014.

Divisional Organiser Brendan O'Hanlon, who leads discussions on behalf of Mandate members

at Dublin Airport, told *Shopfloor*: "The end of the Cost Recovery Programme represents a significant milestone for our members who have had to endure difficult times since the onset of the recession and the knock-on effect on air travel.

"Presently Dublin Airport passenger numbers have increased significantly on both short-haul and intercontinental routes which, in turn, increases customer spend and ancillary revenue."

He added: "Mandate will continue to engage with the Dublin Airport Authority on all outstanding industrial relations issues."



Brendan O'Hanlon: significant increase in passenger numbers

ICTU backing for new runway but warns over bogus self-employment

THE Irish Congress of Trade Unions has welcomed the decision by the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) to construct a new runway at Dublin Airport but warned the project must not become a vehicle for "bogus self-employment" and tax evasion.

ICTU official Fergus Whelan claimed the move announced in early April would boost construction employment and have a positive impact on the wider economy.

He said: "But it should also serve as a vehicle for the creation of high quality, decent jobs and not serve to reinforce the shabby practice of bogus self-employment that is rampant across the construction sector.

"Forcing individual workers to pretend they are independent contractors only benefits bad construction employers. Workers lose their rights and entitlements and the state loses tax revenue." A recent ICTU report highlighted the

scale of the abuse in the construction sector estimating that it had cost the state more than €600 million in tax and PRSI since 2007.

Following its publication the government launched a review of practices in the sector.

Mr Whelan said the Dublin Airport runway project should apply best practice in terms of public procurement to ensure the creation of good quality jobs and uphold the highest standards of employment, in terms of pay and conditions.

"We would urge DAA to put in place systems to ensure there are adequate apprentice numbers engaged on the project, for example, that proper rates of pay are applied and that all agreements are adhered to.

"It would be shameful to see this flagship project become a vehicle for low employment standards, shady tax practices and poor procurement practices."

Picture: Nat Eagleson (CC BY 2.0)



Bar workers are underpaid & undervalued. We want to change that



When major pubs across the country make huge profits, bar workers should also share in their success, argues General Secretary **John Douglas**

LOW WAGES, no breaks and zero-hour contracts: these are just some of the challenges facing bar workers today. While sales and profits for publicans soar, staff in the industry are not getting their fair share.

Seasonally-adjusted figures show that sales in the bar trade are up by over 10%, but many of Ireland's 50,000 bar workers are experiencing poverty pay and rampant exploitation – a far cry from the quality jobs and decent pay they had only a generation ago.

It's difficult to pinpoint exactly how far the conditions of employment in the bar trade have deteriorated since the financial crisis began because of the limited data available.

However, the most recent figures published by the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) and the National Employment Rights Authority (Nera) paint a stark picture, showing:

- Fewer than half of bar workers are in full-time jobs;
- The average bar worker earned €9,924 in 2013;
- An estimated 60% of employers in the industry do not comply with workplace regulations such as the National Minimum Wage and *Protection of Young Persons Act*;
- A total of €289,747 in unpaid wages in the food and drink sector were recovered by Nera in 2014.

Preliminary results from an ongoing survey on conditions in the industry conducted by Mandate campaign barworkers.ie show many bar workers are still exploited, faced with:

- Very low pay;
- No allowances for unsociable hours and Sunday premiums;
- No pay scales and few opportunities for career progression;
- Zero-hour contracts; and

● Split shifts & unfair rostering.

What is perhaps more illustrative are the comments left by bar workers themselves.

One bar worker told us: "I worked in a well-known pub and restaurant in Dublin city for €9 per hour. The bar was extremely busy and I was constantly run off my feet, but during an eight-hour shift I would receive absolutely no break."

Another said: "I work in a late night bar in Dublin city for €10 an hour on a zero-hour contract. I receive my roster one day in advance of the week starting and the roster changes throughout the week."

"It makes it impossible to plan my life and my financial situation is always completely unpredictable. Every month is a scrape to make rent."

In some cases, breaches of the law are blatant and yet workers are afraid to "rock the boat".

Another respondent wrote: "I don't get holiday pay or sick pay so I haven't taken an actual holiday from work in two years, bar a day or two here or there. I can't afford to pay for a holiday and also lose out on two weeks of work."

In the past, trade unions and employers represented by the LVA would sit down and negotiate rates of pay and conditions of employment for all workers in the trade.

It generally meant bar workers had a decent living wage, with compensation for working unsociable hours and an avenue to enforce their entitlements. It also lessened competitive pressure on employers.

However, the LVA walked away from this process several years ago, stripping

workers of their right to have issues settled through collective talks. This has led to poverty wages and insecure hours, all benefiting the employer at the expense of their employees.

When major pubs in Dublin and across the country make millions in profit, bar workers too should be able to share in their success.

The new *Industrial Relations Amendment Act 2015* provides for sectoral agreements which could drastically improve employment conditions for those in the bar trade.

The framework it establishes could see pay, overtime rates, allowances for unsociable hours and much more being set through talks between employers and workers.

That's why this new campaign has been established by and for staff in the industry. Bar workers should be a respected and valued asset for the establishments they work in, particularly given the extent to which Ireland markets the pub to overseas visitors.

If you're out at your local this weekend, tell your local barman or barwoman to visit barworkers.ie and together let's lift the working conditions for all in the trade.



Has it clicked yet?

Ireland needs a dramatic change of direction but does anybody really want it?

By David Gibney
Right2Water/Right2Change Coordinator

THE myriad of problems Ireland is experiencing are well documented. There are literally hundreds of NGOs, trade unions, community groups, political parties and individuals identifying those problems and calling for change, and yet the issues everybody is so critical of have only been exacerbated by successive governments. Why?

Because politics in Ireland is broken and very few people appear to have an appetite to change that.

- Ireland has the second highest prevalence of low pay in the entire OECD – only lagging behind the USA.

- 2,121 children are homeless across the State with more than 70 families losing their homes every single month.

- Irish class sizes are the second highest in the EU with 25 pupils per teacher compared to an average in the EU of 20.

- 10% of people living in Ireland experience food poverty.

- 4,300 people have been waiting on a potentially lifesaving colonoscopy for more than three months, while those with private health insurance will have tests done within 12 days.

- 5,400 people die preventable deaths on the island of Ireland due to economic inequality.

These are only a sample of the crisis we have in our country for headline topics such as health, housing, employment, education, inequality and poverty. Behind every number in every statistic is a person – a family member, a work colleague, a neighbour or a friend – and yet for some reason, something is holding us back from making real change.

Despite knowing that thousands die in Ireland annually as a result of

economic inequality, our last five Budgets by the previous Government were all regressive with the last two increasing the income inequality gap by €1,003 per year alone.

And this excludes water charges which were arguably the most regressive austerity measure since the financial collapse of 2008, before thousands rose up and demanded the scrapping of the unfair charges – something that still hasn't been delivered despite two-thirds of those democratically elected to the Dail being returned on the back of their anti-water charges stance.

Winter mortality

The impact of these budgetary decisions will take some time to filter through, but no doubt they will exacerbate statistics like our excess winter mortality rate – which is already the highest in Europe, including among the colder Scandinavian countries.

This is where more people die during the winter months due to cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease than the other months, and 70% of those deaths occur in the poorest socio-economic groups.

Is this the type of country we want to live in? A country where people die because they don't have sufficient incomes to heat their homes and dress themselves properly?

Imagine there was a campaign that tackled economic inequality and set about a different vision for Irish society. One where your access to healthcare is not dependent on your income. Where housing is a right and not provided solely on the basis that the building of those houses provides a profit for private construction companies. An Ireland that joins the rest of the developed

world in saying workers have a right to be represented by a trade union of their choice – allowing them to address the issues of low pay and low hour contracts which lead to poverty and deprivation. Where natural resources are valued as a public good, not to be exploited by the wealthy few. Where climate change is genuinely tackled and not seen as an opportunity for the private sector to make a quick buck. Or a campaign that sees education as an investment in future generations and democracy as something to be embraced, not exploited.

Prior to the 2016 General Election a number of trade unions including Mandate, the CWU, Unite the Union and OPATSI launched the Right2Change campaign. It laid out a clear pathway for how to tackle some of the major crises facing Ireland. It presented an alternative society based on equality, social justice and real democracy. The campaign presented a fiscal document that would allow for increased public spending of more than €10bn over four years to address the above crises, but it also set out to address the non-financial inequalities that face so many of us.

The plan was simple. Engage trade unions, community groups, civil society groups, political parties and Independent representatives and ask them what type of policies they wanted implemented. We had two conferences to discuss policies and had a submission process leading to the Right2Change Policy Principles of Right2Water, Right2Health, Right2Housing, Right2Sustainable Environment and Right2Education, among other policy areas.

Next up, ask political parties and general election candidates whether they would support those policies

“Despite knowing that thousands die in Ireland annually as a result of economic inequality, our last five Budgets by the previous Government were all regressive with the last two increasing the income inequality gap by €1,003 per year alone”

and work together to implement them if enough were elected and could form a government.

There is no doubt the campaign had an impact in the election but that impact has yet to be fully analysed. However, despite hosting a national demonstration the Saturday before the election which was attended by tens of thousands of people, very little media coverage was afforded to the campaign or its spokespeople. It seemed the media weren't interested in discussing policy areas such as housing, healthcare and water, but were instead focussed on Slab Murphy and his trial. Therein lies one of our key problems.

The genesis of the Right2Change campaign has been to educate and build a broad movement, but for it to be broad some sacrifice is needed. There isn't one person involved in the campaign who thinks all of the policies are perfect. The democratic

manner in how the policies were formulated means that compromise is necessary. But what remains is a campaign with policies that advocate a fundamental shift in direction away from the neo-liberal free-market policies implemented by successive governments over the past 40 years that have resulted in Ireland becoming so unequal and unfair.

If we truly are to build a movement that can achieve positive change, we all have a responsibility to play our part because the opponents of change and the advocates of the status quo are organised and very powerful.

Self-interest

The alternative is to continue to operate in isolation and advocate based on narrow self-interest which has led to the destruction of so many lives over the last number of years.

Politics is broken, of that there is little doubt, but if we don't do anything about it, we are contributing to the disasters of the future.

As the Institute for Public Health in Ireland stated: “There are not natural disasters. There are natural phenomena that can become disasters depending on our set of social arrangements.”

This is also true of social and political disasters.

A movement, by definition, means that collectively we're progressing in a specific direction.

Over the coming weeks the Right2Change Trade Unions will be developing the next phase of the campaign which will most likely include a number of aspirations including the broadening of the campaign to more civil society groups.

To stay up to date go to www.right2change.ie

Call to put TTIP before the people in referendum

ONLINE campaign group Uplift has called for a referendum on TTIP and has warned that the trade deal is a major threat to workers and human rights in Ireland.

Siobhan O'Donoghue, Director of Uplift, told *Shopfloor*: "This is serious. If TTIP and CETA (its sister trade deal between the EU and Canada) are passed into law, every Irish person will be affected in ways never imagined before."

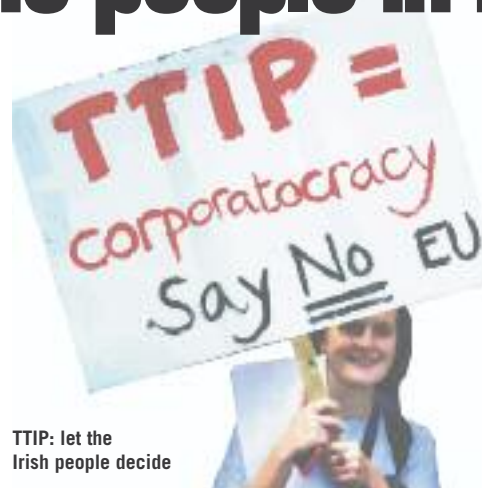
"Corporations will be able to sue our government and food such as hormone-injected beef will flood the Irish market. Irish farming, the environment, and our health will also be in serious jeopardy."

She explained that legal expert Matthias Kelly

has looked into what TTIP would mean for Ireland. "He has concluded that it would be illegal for the government not to have a referendum on certain aspects of the deals. Specifically, the part that allows corporations to side-step our court system and sue the government in private."

Ms O'Donoghue added: "Right now, our government is only listening to big business. They're working overtime to convince us that a referendum isn't needed – probably because they have a very good chance of losing. Under pressure, they've agreed to a Dáil debate on TTIP and CETA."

"This is our chance to put the demand for a



TTIP: let the Irish people decide

referendum front and centre of the mainstream political stage." Uplift claim thousands of people have already joined the Uplift community to stop TTIP and CETA. However, research shows that Irish people know very little about it.

Ms O'Donoghue continued: "That's why we're really stepping up the campaign to raise the alarm about the huge impact TTIP and CETA will have on our daily lives. A referendum on TTIP and CETA would balance the power of corporations and put the decision on the future of our democracy in the hands that matter – the people."

You can sign the Uplift petition at <http://bit.ly/1tt5KVJ>

Mandate's team in Mullingar

SOME 200 delegates headed to Mullingar for the 2016 ICTU Women's Conference on March 3 and 4. And in keeping with centenary commemorations of the Rising, the theme of the conference was *1916 – 2016, celebrating a Century of Women's Struggle and History*. Mandate's delegation at the event – Aileen Morrissey, Joan Gaffney, Doreen Curley and Karen Wall – took time out from the busy schedule of debate at the Bloomfield House Hotel to pose for this snap. For further info on the conference and details about the range of motions discussed, go to www.ictu.ie/equality/2016/03/03/2016-womens-conference



Union Representatives Introductory Course

The Union Representative Introductory Training Course is for new shop stewards/union representatives. The course aims to provide information, skills and knowledge to our shop stewards/union representatives to assist them in their role in the workplace.

COURSE CONTENT:

- Background to Mandate • The role and responsibilities of a Shop Steward/Union Representative • Examining disciplinary/grievance procedures
- Developing negotiating skills • Representing members at local level • Communication skills/solving members' problems
- Organising, Recruitment and Campaigns • Induction presentations.

CERTIFICATION AND PROGRESSION:

Members who successfully complete this course will obtain a Mandate certificate. They may progress to a Union Representative Advanced Course and to other relevant training courses offered by Mandate.

If you are interested in this course, please contact your Mandate official or Mandate's Training Centre at **01-8369699**. Email: mandateotc@mandate.ie



BLOW THE WHISTLE ON THE BAD BOSSES



10 REASONS TO JOIN MANDATE

1. An organising and campaigning union:

Mandate is focused on building an activist base to protect and improve employment conditions. Through better organised workplaces and the power of the collective strength, we will deliver justice for working people.

2. Modern and effective training:

Mandate provides free courses to help you learn new skills, improve existing skills and develop you and your prospective career. We negotiate agreements with employers to pay for attendance at courses and also to provide reasonable time off for employees to attend them.

3. Campaigning for success:

Mandate is a progressive campaigning union fighting on issues that really matter to our members, their families and society in general. Mandate campaigns challenge social injustice at all levels of Irish society.

4. Protection at work:

Highly trained and skilled Mandate officials provide professional advice and assistance, where appropriate, on a variety of employment issues.

5. Safety at work:

Mandate health & safety representatives are trained to minimise the risk of workplace injuries and ensure that employers meet their legal obligations at all times.

6. Better pay:

Year on year, Mandate campaigns for and wins pay rises for its members. Mandate also campaigns to close the widening gender pay gap in Irish society.

7. Legal protection:

Mandate has won significant legal compensation for members who are injured as a result of an accident at work.

8. Mandatory pensions:

Mandate has secured pension schemes with a variety of retail employers and will campaign to secure mandatory pension schemes for all members working in the private sector, particularly those on low wages.

9. You're less likely to be discriminated against:

Mandate has won agreements with employers on respect and dignity at work policies and procedures. Mandate will continue to campaign for tougher laws to make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, disability or sexual orientation.

10. You're less likely to be sacked:

Membership of Mandate protects you and strengthens your voice in your workplace.

Together we're stronger



JOIN MANDATE TRADE UNION ONLINE AT <http://www.mandate.ie/Contact/Join.aspx>

NEWS

5% hike over 2 years agreed

MANDATE members working for hardware and building supplier J McKenna Ltd, in Listowel, Co Kerry, have accepted a deal that will see their salaries increase by 5% over two years.

The salary hike comes in three phases: an immediate 1% rise on acceptance of the deal (April 14, 2016); a 2% increase on the first anniversary of acceptance, and a further 2% rise on the second anniversary of acceptance.

Welcoming the deal, Mandate Industrial Officer Caroline Clifford told *Shopfloor*: "This is the first pay increase our members have had since 2009 and the pay proposal was unanimously accepted by Mandate members."

She added: "McKenna's is a DIY, hardware, household and building supplies merchant that was hit pretty hard during the recession due to bad debts from a number of construction companies."

Car park workers seek pay review

MANDATE members working at the Corrib Car Park in Galway have submitted a claim to management, seeking a pay rise as well as a review of call-out rates.

The car park, located off Eyre Street in the centre of Galway, serves the Corrib Shopping Centre, home to a number of retail outlets, including Debenhams and

Marks & Spencer. Industrial Officer David Miskell, who is Mandate rep for the Galway area, told *Shopfloor*: "It has been some time since any pay increase has been awarded our members working in the car park and it is our belief that a pay review is justified at this time."



Dave Miskell: 'rise justified'

Staff backing for Labour Court recommendation

MANDATE members at Anthony Ryans department store in Galway have voted in favour of a Labour Court recommendation on introducing a staff appraisal system.

The issue has been the subject of local talks as well as two conciliation conferences held at the Workplace Relations Commission.

Mandate Industrial Officer David Miskell said: "This matter has been ongoing for some time now, but this Labour Court recommendation paves the way for the system's introduction with recourse to the industrial relations machinery of the state in the



event of any issues arising."

Meanwhile, a pay claim has been lodged on behalf of all grades employed at Anthony Ryans with the union also seeking a review of contracts and commission.

David Miskell told *Shopfloor*: "It has been some time since any pay increase has been paid to staff and we look forward to constructive engagement from the employer on all aspects of our claim."

An A for Aptitude and a V for Victory...



This year's UCD Trade Union Studies course participants from Mandate: Martin Mahony, Supervalu Blanchardstown (second from right, back row); Mandate North East Division Organiser John Callan (fourth from right, back row); and Muireann Dalton, Dunnes Stores Newtownmountkennedy (front row, right)

Mandate launches new training initiatives...

By Aileen Morrissey

Mandate National Coordinator of Training

AS MORE and more demand is placed on our time, members often find it difficult to attend training in the normal structured three-day training courses.

Yet members are constantly looking for training to help them in their roles as Mandate activists or with their own personnel development.

To try to marry these two situations Mandate is pleased to make available two new training initiatives to help members avail of Mandate's training courses. They are:

1. UNIONlink, Mandate's eLearning training programmes;
2. House Committee 3-hour training courses.

UNIONlink, an eLearning training initiative owned by Mandate, CWU and FSU, is a training initiative unique to trade unions in Ireland.

It is an innovative way for our members to engage in trade union learning that is both user-friendly and interactive. The training can be completed in your own time anywhere using your computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone.

So why UNIONlink? It helps to:

- build the skills, knowledge and confidence of our activists;

- provide the flexibility of eLearning so that members can take control of their own learning;

- develop a blended learning approach;

- support our current training programmes and continuous development; and

- attract members who cannot access current training courses so that they actively engage in their union.

UNIONlink gives members the opportunity to engage in trade union training that is professional, interactive, assists self-development and is accessible and flexible – so that members can take control of their own learning in their own time. Short videos are used which are stimulating and relevant to keep members engaged.

The first course in UNIONlink is called *Your Union and You* and has three modules:

- Understanding trade unions;
- My Union – Mandate; and
- Call to Action.

Your Union and You is an important step in gaining an understanding of trade unions and their relevance.



Bold new initiative: Carol Sheffer and Stevie Fitzpatrick (CWU) Patricia King (ICTU), Marian Geoghegan and Larry Broderick (FSU), along with Aileen Morrissey and John Douglas (Mandate) pictured at the UNIONlink launch

The course also contains reading materials, case studies and graphics. These help to inform members about unions and their relevance in the workplace and society. The course material is mostly our own union materials, so members can relate to it.

There is plenty of opportunity for

members to get to know more about their own union – its structure and website. There is advice and encouragement on how to become more involved and engage to take action.

There are quizzes so that the learner can check their own learning in a fun way. There are tutor and tech-

nical supports for the course participants.

The enthusiasm and interest shown by members who participated in a recent UNIONlink pilot course, *Your Union and You*, has been remarkable. These members were asked to complete a detailed feedback survey for this pilot course and here are some of the results:

Particular thanks go to the members who willingly took part in the pilot UNIONlink programme.

Three of these learners stated:
Mark: "I had no idea how unions have brought about real change in the lives of their members."

Louise: "Knowledge is power, and the more members know the more confident they will be."

Oisin: "It will help members understand that they are the union."

Now UNIONlink eLearning training is available to Mandate members.

If you are interested in registering for this training contact Mandate's training Centre at 01-8369699 or mandateotc@mandate.ie

Another exciting new training initiative is our House Committee 3-hour training course.

This House Committee training is designed to help members in their role as Mandate representatives and to build on their skills and expertise as a House Committee member.

This three-hour course is delivered to House Committee members with a minimum of five in attendance and held at a time that suits you in a location convenient to your workplace.

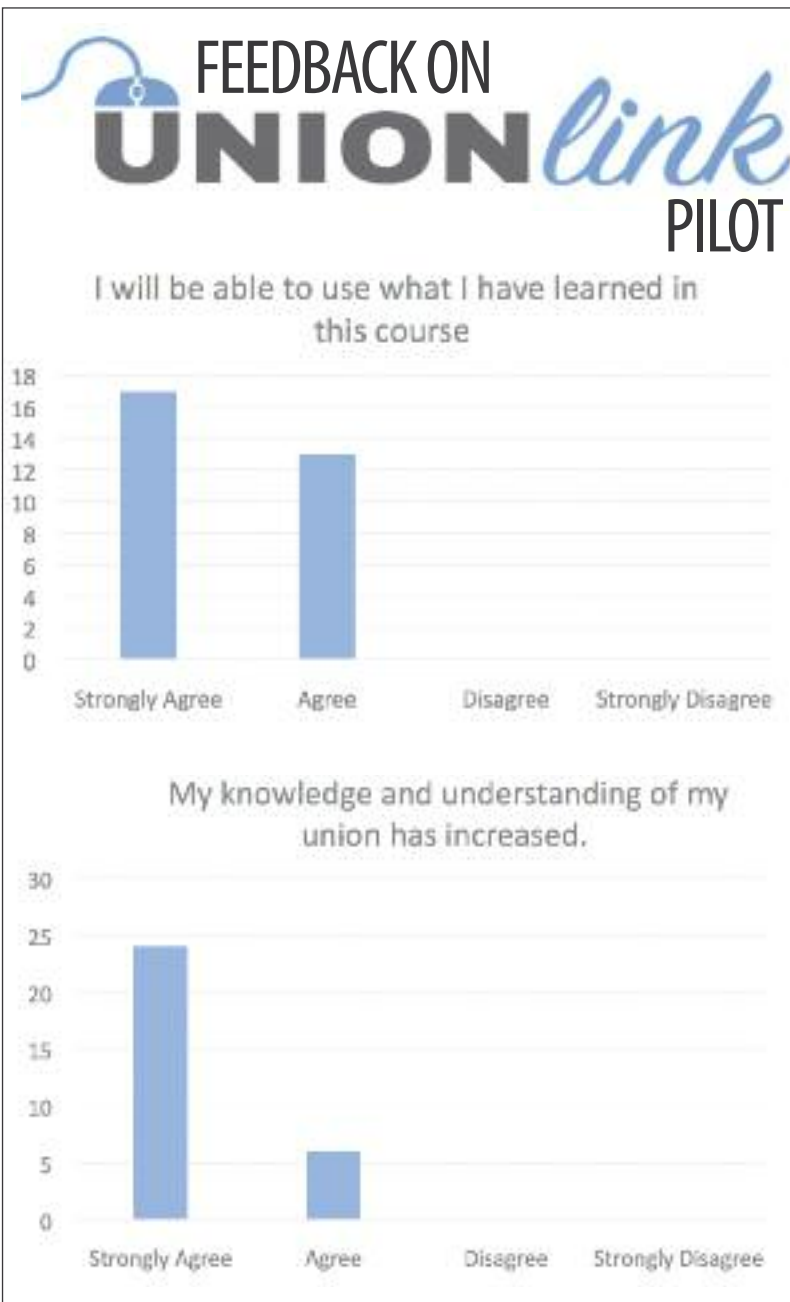
The course content consists of Course Content:

- Background to Mandate Trade Union;
- A stronger Union Workplace;
- Organising Your Workplace;
- Development of effective communications; and
- Building your network and involvement in Mandate Trade Union.

Members interested in registering for this training should contact Mandate's Training Centre at 01-8369699 or mandateotc@mandate.ie



ICTU General Secretary Patricia King speaks at the UNIONlink launch



Gerry Light

Assistant General Secretary
Mandate Trade Union

VIEW *from the* SHOPFLOOR

When a business is not worthy of the name...

QUESTION: When does a business not deserve credibility or the recognition to be called a business?

ANSWER: When it fails to pay a proper dividend to society and its workers and instead uses the taxpayer to mask and subsidise the rising levels of endemic abuse and exploitation that are becoming all too familiar across a broad range of employments and the sectors within which they operate.

Whether it is in the world of aviation, manufacturing, finance, IT or retail, consumers on an increasing basis are, it would appear, more focused and impressed by profit levels and share price performance rather than seeking to challenge the employment practices and the degree to which many of these so-called blue chip corporate success stories contribute to the broader society in which they are operating and thriving.

Of late some of the leaders of these companies have taken to commenting on how other businesses should handle their industrial relations, particularly at times of worker unrest. They have even gone so far as to suggest how the State should operate its vital public services.

Worryingly these types of intervention have been met with significant approval by sections of society who even go so far as to suggest that the CEOs in question would be perfect to run certain Government departments. In fact some go further by demanding that they should be given control of running the country itself.

Before we get totally engrossed in this populist, unqualified cheerleading, it is important to understand the extent to which fairness and ethical standards are practised in the businesses of some of these so-called new champions of Irish society. In conducting this assessment there are a number of key areas to be considered.

There is no reason why a business should not be forced to disclose the level of profits it generates in the country in which it operates. Far too often these profits are hidden behind the veil of corporate accounts thus denying the State, workers, trade unions, the media and the general public a valuable insight into this information.

Much discussion has taken place for far too long about the amount of corporate taxes being paid. Instead of achieving our stated objective of a 12.5% take, it is now accepted that the average return is somewhere in the region of 5% – with the US Bureau of Economic Analysis stating that US subsidiaries operating in Ireland pay as low as 2.2%.

When it comes to employment practices many of these successful businesses are found to be sadly wanting.

In a lot of cases they openly frustrate workers in their efforts to fully vindicate their constitutional rights to not only be a member of but also to be formally represented by a trade union. Contracts of employment are becoming more short term and precarious in nature with many jobs being handed out to unscrupulous employment agencies to operate.

Disgraceful truth

A recent report by Unite not surprisingly found that Ireland is a low wage economy and compared to our peer group in Europe Irish wages fall well below average. Furthermore the report found that the retail sector is “ultra-low paid”. The disgraceful truth of the matter is that many of these low wages are being paid by hugely profitable indigenous and multi-national retail operations.

To compound the insult even further thousands of retail workers in these businesses must out of desperation turn to the State for welfare support in order that they can supplement their earnings to maintain basic living standards.

In simple terms the State and the Irish taxpayer is helping to mask the prevalence of low pay by allowing those companies who can afford to pay decent wages to get away with it to the ultimate benefit of their wealthy owners, senior management and shareholders.

These are the basic questions and standards that we must hold all businesses and their leaders accountable to. A business is not worthy of the name if for its existence it depends on practices which result in it not making a full and appropriate contribution to its workers and society.

Neither can they be allowed to rip off the taxpayer and use the State in the form of welfare transfers to sustain and hide the deplorable terms and conditions of their workers. Most of all they must not be allowed to take advantage of those most in need in order to exploit them even further.

It is at times like this that we should remind ourselves and practise where possible the values of the Fair Shop concept which calls on us all to “spend your money where workers count”. By individually doing a little it means that together we can achieve a lot.



INTERNATIONAL



Picture: Hakan Dahlström (CC BY 2.0)

IKEA workers urged: ‘Stand with Stoughton’

EMPLOYEES at the Goods-Flow-In department at the IKEA store in Stoughton, Massachusetts, want to join a union and global union UNI has called on IKEA workers across world to support them in their efforts.

Three times they have demonstrated publicly their strong desire to be represented by the UFCW, but IKEA USA refuses to recognise the UFCW as their representative without an election.

IKEA management had assured UNI and the UFCW as well as the workers in Stoughton that IKEA’s own “co-worker principles” would be upheld during the election and guaranteed that “co-workers will be able to enjoy a healthy environment to participate in the process and freely exercise their right to vote in the union election.”

The chain’s US management had also given assurances to engage constructively with the union should co-workers vote for representation by the UFCW.

But, according to the UNI IKEA Global Union Alliance, IKEA USA is waging what it termed a “coordinated and explicit misinformation campaign” in the run-up to the election.

It is understood workers are being forced to sit through up to two-hour long meetings during which management deliver scare stories about the loss of existing benefits and pay, framing the election as a choice between the company and the union.

IKEA USA drafted in workers from other stores to cover for Stoughton workers being pulled off the floor to attend these meetings.

Management continues to refuse to engage with UFCW and continues to misinform and scare workers. Managers answer questions by workers about the union rather than letting the union talk to workers directly.

On June 15, UNI Global Union informed IKEA global management that it would no longer engage in any exchanges with US management until the company “explicitly and publicly corrects its wrongdoing”.

Anti-union

And in a press statement UNI placed the blame firmly on local management: “UNI believes that IKEA Global management has acted in good faith. Along with UNI and the UFCW, and most importantly the workers at IKEA Stoughton, IKEA Global management has been misled by IKEA USA which has chosen to go down the anti-union path following the discredited Walmart model of fighting unions.

“IKEA Global must not allow its reputation to be tarnished and must step in and instigate change to ensure this growing anti-union culture is not allowed to fester.”

UNI IKEA Global Union Alliance has called for IKEA workers across the world to send their support. Check out www.facebook.com/UnionAllianceIKEA and share.



Some of the Stoughton IKEA workers pictured during their November 2015 stoppage

Picture: UNI Global



Newly-elected President of Mandate, John O'Donnell, M&S Cork, with outgoing President, Joan Gaffney, Brown Thomas, Dublin



FLASHBACK BDC 2016 IN PICTURES







Women of 1916 fundraiser raises €2,300 for Colombia

A FUND-RAISING walking tour, titled ‘Trade Union Women involved in 1916’ was held on the evening of May 26 in aid of a training initiative in Colombia.

Colombia has now reached an important moment in its history, and is close to the signing of a peace agreement between the government and the guerrilla group FARC-EP.

This is the result of a more than three years of negotiations in Havana, Cuba, during which time a number of landmark agreements have been brokered against a backdrop of difficulties and disagreements.

Lasting peace

However, the Colombian people do not know about the details of specific developments in the peace process and the importance of civil society participation in building a stable and lasting peace.

The information that citizens receive is determined by a mass media controlled by those who support the war, which has misinformed and generated uncertainty and sewed confusion among ordinary Colombians.

For this reason, the National Association for Solidarity Assistance (ANDAS), a human rights organisation that works with the victims of the conflict for the recovery of their rights, decided to initiate an information campaign about the development of the peace negotiations in Havana.

To do so, they are carrying out training activities with victims’ groups, school students and the inhabitants of different neighbourhoods in cities



Historians Dr Mary McAuliffe and Liz Gillis were tour guides on the fund-raising event

across Colombia.

To support these training activities they need to create educational materials, such as fact sheets, infographics and eventually a video that will make participants aware of the specific agreements that have come out of the peace negotiations in Havana.

The campaign seeks to increase an understanding of the peace agreements among victims of the conflict and in local communities that take

part in the training. It is also hoped the initiative will boost the commitment of Colombians to build on peace after the signing of a final agreement.

The campaign also seeks to make visible the problems that communities face so that the government includes these among issues to be discussed with victims and other social sectors impacted by Colombia’s socio-economic difficulties.

Having met ‘The Mothers of Soacha’

in their kitchens in Colombia and having heard of their desperate need for funding for this local training programme Mandate National Coordinator of Training Aileen Morrissey arranged the fund-raising event which was a sell-out.

She told *Shopfloor*: “More than 30 women took part in the walk with tour guides, historians Dr Mary McAuliffe and Liz Gillis, ensuring that the women of 2016 realised the very im-

portant roles that the women of 1916 played in gaining our independence.

“The women on the walking tour of Dublin had a real connect to the plight of the women in the neighbourhoods of Colombia.”

The fund-raising walk raised more than €2,300 which will help with the production of educational materials and the development of the training activities within local communities in Colombia.

SHOP STEWARDS TRAINING PROGRAMME

Course Title	Course Dates	Duration	Location
Trade Union Representative QQI Level 5	September 5/6/7	3 days	OTC Dublin
Trade Union Representative QQI Level 5	September 12/13/14	3 days	Waterford
Union Representative Introductory	September 19/20/21	3 days	OTC Dublin
Safety Representation for Elected Reps Level 5	September 26/27/28/29/30	5 days	OTC Dublin
Union Representative Advanced Senior	October 3/4/5	3 days	OTC Dublin
Union Representative Introductory	October 10/11/12	3 days	OTC Dublin
Training Development 1	October 17/18/19/20/ 21	5 days	OTC Dublin
Trade Union Representative QQI Level 5	October 17/18/19	3 days	OTC Dublin
Union Representative Advanced Senior	November 7/8/9	3 days	Galway
Trade Union Representative QQI Level 5	November 14/15/16	3 days	OTC Dublin

If you are interested in attending any of these courses, please contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Organising & Training Centre on 01-8369699.

Democracy demands an end of water charges & Irish Water

MORE than 98 TDs campaigned for the end of water charges ahead of the recent election and were elected on that basis. If Ireland had a fully functioning democracy, water charges would already be gone – along with Irish Water.

In fact, they would never have been introduced in the first place considering the Labour Party campaigned against them ahead of the 2011 election.

For two years now water charges have been the biggest issue with the electorate, but have been largely ignored by the mainstream media.

The Right2Water campaign hosted seven of the largest demonstrations in the history of the State receiving tokenistic coverage. The campaign has tried to have a real conversation about our country's water policy but almost everyone refused to have that honest debate.

In the Oireachtas, the Government guillotined the legislation in relation to water charges and Irish Water, refusing to debate the policy. This in itself shows the anti-democratic nature of our national parliament.

In February 2016, Right2Water flew Maude Barlow, National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, co-founder of the Blue Planet Project and the world's leading expert on water policies, to Ireland.

Hysterics

She is a climate change and conservation activist and has written 17 books, including *Blue Gold*, *Blue Covenant* and *Blue Future*, all about the water industry. Not one media outlet felt she deserved to be interviewed on water as a policy.

Now we hear hysterics from misinformed politicians, right-wing economists, media presenters, columnists and other contributors about how we need to have water charges. That's simply not true. Water charges are economically inefficient, environmentally unsound and socially destructive.

All of the international evidence shows that water charges do not reduce consumption levels. Irish people use 20% less water than those in the UK, where water charges are already in place.

A SIPTU report from 2011 stated: "...in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands it has been found that metering each home makes little difference to the amount of water used by families. Researchers have found that while consumption dropped initially following the installation of meters, after a relatively short time this was more or less reversed with families returning to the pre-metered level of consumption."

It is estimated that Irish Water would be spending €2.6 billion on installing, maintaining, administering and replacing water meters over the next five years without any conservation benefit. In Right2Water, we believe that €2.6bn would be better spent on fixing the leaks and upgrading the infrastructure. We also believe that households should be incentivised to purchase water conservation devices.

Having said that, this policy was



Picture: Andrew Beeston (CC BY 2.0)

never about conservation. It was always about privatisation.

If it wasn't, then why wouldn't the government offer a constitutional referendum to enshrine ownership in the hands of the public? That could have made the issue 'go away', but they stubbornly refused and instead sacrificed 50% of their TDs – with the Labour Party losing 80% of their seats. Furthermore, the past two gov-

ernments reduced funding for our water services by 65% – directly leading to leaks. How is that being conservation-conscious?

The inconvenient truth is that water is now the most profitable industry in the world outside of financial services. In 2013, in Britain, private water companies made profits of €2.81bn and paid €2.55bn to shareholders while paying only

€101m in taxes. Seven water companies paid no corporation tax at all.

The dividends paid out to UK water companies are double that of your average non-financial company. As a result, there is almost no retained profit which is usually used to upgrade infrastructure.

More than half of all water companies in the UK are owned by private equity consortiums – a group of High

Net Worth Individuals who pool their money to strip profits from any industry they can get their hands on. The impact is that for every £100 spent on a water bill in the UK, between £20 and £30 goes directly to the companies rather than the water system.

Then there are the social implications. The installation of meters and the commodification of water inevitably leads to water poverty. Ireland is the only country in the EU that does not have water poverty – and that's how it should stay.

In the UK, parts of France, throughout Rome and in the US in cities such as Detroit, tens of thousands of families have had their water shut off for simply being unable to pay their bills.

The Detroit Water Brigade attended the Right2Water demonstration on December 10th 2014 and explained how tens of thousands of families are getting by with donations

“The inconvenient truth is that water is now the most profitable industry in the world outside of financial services. In 2013, in Britain, private water companies made profits of €2.81bn and paid €2.55bn to shareholders while paying only €101m in taxes. Seven water companies paid no corporation tax at all”

of water from neighbours. If you can't pay your water bill and your water is shut off, the State can take any dependents – including children – off you. Your home automatically becomes condemnable. This is not the future we want for our country.

While the EU estimates that domestic households only use 10% of all water – with commercial companies and agriculture using 90% – the Government's policy was to make households pay up to 78% of the costs. In the year Irish Water was to begin charging households, the original plan was to raise more than €300 million, and in Budget 2015, the Irish Government gave a €405 million tax break to the top 17% of earners. That's not a coincidence.

While politicians and journalists were ignoring the debate being had in community centres, pubs and on the streets across the country, people were educating themselves and making the informed decision to vote out people who were in favour of water charges. Their democratic will should be vindicated by scrapping charges now and abolishing Irish Water. That's the democratic will of the people.

Equality rights have disappeared into the bowels of workplace relations, but why?



Niall Crowley

THE website should be a good starting point. You have to work hard but you will finally see, up there in the header, a small reference to equality legislation. Never mind, press on. Let's have a look at what the body has responsibility for.

Well yes, it does say that it assumes the roles and functions of the former Equality Tribunal. Still the list of eight different responsibilities makes no reference to equality legislation. Where to now? There is a little box asking 'What you Would like to Do Today?' Quirky for sure.

You get a choice of nine activities. Not a mention of equality, but yes there is a mention of 'employment rights' so let's give that a go. On that page you'll find a sidebar with 21 options. There it is – 'employment equality'. Keep looking and you'll find 'equal status', whatever that might mean.

But still, persistence pays and if you chase around the Workplace Relations Commission website you could find out about making a complaint under the *Employment Equality Acts*, which prohibit discrimination in the workplace, and under the *Equal Status Acts*, which prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, education and accommodation.

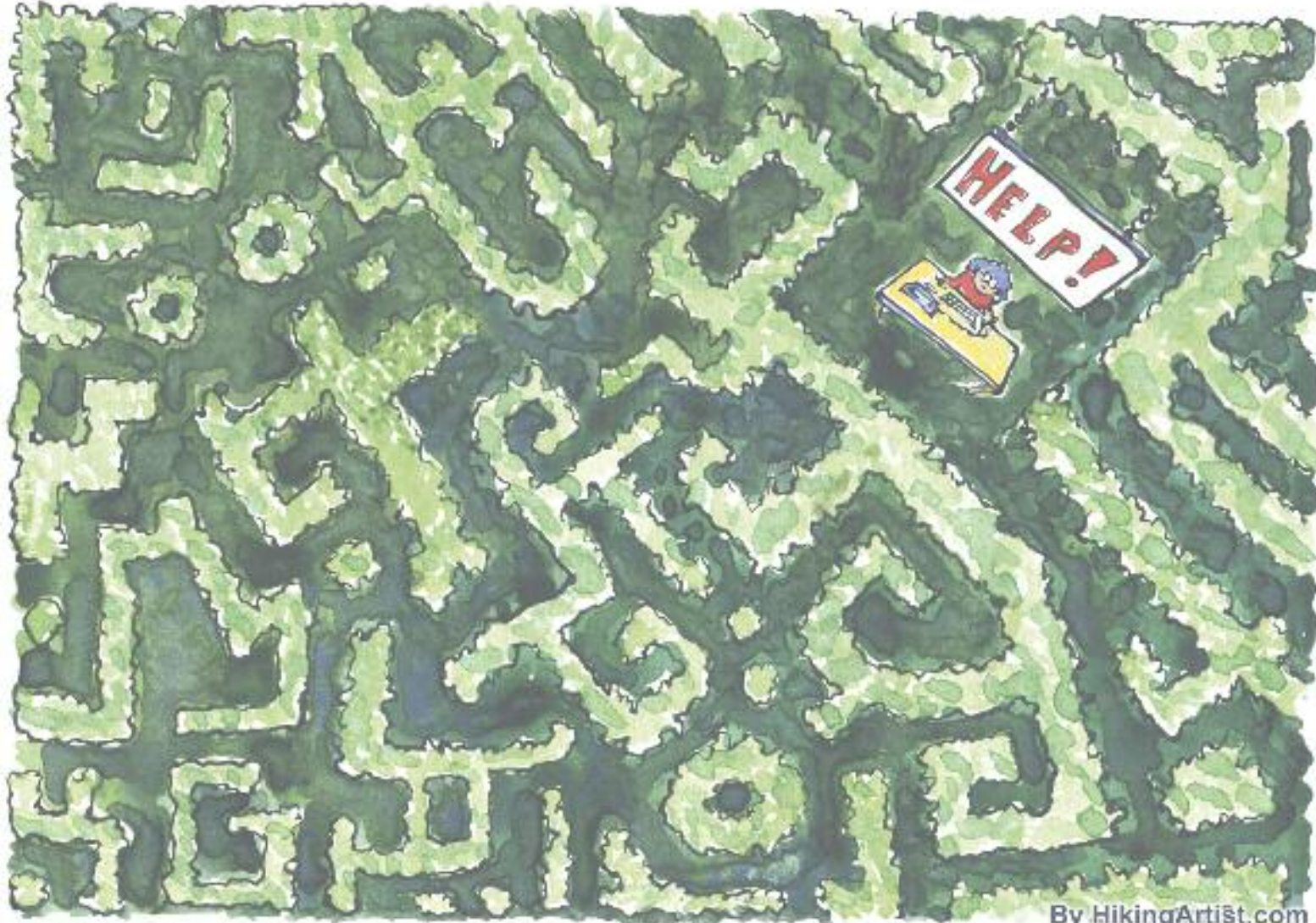
Shameful

This is shameful. When the Equality Tribunal was merged into this new body, we were promised a "world class" service by Minister Richard Bruton. Aren't we always? Far from world class, far even from service, equality rights have disappeared into the bowels of workplace relations.

The Workplace Relations Commission is in the news a lot, especially recently. Still you would never guess from its public pronouncements that it is responsible for hearing, mediating, and deciding the broad range of discrimination cases under the *Equal Status Acts* and under the *Employment Equality Acts* on the nine grounds of gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. The opposite actually.

Kieran Mulvey, the Director General, offered little clarity in a recent series of interviews about the new right to non-discrimination accorded to those in receipt of rental supplement seeking to rent accommoda-

Illustration: Frits Ahefeldt-Laurvig (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)/HikingArtist.com



By HikingArtist.com



Kieran Mulvey: offered little clarity



Richard Bruton: 'world class' service promise



Workplace Relations Commission website

tion. He seemed surprised about this new provision of the *Equal Status Act*, although it has been in place since January of this year. He was less than enthusiastic and brushed the whole matter away.

He said the WRC was not the appropriate body to deal with this issue because it was not a workplace issue. He bemoaned how anyone could expect the WRC to take on such an issue given that they were up to their necks in industrial disputes and had 5,000 employment rights cases to be adjudicated on. He dismissed that the Workplace Relations Commission had any capacity to deal with complaints on this issue.

It got worse. He queried, how could they know what evidence was required, how could they establish such evidence, and how could they know whether the complaint was vexatious or real? He seemed to have no idea that his staff are, or should be, dealing with similar cases every day under the *Equal Status Acts*.

It is hard to see any complainants queuing up outside the Workplace Relations Commission to have their discrimination issues resolved after all that. This needs to change. The equality infrastructure developed since

1999 was hard fought for. It made a significant contribution. It is hard to watch it being slowly dismantled in this almost invisible manner. The Workplace Relations Commission has a Board of 10 members with social partner representations, including strong trade union representation.

Pressures

The Board has to rectify this, even in the context of the many pressures the Workplace Relations Commission is under. If it is not corrected now in the early stages of the existence of the Workplace Relations Commission, it might never be sorted.

The Workplace Relations Commission has to provide reassurance that they are giving cases of discrimination due consideration both in relation to the workplace and to the provision of goods and services, education and accommodation.

This can only be done by establishing a dedicated unit within the WRC to deal with these equality cases and by redesigning the website to give clarity to this role and enhance the accessibility of the Workplace Relations Commission for the diversity of people experiencing discrimination.

ICTU report highlights poor record on childcare

THE Irish Congress of Trade Unions has called for the introduction of new entry-level pay for childcare professionals at the Living Wage rate of €11.50 per hour and for investment in the sector to be brought in line with the 1% of GDP benchmark recommended by UNICEF, from its current level of 0.2%.

This follows the publication in March of a Congress report on the problems facing the childcare sector in Ireland, highlighting how low wages and poor career progression for childcare professionals has resulted in staff turnover rates of over 22%.

Ring-fenced

Along with the introduction of the Living Wage and increased public investment, the Congress report also calls for paid parental leave of six months and an increase in employer PRSI to 13.75% on the portion of salaries above €100,000, with the resulting funds ring-fenced for childcare provision.

The Congress report – *Who Cares: Report on Childcare Costs and Practices* – found that the low public investment in Ireland has contributed to childcare costs that are among the highest in the EU.

Dr Peter Rigney, the report's main author, said: "There have been significant policy failures on childcare that have led us to the worst of both worlds: high cost care provided by some of the lowest paid workers. So-



Peter Rigney: 'significant childcare policy failures'

cially and economically this is unsustainable and will ultimately cost us in the long run."

The report surveyed some 3,700 trade union members to gauge the cost of care across a range of income bands and assess the childcare choices being made by working families across the country.

The survey found that 29% of respondents used family members – especially grandparents – for childcare, while private creches were less popular with lower income families. It found that among those families using private care, costs ranged between €1,000 and €1,499 per month.

The report also highlighted Ireland's poor record in comparison to



childcare provision in other EU member states, with Ireland's spend of 0.2% of GDP among the lowest and nowhere near the UNICEF recommended rate of 1% of GDP, per annum.

Dr Rigney added: "The introduction of the Living Wage for childcare workers combined with increased public investment will help transform the sector into one that is accessible, affordable and of high quality. At the moment it meets none of those standards."

"In addition, we need to see a detailed roadmap on paid parental leave to bring us to the target of six months, which will help alleviate a huge cost burden for working families."

Happy Des!

DESSIE Finnegan celebrates reaching a half century at his recent 50th birthday bash in Dundalk.

Veteran activist Dessie is retiring from the NEC at this year's Biennial Delegate Conference in Galway after serving more than 20 years on the committee and having notched up some 30 years of involvement with Mandate.

In fact, Des is something of a flagbearer for the union and is known locally in Dundalk as 'Mr Mandate'.

He has also been Local Council secretary, vice-chair and treasurer. One Mandate source said: "Des is a real trouper – he has always been to the fore in representing Mandate members in Tesco."



My Money My Choice



"I spend my money where workers have a voice"

"I love being able to find Fair Shops on the website"



"A great campaign supporting workers"



www.fairshop.ie

Spend your money where workers count

Galway May Day event marks Rising

MAY DAY, International Labour Day, was celebrated by the Galway Council of Trade Unions with a night of song, sociability and historical discussion, in which retail workers featured prominently.

The focus of the discussion, which took place in the Galway Mechanics Institute, was the 1916 Rising and Trades Council President Mark Lohan kicked things off with a short presentation on Loughrea-born Brendan Donelan.

Donelan, who was employed as a draper's assistant in Camden Street, was only 18 when he was killed in the South Dublin Union during the Rising.

Speaking about the labour dimensions of the Rising in Galway, Dr John Cunningham of NUI Galway described the class antagonisms that underpinned the large mobilisation of Volunteers in the Athenry area, the influence of James Connolly's newspaper, *The Workers' Republic*, which had a considerable circulation in



Panellists at the May Day event on 1916 organised by Galway Trades Council: Sarah-Anne Buckley, Mary Muldowney, John Cunningham, Linda Connolly, Mark Lohan and Tish Gibbons
Picture: Diane Jackson

South Galway, and the attitude of Galway trade unionists of the time towards the republican movement.

One of the most prominent trade unionists in Galway at the time, Luke J. Duffy, a draper's assistant in Moon's, was secretary of the local (Redmondite) National Volunteers. Later Duffy became general secretary of the Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Mandate's predecessor.

The highlight of the evening was the panel discussion on the role of women in revolutionary and radical movements during this period, featuring Prof Linda Connolly (UCC), Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley (NUI Galway), Dr

Mary Muldowney (Stoneybatter & Smithfield People's History Project) and Tish Gibbons (SIPTU).

The speakers addressed the connections between feminist, labour, cultural and republican movements before and after 1916; the marginalisation of radical women in the post-Treaty decades; and efforts to include the story of female engagement with the Irish revolution in the historical narrative and to have it reflected in commemorations.

The event was held in association with the Irish Centre for the Histories of Labour and Class at NUI Galway, and was supported by Galway City Council.



Al Helal football team in Gaza

Thanks for helping us reach our goal! – Gaza Kids to Ireland Project

GAZA KIDS TO IRELAND PROJECT along with our friends at Gaza Action Ireland have been fundraising for some time now to bring the children of the Al Helal football team from Gaza to Ireland and we would like to thank those who have supported the project so far.

The money raised from the fundraising will go directly towards flying the team over, providing accommodation and some expenses. It would really mean the world to these children to escape the daily pressures of living in an occupied territory and we really want to make this happen and let them have some happy memories to bring back to Gaza.

On their trip the children will be attending the Shamrock Rovers versus Bohemians match and will also travel to play games and have fun with their peers in Dublin, Limerick, Tipperary and Antrim.

Football is the lifeblood of these children, children who take a risk every day to play on their streets – extraordinary children who need our help.

We recently held an auction in the Teachers Club and a special thank you to Tadgh for all his help. On the night we raised nearly €7,000 when we auctioned a wonderful array of limited edition prints (signed by artists including Robert Ballagh, Jim

Byrne, Felim Egan and Jim Fitzpatrick), Palestinian ceramics, a voucher for Jerusalem Restaurant, a bronze James Connolly bust, a signed Ireland rugby ball, tickets for the PALFEST festival and lots, lots more.

Our auctioneer on the night was Dublin Mid-West TD Gino Kenny, who did a fantastic job. It's never too late to get involved and help to bring the children over in July. If you can help in any way at all, please check out Gaza Action Ireland's web page for further information.

To donate to Gaza Action Ireland and the project go to... <http://gazaactionireland.weebly.com/donate.html>

SKILLS FOR WORK

Interested in a computer training course?



Do you have a desire to improve your communication through computer skills but never got around to it?

Communications through Computers

Starting from scratch this course helps you to use a computer and builds confidence for communicating on-line.

Mandate Trade Union in conjunction with Skills for Work is offering free training. The courses are to encourage members back into learning and training whilst aiming towards a FETAC level 3 Award.

If you are interested in doing a Communications through Computers course, contact:

Mandate Training Centre
Distillery House
Distillery Road
Dublin 3

Phone: **01- 8369699**

Email: **mandateotc@mandate.ie**

Courses are free and open to members who have not achieved Leaving Certificate or who have an out of date Leaving Certificate. You can also achieve a FETAC Level 3 Award. Skills for Work is funded by the Department of Education & Skills.

Picture: European Parliament

Heading for the buffers again...

NOW that we're in recovery and house prices are rising, I suppose it doesn't matter that another financial crisis is coming.

The fact that we're even less prepared to deal with a crash than the last time doesn't matter too much either, because GDP is up and "the fundamentals of the economy are sound".

It's probably irrelevant that the IMF have predicted a financial crisis in their latest *Global Financial Stability Report* and that central bankers across the globe are, to put it colloquially, bricking themselves.

It is likely that the world will face another global financial crisis in the near future partly because many of the problems that led to the 2008 crisis remain unsolved. The fragility of the shadow banking sector, high indebtedness, a lack of structural reform, and the growing weakness of emerging markets is pointing to a crash.

Indeed even the half-hearted attempt at the regulation of financial in-



Stephen Nolan

“The almost complete failure of policymakers to put manners on global finance capital since 2008, and the ongoing use of debt as a model for growth might suggest that any moves to save the global economy from another bust, will be too little, too late... time to stock up on beans”



Nouvelle cuisine: beans on toast

Picture: Steven Lilley (CC BY-SA 2.0)

stitutions since 2008 has shifted some of the riskier financial activities back into the shadow banking sector beyond the scrutiny of a supposedly stronger regulatory framework.

While massive monetary policy stimulus has rekindled some weak growth, the cheap money created by low interest rates and quantitative easing aimed at rescuing developed economies has inflated asset bubbles, flooded out into emerging markets,

and encouraged states and private corporations to borrow and load up on debt. Corporate debt levels in emerging markets alone have quadrupled between 2003 and 2014. And, if I remember correctly, massive levels of debt had something to do with the last crisis.

All eyes of course look to China which helped prevent a second Great Depression in 2008 only by making credit so cheap it set off a huge prop-

erty boom resulting in empty office blocks and ghost cities. Now it's trying to manage a slowdown while at the same time attempting to deflate the massive credit bubble it created.

The Bank for International Settlements has warned that Chinese credit growth since 2008 represents one of the largest expansions in modern financial history. It is likely that China will respond by devaluing its currency flooding the global economy with cheap goods leading to deflation in the west. The renowned economist Steve Keen who predicted the crash of 2008 when everyone else was talking about a 'soft landing' has been pointing to the next one and again, its unlikely to be soft.

The almost complete failure of policymakers to put manners on global finance capital since 2008, and the ongoing use of debt as a model for growth might suggest that any moves to save the global economy from another bust, will be too little, too late.

It's time to stock up on beans.

HEALTH SAFETY REPRESENTATION

This course is certified by QQI and offers a Level 5 qualification. The course is approved by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions as training for safety representatives.



AIM OF THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and competence to enable the learner to promote and maintain safety and health in the workplace and represent workers on health and safety issues.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Learners on completion will:

- Understand the concepts of the promotion of safety, health and welfare in the workplace
- Be familiar with the core health and safety legislation
- Describe the role, the rights and the function of the Safety Representative
- Understand the duties of employers and the role of the HSA
- Understand the importance of the safety statement, hazard identification and risk assessment
- Explain the fire hazards, their sources and the requirement for the fire preventions controls
- Understand the communication process and effective participation at meetings
- Outline factors of accident causation, describe prevention strategies and policies

WHO IS THE COURSE FOR?

The course is designed for newly-appointed Safety Representatives in the workplace. It will be appropriate for those already in the role or those interested in taking on the role who may not have had adequate training. The course will also benefit more experienced reps who may want a refresher course.

DATES

Feb 22 - 26

VENUES

SIPTU COLLEGE
563 Sth Circular Rd,
Kilmainham

Mar 7 - 11

MANDATE OTC
Distillery Rd, Dublin 3

Apr 4 - 8

SIPTU
Connolly Hall,
Lapps Quay, Cork

Apr 8 - 22

IMPACT
Roxborough Rd, Limerick

May 11, 12,
18 and 25
June 1

SIPTU
Forster Centre,
Forster St, Galway

June 13 - 17

IMPACT
Ice House,
Fish Quay, Sligo

Sept 5 - 9

SIPTU
Connolly Hall,
Summerhill, Waterford

Sept 26 - 30

MANDATE
OTC Distillery Rd, Dublin 3

Oct 11, 12, 13
25 and 26

IMPACT
Fr. Matthew St, Cork

Nov 7 - 11

SIPTU
Church St,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly



For further info and booking log on to www.ictu.ie/unionlearning and search courses for HS or contact Pauline Corr at (01) 889 7707 email pauline.corr@ictu.ie

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By Fearghal Geraghty
Youth Connect

YOUTH CONNECT'S third annual Youth4DecentWork Short Film Awards Show was held at the Savoy Theatre on March 3. With nearly a thousand students registered and 98 films submitted, this year's award show proved to be a huge success.

Schools from all over the country came to showcase their support and



Sparky: stills from *Sillan*, left and below, which took the coveted Best Overall Video award. The production team from Patrician High School won an all-expenses paid trip to New York for their efforts

'*Sillan*' from Patrician High School, Monaghan, won the Best Overall Video as well as an all-expenses paid trip to New York.

'*CAM Productions*' from St Aloysius College, Cork, win the Best Acting Category; '*Triple S B*' from Patrician Secondary School, Kildare, win the Most Original Category; and '*In Focus*' from St Joseph's Secondary School, Mayo, win the Best Interpretation Category.

Two Highly Commended Certificates were also given – '*Team Spud*' from Clonkeen College, Dublin, and '*Vision Quest*' from Moate Community School, Westmeath, for the high standard of their respective films.

Meanwhile, the People's Choice Award went to '*What if..?*' from Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont, Dublin, with 33% of the votes.

This was a highly successful event with representatives from across both the performing arts and trade union sectors in attendance to watch the country's next generation showcase both their knowledge of rights within the workplace as well their artistic ability in this unique competition.

For more information on the Youth Connect or the Youth4DecentWork Awards, you can go on their website at www.Youth-Connect.ie.

soak up that red carpet feeling, with actor Aonghus Og McAnally taking over hosting duty.

Everyone was truly blown away by the standard of films in this year's competition, for which the theme was *Health & Safety in the Workplace*.



Some 32 teams were shortlisted for the People's Choice Award while 20 of those films were in the running for Best Overall Film. Of those 20 films we had three sub-categories – Best Acting, Best Interpretation & Most Original for which they were respectively divided into.



Trade Union Representation (QQ1 Level 5)

This course for shop stewards/union representatives who have completed the introductory course or who have relevant experience.

Course content:

- Understanding Mandate's structures
- Overview of Mandate's rules
- Industrial Relations institutions and mechanisms
- Mandate's Organising Model
- Negotiations & Collective Bargaining
- Understanding Equality and Diversity
- Developing induction presentation skills
- Introduction to Employment Law
- Identifying issues and using procedures

Certification and Progression: Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate certificate. They may progress to the QQI Level 5 Certificate in Trade Union studies or other relevant training courses offered by Mandate.

If you are interested in this course, please contact your Mandate official or Mandate's Training Centre at **01-8369699**. Email: mandateotc@mandate.ie



House Committee Training Course

This House Committee course is designed to assist members in their role as Mandate Trade Union representatives and to build on their skills and expertise as a House Committee member. This three-hour course is delivered to House Committee members with a minimum of five in attendance and held at a time that suits you in a location convenient to your workplace.

Course Content:

- Background to Mandate Trade Union.
- A stronger union workplace.
- Organising your workplace.
- Development of effective communications.
- Building your network and involvement in Mandate Trade Union.

If you are interested in this training please contact the training centre at:

**Mandate Organising and Training Centre,
Distillery House, Distillery Road, Dublin 3**
Tel: (01) 836 9699 Email: mandateotc@mandate.ie



Michael Taft

EARLIER this year, Tesco workers voted overwhelmingly for industrial action to resist the proposed wage cuts that management is demanding and the issue is now at the Workplace Relation Commission.

It is timely to take a step back and look at wages that not only Tesco employees but all retail workers earn. And when you sneak that peek you will find that retail workers in Ireland are some of the poorest paid in the EU-15. [SEE CHART 1]

According to Eurostat (the baseline figures are from 2012, brought up to 2014 with the Labour Cost Index), Irish retail workers rank 12th in the EU-15. And these wages are well behind European averages.

Irish retail workers would need a 20% increase to reach the EU-15 average.

But when we compare Ireland with our peer group, the comparison deteriorates dramatically.

One peer group are the Northern and Central European economies (NCEE). This is the EU-15 figure excluding the poorer Mediterranean countries (though it's worth noting that Italian retail workers earn more than Irish). In this comparison, Irish retail workers would need a 35% increase in the hourly average wage.

A second peer group is other Small Open



Picture: David, Bergin, Emmett and Elliott (CC BY 2.0)

Some detail on retail

Economies (other SOE). This is a comparison used by the IMF and it refers to economies with small domestic markets and a high reliance on exports, just like Ireland. This category includes Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

In this comparison, Irish retail workers would need a 54% increase in the hourly average wage.

Some may object to this, claiming that if a company is not profitable, it cannot increase wages. This is true enough.

But we are confronted with a problem: the last year we have comparative enterprise data in the retail sector is 2012 – a bottom point in the retail business cycle with the economy still mired in a domestic demand sector. Although profits per employee was about 15% below the EU-15, profits in the foreign-owned sector (such as Tesco) was the highest in the EU-15.

So even with the consumer economy at rock bottom, a substantial part of the retail sector was doing OK.

Of course, this information should be open and transparent – not only for the workers but for society as a whole. Currently, a high number of firms, especially in the retail sector, are not legally required to make public their full financial accounts.

These firms can be branch affiliates of foreign-owned firms (e.g. Tesco, Aldi, Lidl, etc.), private unlimited firms (Dunnes Store is a major example) and a range of firms whose turnover is below a threshold (yet they can employ a significant number of people).

The new government should examine these

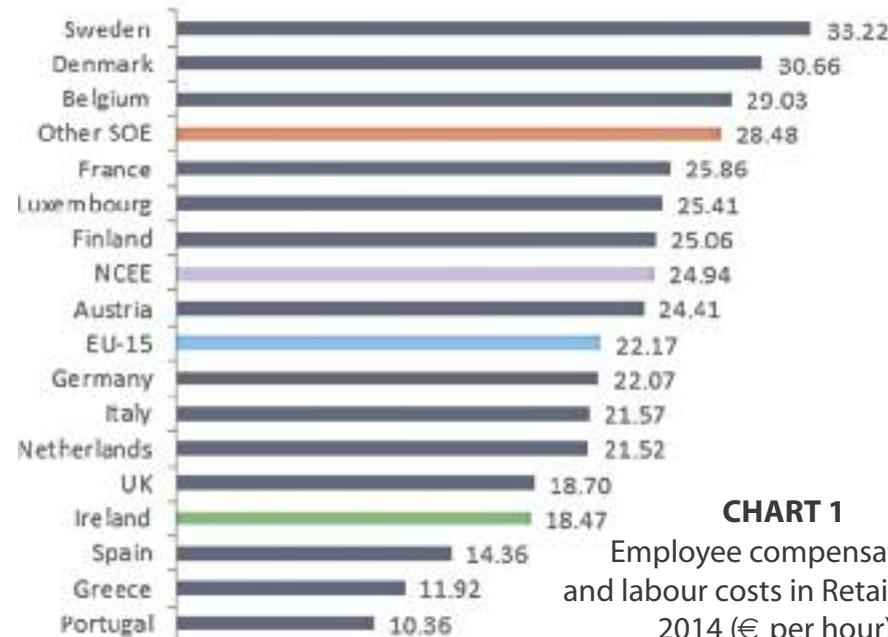


CHART 1
Employee compensation and labour costs in Retail Sector 2014 (€ per hour)

inequitable and secretive provisions.

Nonetheless, recent trends are looking decidedly better. In the last year, Irish retail turnover increased by nearly 3%; in the EU-15 the growth rate was half that.

And with a gross operating rate at the EU-15 average, the Irish retail sector is moving back to, if not already exceeding, European averages.

What can be done to drive up employees' wages? From the Government end, it could strengthen workers' rights – the right to collective bargaining, the right of part-time workers

to extra hours when they become available (this is already an EU Directive, just not one that operates here), legislate for Sunday premium and overtime, etc. All these would help promote wages.

From the workers' perspective, the best thing is to join a union.

Mandate recently published a survey which showed that workers in trade unions fare much better than workers outside unions.

Here are a few headlines from the survey:

- Retail workers in unionised employments earn an average of €13.03 per hour compared to €10.04 for non-union workers.

- 100% of unionised retail workers have pay scales with service increments, compared to only 14% in the non-union retail sector.

- The average minimum hour contract for retail workers in unionized employments is 24, compared to 16 hours in non-union employments; a difference of approximately €100 per week.

- 16% of workers in the non-union sector say they work under zero-hour contracts, whereas there is no evidence of zero-hour contracts in the unionised retail sector.

Those are pretty powerful reasons to join a union. Ultimately, the struggle over workers' living standards is a combination of political action and workplace organisation. The retail sector is no different.

And there is a great need for that combined effort. Dr Micheal Collins, from the Nevin Economic Research Institute, found that 42% of workers in the Wholesale and Retail sector were paid below the Living Wage level.

Many of the women and men who serve you in a shop, supermarket or department store are living in poverty and deprivation.

That is economically inefficient, socially obscene and ultimately resolvable at a political and industrial level.

Victory to the retail workers – to the Tesco workers, to all retail workers: our economic and social prosperity depends on it.

Michael Taft is Research Officer at Unite the Union

SHOPFLOOR | June 2016

€10,000 for au pair in employment judgment

A SPANISH au pair has been awarded €9,229 by the Workplace Relations Commission after the family she worked for was found to have breached employment laws.

The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI), which supported the au pair in taking the case, what it called a "landmark decision".

MRCI Legal Officer Virginija Petrauskaite told *Shopfloor*: "This judgment sends a very clear message: au pairs are workers, and any family employing an au pair must abide by employment laws – including the National Minimum Wage Act.

"The au pair at the centre of this case was paid just €100 a week. Unfortunately, her case is not an exception; in fact we know many au pairs whose treatment was much, much worse. The work done by au pairs and other childcare providers is absolutely essential to families, communities and the economy, and this landmark decision and award is a clear statement that it has value."

The WRC found the family had breached aspects of the *National Minimum Wage Act*, the *Organisation of Working Time Act*, and the *Terms of Employment (Information) Act*, and was ordered to pay a total of €9,229 to the au pair.

It is understood the family have accepted the judgment and paid the award in full.

The au pair who was at the centre of the case commented: "With this judgment I feel respected for my work at

last. That's what through the Migrant Rights Centre and the decision of the Workplace Commission I have been able to obtain: respect and credibility. And it is proof of the important work being done by au pairs and domestic workers to get our rights."

Welcoming the judgment, Congress Equality Officer David Joyce said: "Congress was instrumental in drawing up a Code of Practice covering au pair workers here in Ireland, which sought to ensure they were removed from the shadow economy and recognise that they have rights like any other workers."

"The Code of Practice led in 2014 to the Irish government formally ratifying the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention which clearly stipulates that ILO member states should 'take measures to ensure that domestic workers enjoy minimum wage coverage, where such coverage exists'."

He added: "There is no grey area here and those recruiting au pairs to work here must comply with the law and make them fully aware of their rights and entitlements."



David Joyce: 'no grey area'

€30k payout for gender discrimination



Picture: James Cridland (CC BY 2.0)

A MEMBER of Mandate who works in a North Dublin pub has been awarded just under €30,000 for discrimination on the grounds of gender.

Mandate, acting on her behalf, successfully argued at the Equality Tribunal that bar worker had been paid less than her male colleagues despite carrying out work of equal value.

The pub owners had insisted that her male colleagues had held more responsibility – an assertion that was rejected by the Equality Officer at the Tribunal.

Welcoming the tribunal outcome, Mandate Industrial Officer David Miskell said it was vital that pay differentials were looked at closely and challenged when necessary.

Both the name of the claimant and the company cannot be disclosed for legal reasons.

Mandate, as the union for bar workers, has recently launched a campaign to promote employment rights and trade union membership in the licenced trade. Full details can be found on www.barworkers.ie

Selected statistics from recent MRCI survey of 554 au pairs...

- 48% were Brazilian, 28% were Spanish
- 98% female
- More au pairs were aged 31 – 35 (15%) than aged 18 – 20 (10.5%)
- 43% EU citizens, 43% on student visas
- 37.2% had no contract at all, 40% verbal contract only – so almost 80% have no written contract
- 20% (1 in 5) paid a fee to get the job
- 37.6% were expected to work more than was originally agreed
- 37% work 6-8 hours per day, 31% work 8-10 hours per day.
- 30.7% asked to work when they were sick
- 58% are paid €120 or less per week
- 1 in 10 do not have their own bedroom
- 1 in 5 are expected to be on call at night
- More than 1 in 5 (22%) do not feel comfortable in the house

Pay review sought at O'Toole's SuperValu

MANDATE is seeking a review of pay and hours for members working at O'Toole's SuperValu in Tuam.

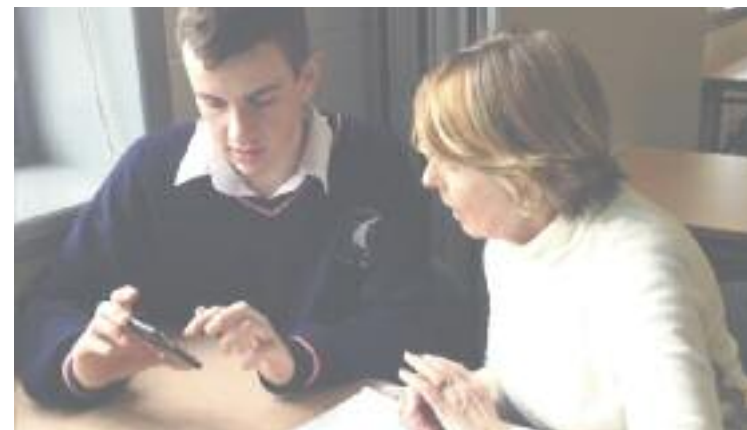
In recent years staff agreed to cuts in pay in response to a downturn in trade. David Miskell, Mandate Rep for Galway, told *Shopfloor*: "Our members have worked with management in response to challenging trading conditions in the past – we now believe that it is appropriate to seek full restoration of these cuts."

"We're seeking a meeting with management and we look forward to constructive engagement on the issues at hand."



121digital training

FREE private lessons for members of Mandate



Dear Mandate member

you or a family member may be interested in this

FREE 121digital training. Each learner chooses their own course content; learns at their own speed; there is no exam. Each learner has their own tutor. Lessons are private. We meet in a group. The 121digital programme engages the young (secondary school students and university undergraduates) as tutors to share their digital skills with adults living and/or working in the local community. Learners bring their own device (laptop /tablet /smartphone) to lessons. 121digital lessons take place in your local secondary schools, IT colleges and universities and also in libraries, community centres and youth centres and are run during the working day (in schools) and in the evenings in other centres.

The 121digital programme has engaged 2,000 volunteers to train 2,000 learners, so far but places are limited – so book early. 121digital training centres maintain a waiting-list of learners for future courses.

121digital was established in 2010 and since 2014 is supported by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), hence our programme is recognised by the Government and is part-funded for its work in the community.

When completing their end-of-course questionnaires, learners report improved communication with family and friends and access to services. They report feeling more safe and secure online and a resulting improved self confidence.

"My (digital device) is my friend, now. I can send emails and attachment. I called my grandson on Skype. I can find information online," they tell us. Months and/or years later learners return with another device (laptop, tablet, or a new smartphone) for another course. Visit the website www.121digital.ie for more information and call your local 121digital training centre to book.

Regards

Fintan Mulligan
121digital
fintan.mulligan@121digital.ie
Tel: 086 8199 752

Childminding Ireland four on indefinite strike action

FOUR IMPACT members in Childminding Ireland have been on strike since Tuesday, June 7 in a dispute over compulsory redundancies.

A protest in support of the four workers was held outside the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Mespil Road, in Dublin, on Tuesday June 21.

Childminding Ireland receives substantial state funding and is not in financial difficulty, yet its workers were issued with redundancy notices and told they'd be able to re-apply for their jobs at some time in the future.

Last month, management refused to engage the union on the redundancies at the Workplace Relations Commission and put forward restructuring proposals leaving staff with no other option but to take industrial action. IMPACT asked the Depart-

ment of Children and Youth Affairs to use its influence with the agency's management and urge them to take part in normal negotiations. It has refused to do this.

An IMPACT spokesperson told *Shopfloor*: "Childminding Ireland is located in a business park in Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. Because of its iso-



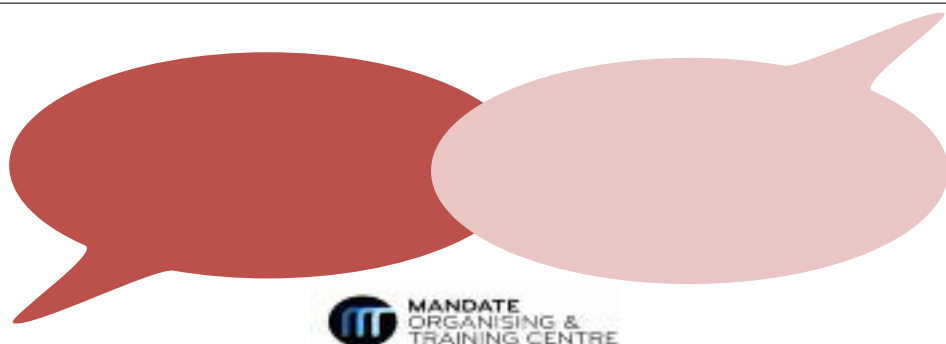
lated location, striking staff have received little attention, despite being on an indefinite strike.

"We are seeking to put pressure on the Government to use its role as funder to ensure that management engages with IMPACT in the normal way – and find a satisfactory response to this dispute."



Wicklow Local Council at the BDC conference in Galway – pictured from left, Secretary Muireann Dalton, Chair Brian Fogarty and Vice-Chair Ciaran Lang

More BDC pix pages 15 to 18



Learn English with Mandate for free!

Mandate, your trade union, is offering English speaking classes for members. The course is for members who while speaking some English have never had the opportunity for formal training. In the course you will learn the basic grammar and improve your vocabulary. You will have the chance to correct those mistakes that your workmates are too polite to tell you about! Improved language skills can add to your confidence and improve your quality of life.

Training is **free** to Mandate members. If there are 10 Mandate members who wish to attend this training, classes will take place in a location near to your workplace.

If you are interested please contact:
Mandate's Training Centre
on **01-8369699**

Places are limited and are allocated on first come, first served basis

This training course is designed for YOU!



Word Processing QQI Level 5

What you'll learn...

- Word processing common uses, for example: document formatting, graphics tables and mail merge.
- Create documents applying a range of processing features.
- Use proofing tools such as spell-check, thesaurus and search/replace.
- Learn File Management facilities.

Training is free to Mandate members. If there are 10 Mandate members who wish to attend this training, classes will take place in a location near to your workplace.

Contact: **Mandate's Training Centre** on **01-8369699** or apply online at **www.mandate.ie**

Places are limited and are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Mandate slams Junior Health Minister on smoking comments

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

JUNIOR Health Minister Finian McGrath has been reported as stating that he believes the smoking ban should be relaxed.

In an interview with the *Sunday Business Post*, the Junior Health Minister said he would like to see indoor smoking areas in pubs.

Minister McGrath was supported in his call by *Irish Independent* columnist David Quinn who suggested that smokers "are being given

too hard a time" and that the State "ought to relent."

What both Minister McGrath and David Quinn seem to forget is that the smoking ban was implemented to prevent workers from dying as a result of second-hand smoke.

Still alive today

The Irish Cancer Society claims that 3,726 people are still alive today precisely because of the smoking ban over the last 12 years. The vast majority of these are bar workers who suffered from a disproportion-

ate level of lung cancer before the smoking ban was brought in.

That's why Mandate supported the smoking ban so strongly at the time and why Mandate regards it now as one of the major successes of the trade union movement.

The smoking ban is a workplace and trade union issue. No worker should be subjected to substances that may take their lives. By saying the smoking ban should be relaxed, the Minister is putting the lives of thousands of workers at risk.



- Second-hand smoking is classified by the International Agency For Research On Cancer (IARC) as a class 1 carcinogen, along with asbestos and plutonium.
- Public health measures such as the smoking ban have encouraged smokers (63% of whom want to stop) to quit,
- They have also reduced smoking rates to an all-time low of 19.5% among adults and 8% among children,
- They have stopped young people smoking before they started, and have saved thousands of lives.
- 5,950 deaths are caused by smoking each year.
- There are 31,150 in-patient admissions and 300,000 bed days in hospitals given over to smoking-related conditions.




Picture: Winfried Mosler (CC BY-SA 2.0)



Union Representative Advanced Senior Course

The Union Representative Advanced Senior Training Course is for union representatives who have completed the Introductory and Advanced course and who have experience as a union

Course content

-  The history of trade unionism
-  The emergence and development of the market system
-  The impact of globalisation
-  Free trade and open markets in a modern society

Certification and Progression: Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate certificate. They may progress to the FETAC level 5 Certificate in Trade Union studies or other relevant training courses offered by Mandate.

If you are interested in this course, please contact your Mandate Official or Mandate's Training Centre at 01-8369699. Email: mandateotc@mandate.ie

Bar Workers 3-hour training course

Bar workers have identified training that they need and Mandate Trade Union is designing and developing this Training which will be delivered in three 3-hourly courses.

The course content is to raise awareness in the following areas:

- Health and Safety in the workplace
- Health and Safety for the individual
 - Personnel safety as a bar worker
 - Legal entitlements for bar workers
 - Know your employment rights
- Identification of further training requirements for bar workers

Venue: Mandate Training Centre, Distillery Road, Dublin 3

Dates: Tuesday 20th September 2016;

Tuesday 4th October 2016; Tuesday 25th October 2016

Time: 12 noon - 3 pm

Eligibility: Mandate Trade Union members

Places are limited. To secure your place phone Mandate Training Centre at 01-8369699 by Friday 9th September 2016. There is no release sought for this course.



STAY CONNECTED www.mandate.ie



Personal & Professional Development

Mandate Training Centre, Distillery Road, Dublin 3

Training is free to Mandate members. If there are 10 Mandate members who wish to attend this training, classes will take place in a location near to your workplace.

- How to communicate your needs and wants
- Finding the right information that will steer you in the right direction
- The environment in which we live and work
- The social, political and economic landscape of trade unions
- Media ownership – who is telling you what and why
- Social Media – What it is all about
- How to write a good application form and designing a CV
- Strengthening abilities to engage and influence

Contact **Mandate's Training Centre** on **01-836 9699** or apply online at **www.mandate.ie**

Training is **free** to Mandate members but courses are also open to Mandate members who are currently unemployed.

Places are limited and are allocated on a first come, first served basis.



HMCA & MANDATE TRADE UNION A 20 YEAR AFFINITY PARTNERSHIP

Since 1996 Hospital and Medical Care Association (HMCA) have been providing a range of membership benefits to members of Mandate Trade Union and their families.

HMCA were formed in 1978 as a specialist provider of membership benefits and our success relies on the quality of plans which are all supported by a first class customer service and claims handling team. All of the plans are offered on a voluntary and optional basis and as part of your membership with Mandate Trade Union.

As part of our affinity partnership with Mandate Trade Union, HMCA have also contributed to the Mandate Trade Union Benevolent Fund which we are delighted to help support. Once a member has subscribed to a plan then HMCA pays a sponsorship payment, which Mandate pay into their Benevolent fund.

HMCA are continuously looking to offer new products to provide to members and their families that are cost effective and will provide necessary protection when needed. With this in mind, we have recently introduced the low cost Care Starter Cash Plan and Care Cash Plan, both these plans are designed to offer tax-free cash benefits towards, in-patient and day-case hospital admissions, dental, optical, consultations, x-rays, scans, physiotherapy, complementary medicine and much more..

The full range of plans available for Mandate Trade Union members include: -

- Care Cash Plans
- Life Plan
- Dental Plan
- Personal Accident Plan
- Travel Plan
- Vehicle Breakdown Recovery

You can visit the HMCA website at www.hmcaireland.ie or enquire online at www.hmcaireland.ie/mandate.htm for full details of all of the plans.

You can also phone the office in Dublin at **01 6130316** for an informal discussion on your requirements.

02157338 ©2016



Picture: Rodrigo Senna (CC BY 2.0)

Connect with Mandate

www.mandate.ie



MANDATE MEMBERS HOME & MOTOR INSURANCE

JLT Ireland is offering a home and motor insurance solution for MANDATE Members

Features include:

- Competitive rates
- 24 Hour emergency and claims helpline
- Flexible payment solutions.

For further information on Mandate facilitated insurance solutions please contact:

JLT Ireland
1800 200 200
www.mandate.jltonline.ie



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Directors: P. Howell, P. Doherty, D. McCarthy, R. O'Higgins, E. Breen, A. Gilling (UK)
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Bringing a system to book

By Frank Keoghan

POLITICAL economy is a concept incorporating economics, which comes from the ancient Greek *oikonomia*; “management of a household, administration” and politics; from the ancient Greek *politikos*, “of, for, or relating to citizens”. So, political economy may be defined as the management of production and distribution in society.

Economics is presented by the establishment media and the education system today as an apolitical, neutral science; one that merely requires technical knowledge and study in order to understand, and ultimately control the market system.

It avoids any study of the means by which wealth is created or things are produced. It does not study the relations created between owners and workers, a relationship which is exploited in the production process, nor does it study the system of control this gives rise to. Economics presents the world as one section of society sees it: the owners of wealth.

Political ideology

Political economy, on the other hand, begins from the viewpoint of the rest of us. It is concerned with the study of production, exchange, distribution, the consequent social relations, and the whole range of political ideology and laws that evolve and relate to the basic economic system.

Political economy is not by definition left-wing or right-wing. However, its great proponents: Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx, Joseph Schumpeter, Keynes etc. through their analysis, identified the different classes involved in the production process and their relationship to each other, providing workers with invaluable analytic tools.

Sadly, these tools have become very rusty through lack of use, to the point where there seems no alternative to policies that enrich the wealthy while destroying our environment and impoverishing large sections of the population of the globe. These same



Picture: David Goehring (CC BY 2.0)

policies are even presented as a solution to the crisis that they caused in the first place!

But workers are beginning to sense that there is something wrong and are looking for alternatives. So, it's time to dust off political economy because it places workers at the centre of its critique and of society, while providing the strongest rationale for concerted trade union activity.

The capitalist or ‘free market’ economic system creates inequality and injustice through exploitation, which is built into the production process. The concentration of wealth at the top is not a by-product of greed or of some



Adam Smith

Karl Marx

other inherent human characteristic: it is part of the process of accumulation of wealth or capital that is a defining characteristic of the system.

Most of us work for somebody else for a wage. This wage labour implies that the workers sell their capacity to work as a commodity. The pre-condition for wage labour is a category or class of people who have no other way of making a living, and a class of people who own the machines and the raw material used to create commodities, as their private property.

The owner who buys the labour power, and pays for it at its value, owns both the labour process and the product of labour, and can sell the product in order to realise a profit.

Our present system of capitalism is inherently an expanding system, for

capitalists must constantly accumulate and extend their capital in order to preserve it; they must continually expand in order to remain capitalists because if they didn't, they would be destroyed by competitors.

So, wealth means the concentration of much of society's production in relatively few hands, and that cannot occur without the simultaneous creation of its opposite – poverty or relative poverty – the material deprivation of the many, at least in relative terms.

The capitalist system creates class divisions: those who have wealth and use it to accumulate more, and the vast majority of people in the world who do not. The economics that is presented to us by the establishment is the economics of wealth accumulation.

Unchallenged

Their analysis and policies are those that benefit the capitalist class. It does not serve the interests of the vast majority of the people but it is the discipline, unburdened by political analysis, which is taught at universities and is reproduced by economic commentators, mainly unchallenged, every day in the media.

But economics is political, and the largest civil society groupings in the country – trade unions – are obliged to project a consistent analysis of economics and a vision of how it could work for the majority and in so doing, also provide an ideological basis for trade union activity.

When a worker understands the mechanism of profit and accumulation and relates that to the concept of wage labour, it makes perfect sense to maximise the worker's proportion of the surplus of his or her labour. The established method of realising this goal in our era is trade union activity.

That is the underlying logic of political economy and of informed trade union activism and is the reason why it is important for trade unionists to understand the concept.

SKILLS FOR WORK *Interested in doing a personal finance or maths course?*

Do you have a desire to improve your personal finance skills? Or maths skills? But never got around to doing it?

Personal Finance and Maths course



Starting from scratch this course helps you to improve your maths and personal finance. Mandate Trade Union in conjunction with Skills for Work are offering members the opportunity to attend training. The courses are to encourage members back into learning and training while aiming towards a FETAC level 3 Award. If you are interested in doing a Communications through Computers course, contact:

Mandate Training Centre, Distillery House, Distillery Road, Dublin 3

Phone: **01-8369699** Email: **mandateotc@mandate.ie**

Courses are free and open to members who have not achieved Leaving Certificate or who have an out-of-date Leaving Certificate. You can also achieve a FETAC Level 3 Award. Skills for Work is funded by the Department of Education & Skills.

WORKING IN A BAR?

Take the confidential
survey today

Log on to barworkers.ie



“

To cut down on wages we only have one person closing Sunday-Thursday, meaning I'm regularly on my own from 9pm on, left to do all the cleaning and cash up. It also means I'm the only employee in a bar, in the inner city late at night. It's just not safe.

”

“

The ease with which bar staff are hired and fired makes it so easy for staff to be exploited. My managers have hired people for three-day unpaid trials during busy periods with no intention of hiring them, they've forced people out of work by cutting their hours to next to nothing, and the staff that have managed to stay for a long time have no prospect of promotion or a pay rise.

”

“

I don't get holiday pay or sick pay. Consequently I haven't taken an actual holiday from work (bar a day or two here and there) in two years. I can't afford to pay for a holiday and also lose out on two weeks of work.

”

“

I worked in a well known pub and restaurant in Dublin city for €9 an hour. The bar was extremely busy and I was constantly run off my feet, but during an 8 hour shift I would receive absolutely no break, and staff discounted meals were still out of my price range.

”