

SHOPFLOOR

FIGHT FOR RIGHT TO REPRESENT MEMBERS WILL GO ON



● Back to Labour Court as industrial action suspended

● Lloyds Pharmacy workers claim activists targeted

PAGES 3,4,5



MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

RESPECT?

We deserve nothing less...

Find out the facts: YOUR experiences, YOUR words...

SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION - CENTRE PAGES



STRAIGHT TALKING

John Douglas

General Secretary
Mandate Trade Union



Raise the Roof and raise Hell

THERE can be little doubt that Ireland is in the middle of a housing emergency. Our city centres are littered with the makeshift cardboard "bedding of thousands of homeless" who bed down each night in a different shop front or alleyway.

Our hotels and B&Bs are full of families who have been left to rot on public housing waiting lists for decades. Can you imagine raising your children in a one-room B&B on Gardiner Street, Dublin, eating, sleeping, homework etc., all in one room – the children's playground being the landing or the main street?

Can you imagine living in a 'hub' with eight to 10 other families, sharing the same common areas and with little or no privacy? Can you imagine being a young retail worker hoping to save for a home, when Eoghan Murphy, the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, believes that an "af-

fordable" house is one priced at €320,000? Your deposit alone will be €32,000.

Can you imagine a scenario whereby Wicklow County Council have not built one single public house since 2013? Can you imagine young retail workers chasing rented accommodation in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick etc., with landlords charging rents of up to €2,000 a month?

There is no need to imagine: this is the sad reality for hundreds of thousands of Irish citizens – no hope, no future, a Government condemning them to landlords, vulture funds and developers.

Minister Eoghan Murphy's only answer is to hand over public lands to private developers to build private housing, and, of course, some "affordable housing" (€320,000) with a spattering of public housing (10%).

Once again this Government of Fine

Gael and Independents, supported by Fianna Fail, are plundering the public purse and public assets to line the pockets of vulture funds, landlords and developers.

The land in State ownership is owned by the people of Ireland and must be used to build universal public houses for our citizens.

The land is there, the finance is there, what is lacking is the will, because Fine Gael and its allies are wedded to an ideology that puts private capital ahead of the common good.

I will be joining thousands of others at the lunchtime rally on October 3 outside the Dail. This is a first step in halting the inhumanity of the current housing emergency.

We have a government that has no moral compass and is out of touch, whether you are 16 or 86, I urge you to make the time to be there at lunchtime on October 3.

Shopfloor is published bi-monthly by Mandate Trade Union. Mandate Head Office, O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1 T: 01-8746321/2/3 F: 01-8729581 W: www.mandate.ie Design & Editing: Brazier Media E: braziermedia@btinternet.com. Shopfloor is edited, produced and printed by trade union labour



**RAISE
the
ROOF**
On October 3rd
**Homes
For All**

Rally

at Leinster House
Wednesday Oct 3rd
@12.30-2pm

Trade unions, political parties, students' unions, housing agencies & community and campaign groups have joined forces to demand action on the housing crisis.

**Join us
on October 3rd
and make
your
voice heard**

THE HOUSING CRISIS IS AN ISSUE FOR EVERYONE

Most workers now struggle to buy a home of their own as house prices have spiralled beyond the reach of those on low and average incomes.

Soaring rents have put huge financial strain on workers, students and their families, often paying for poor quality accommodation with little or no security of tenure.

It is a key issue for women as our rate of female homelessness is now double that of other EU states and more than 60% of homeless families are headed by lone parents, the majority of whom are women.

Meanwhile, housing waiting lists grow ever longer and homeless numbers are at record levels. Thousands are now crowded into unsuitable accommodation, with families forced to raise children in hotel rooms and other emergency dwellings. Government policy to date has failed to solve the crisis.

But on October 3rd there is a chance to change course, when an opposition party motion on the crisis is debated in the Dáil.

The motion demands radical new action on the crisis, including the construction of quality, affordable public housing, preventing people from being evicted into homelessness and enshrining the right to housing in the constitution.

It is supported by Sinn Féin, People Before Profit, the Labour Party, Solidarity, the Social Democrats, the Green Party and Independents4Change, with others expected to add their backing. The motion also has the support of a wide range of trade unions,

housing agencies, and community and campaign groups representing tens of thousands of people across all sectors of our society.

A special rally has been called for outside Leinster House at lunchtime on Wednesday October 3rd by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, in conjunction with the National Homeless & Housing Coalition, the Union of Students in Ireland, the National Women's Council of Ireland and key housing and homeless agencies.

**So join us on
Oct 3rd and help
us Raise the Roof
for change**

www.ictu.ie/raisetherooft

#RaiseTheRoof #HomesforAll #Oct3rd

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalHomelessandHousingCoalition/>



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Gerry Light addresses Lloyds Pharmacy workers at September 25 meeting in Dublin

● Employer accused of targeting activists ● Union will take battle back to Labour Court

Lloyds Pharmacy workers in vote to temporarily suspend industrial action

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

MANDATE members working at Lloyds Pharmacy have voted by 75% to temporarily suspend industrial action. The decision was taken at a mass meeting of members at Citywest Hotel in Dublin on September 25.

The workers claimed the reckless and disgraceful behaviour of their employer, who has refused to engage with their workers' union, has both inconvenienced the public and damaged the business.

"We care about our customers. We hate seeing them inconvenienced. We only wish that management felt the same," said one Lloyds worker who wished to remain anonymous.

"It seems the company would rather close shops, inconvenience the public and damage the business rather than allow us our right to representation," she continued.

And Mandate claimed the company had "targeted" a number of trade union activists in a bid to create a chill effect.

Another Lloyds worker, who spoke at the meeting, said: "There has been intimidation on a grand scale since we began our campaign. Pharmacists have been constantly pressurised. It's no wonder half the workforce wants to leave."

She added: "Yet the company is at-



tempting to claim the high moral ground by pretending they care about their workers and patients? If they did care, like we do, they could prevent all strikes by simply agreeing to a meeting with our trade union."

Mandate Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light said: "Since we began our campaign 18 months ago, our members have won the abolition

of the minimum wage in the business; significant pay increases of up to 24 per cent; the introduction of pay scales; the re-introduction of a sick pay scheme; the payment of pharmacist professional fees; and the promise of secure hour contracts being implemented."

He added: "We don't believe these concessions are sufficient, so we will

now be taking a case to the Labour Court seeking to improve on these achievements."

The Labour Court has already issued a recommendation instructing Lloyds Pharmacy to allow their workers the right to be represented. However, the company has refused to engage. Now Mandate will seek a recommendation on the substantive is-

“ Make no mistake, this dispute is continuing. Our members are reserving their right to participate in further industrial action in the future should the company continue its non-engagement ”

sues in dispute. Mr Light told *Shopfloor*: "Make no mistake, this dispute is continuing. Our members are reserving their right to participate in further industrial action in the future should the company continue its non-engagement."

The dispute between Mandate and Lloyds Pharmacy is in relation to a claim for:

- A pay increase with adequate incremental pay scales (Lloyds workers' pay scales start at €10 per hour);
- A sufficient sick pay scheme;
- Security of hours and the elimination of zero-hour contracts; and
- Improvements in annual leave entitlements and public holiday premiums. **Strike pictures - pages 4/5**

LLOYDS PHARMACY STRIKE

Clondalkin



Finglas



Knocklyon



Killester



Lucan



Crumlin



Mullingar



Carpenterstown Road



Bray



Blanchardstown



Baltinglass

LLOYDS PHARMACY STRIKE

Drumcondra



Stoneybatter

Drumcondra



Blanchardstown



Tonlagee Road



Shankill

The Mill



Wicklow Main St



Rowlagh



Artane

Lucan



Allegations against striking workers rubbished at hearings

MANDATE has welcomed the positive outcomes of adjudications involving 10 of its members at Tesco Sligo who were subject to disciplinary sanctions by the company following the pre-'96 dispute in 2017.

In total action was taken against 13 members of staff – three are still ongoing.

All 10 members were pre-'96 staff and were on picketing duty at their nearest striking store, Tesco Longford.

North and West Divisional Organiser Ciaran Campbell explained to *Shopfloor*: "All of the striking members were accused of unlawful industrial action and being absent without leave, commonly known as AWOL.

"During the stressful in-house disciplinary process, many of these long-serving members – most, if not all, of whom never ever incurred a disciplinary sanction prior to this farce – were subjected to allegations that have since been proven unfounded.

"They were similarly exposed to a disciplinary process that was inherently flawed in how it was conducted, not only in terms of natural justice but which was in absolute conflict with the company's own disciplinary procedures."

Fully impartial

Mr Campbell said that it was not until the adjudications were held that members got a "fully impartial and fair hearing" at which each allegation was dismissed by the Adjudication Officer.

"The Adjudication Officer rightfully declared that he hadn't the authority to determine the legality of the claimants' actions and it was up to the company to take this matter before the courts.

"He further stated during the hearing that if it was the case that the company had an issue with the legality of the union's actions, why were they taking it out on the individual members who were only following union instructions having ensured that the ballot for industrial action was fully compliant with their own rules and that of the Industrial Relations Act 1990."

According to Campbell, the Adjudication Officer said it was obvious the local management knew where the claimants were and what they were doing during the dispute and could not be accused of being AWOL.

The Adjudication Officer also expressed serious concerns over how the disciplinary process had been applied.

Mr Campbell added: "While it is regrettable that the company are prolonging this nonsense by appealing the decisions to the Labour Court, it nevertheless remains the case that these brave Mandate members have fought for and got the decisions they deserve – decisions that they and Mandate will do all at the appeal hearing to preserve and protect."

HOUSING & HOMELESS CRISIS



Fr Peter McVerry joins ICTU President Sheila Nunan and Orla O'Connor of the National Women's Council at Raise the Roof launch

Pictures: RollingNews.ie/Congress

Joint call issued for radical change in policy on housing

A WIDE range of trade unions, housing advocates, campaign groups and civil society bodies have issued a joint call tomorrow for a radical shift in housing policy.

The Raise the Roof initiative involves housing advocates such as Fr Peter McVerry, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the National Homeless & Housing Coalition, the Union of Students in Ireland, the National Women's Council and other civil society groups.

At the initiative launch in Buswells Hotel calls were heard for a sweeping change in housing policy, including a major programme of public housing construction, an end to evictions into homelessness and establishing a legal right to housing.

Almost impossible

Speaking ahead of the September 6 launch, Congress President Sheila Nunan told *Shopfloor*: "This crisis is an issue for everyone. It is now almost impossible for workers, young families and students to secure decent, affordable accommodation and this has put intolerable pressure on living standards across all sectors.

"We need to see a dramatic increase in the supply of quality, affordable public housing. Housing is a human right and should not be the plaything of speculators."

Fr Peter McVerry said: "When will the emperor finally realise that he has no clothes? Homeless figures are up, house prices are up and the fact that government policy has failed is staring us all in the face. The old re-



Stalwart housing campaigner: Fr Peter McVerry

frain from government that 'we just need more time' just does not wash anymore. We need to see a dramatic change in policy to resolve this worsening crisis."

National Women's Council's Orla O'Connor

commented: "The crisis is clearly a woman's issue, with our rate of female homelessness now double that of other European countries. More than 60% of homeless families are lone parent families, the majority lone mothers.

"The shocking rates of women and child homelessness are a result of the dramatic increase in families forced from their homes due to rising rents, the majority of whom are women-headed lone parent families."

Michelle Byrne, of the USI, said: "The Union of Students in Ireland is calling for a higher supply of quality and affordable student accommodation. We also want to see Purpose Build Student

Security & protection

"Accommodation (PBSA) rent caps of 4% as currently they do not fall under the rent pressure zones legislation. Students also need legislation to be put in place for digstyle accommodation in order to give them greater security and protection."

Speaking on behalf of the National Homeless & Housing Coalition, Aisling Bruen said: "The housing crisis is not a natural disaster but one that has been made by human hands. People face evictions, are stuck in overcrowded homes, in hostels, hotels and direct provision: this has become our 'new normal' – we all know someone who has been affected.

"It is unacceptable and at a national level grassroots and community action in response to the crisis is now growing."

MANDATE YOUTH COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY 3PM
7TH NOVEMBER

MANDATE HEAD OFFICE
O'LEHANE HOUSE,
9 CAVENDISH ROW, DUBLIN 1

facebook.com/MandateYouth



MANDATE
TRADE UNION

SuperValu success follows recruitment hike

WHILE welcoming the recent negotiated pay increases for staff working for the Kavanagh Group of SuperValu stores across Mayo and Donegal, a senior Mandate official has also praised what he called the “prevailing good industrial relations” that had helped secure the settlement.

Divisional Organiser Ciaran Campbell pointed out that the deal had ensured an “effective increase across all rates of the current pay scales” but of equal importance it had given Mandate access to stores “as a means of recruitment and organising”.



‘Energy and dynamism’: Gerard Halligan

He told *Shopfloor*: “The 1.5% pay increase effective from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, while welcome, is not the real news item here.

“More importantly was the company’s recognition of the prevailing good industrial relations with Mandate and their willingness to allow us to meet and greet current and potential members in their Mayo and Donegal stores during opening hours.”

Mr Campbell said the union had put this “new opportunity and arrangement” to good use and had subsequently seen a “notable uptake”

in new members.

He continued: “What is particularly pleasing is we now have members in stores where up to now we have had no actual presence. It is important that we continue to build on this, especially ahead of the next round of pay negotiations that will hopefully start in March/April of 2019.

“We believe there is still a serious body of work to be done with regard to our members’ pay alongside improving other terms and conditions, but this can only be done if we are

properly represented numerically but – equally importantly – we need to be well organised.”

And Mr Campbell singled out Mandate Organiser Gerard Halligan for particular praise in boosting local membership of the union.

“The real credit in recent membership uptake should go to Gerard, who has put in a tremendous effort in achieving this. It wouldn’t have happened without his serious energy and dynamism. The results of his efforts are there to be seen – we just need to build on them!”

Labour Court calls on Tesco to return to normal I.R. processes

ACCORDING to Mandate, the Labour Court recommendation LCR21742 clearly verifies and vindicates its long and often-stated position that Tesco Ireland Ltd seems intent on de-recognising the collective bargaining rights and agreements with the union.

The Labour Court presided over a complaint hearing where Mandate argued on behalf of a number its members working at Tesco Carrick-on-Shannon that the company had breached the 2006 company/union agreement over the assigning of extra hours to current staff over a period of time from 2013 on.

Mandate referred the complaint under Section 20(1) of the Industrial Relations Acts 1969 having exhausted the company’s collective grievance procedures and after unsuccessful conciliation efforts at the Workplace Relations Commission. The union sought the company’s joint referral to the Labour Court in keeping with the collective grievance and recognised company/union dispute



Tesco Carrick-on-Shannon: Mandate claims management breached agreement on hours

procedures – but this was refused.

At a Labour Court hearing in May 2018, the company stated that despite the fact there was a union/employer-agreed grievance procedure there was no obligation on it to agree a joint referral to the Court if the issue could not be resolved at conciliation.

They further stated that the agreement only obliged them to attend a third party and that by attending the conciliation hearing they had fulfilled their obligations under the agreement. Mandate disputed this and ar-

gued that the requirement and – indeed – the expectation was that the issue would be processed to its conclusion through the agreed procedures that included joint referral to the Labour Court. The union argued that this had been the norm up to then.

The Labour Court issued the following recommendation: “The Court notes that the collective grievance procedures (stores) states: ‘as per normal practice during any grievance, colleagues will work under protest until the grievance procedure

is fully exhausted’.

“It is clear to the Court that that requires both parties to continue in process until all avenues have been exhausted. In the circumstances of this case that has to mean that following the failure to resolve the issue at conciliation, both parties were required to move to the next step, i.e. a joint referral to the Labour Court as per s 26 (1) of the 1990 Act.”

Agreements

The recommendation continued: “It has always been the position of the Court that it will uphold employer/worker collective agreements. Therefore, the Court recommends that the parties return to conciliation to agree a joint referral of the issue in dispute in accordance with their own collective agreement and s26(1) of the 1990 Act.”

Following this recommendation, Mandate wrote to the company seeking their commitment to adhere to procedures, but to date there has been no response.

Commenting on the move, Divisional Organiser Ciaran Campbell described it as “very worrying but not surprising development in our industrial relations with this employer”.

He told *Shopfloor*: “They have not responded to our overtures that both sides should abide by the Labour Court recommendation and the long-standing collective grievance procedures that we have both historically honoured. It is our position which has been vindicated that we have done so and are still willing to do so.”

Mr Campbell said the union had no alternative but to consult with members at the Tesco Carrick-on-Shannon store to determine what next steps to take.

“As we are doing this there are other collective grievance issues affecting other groups of members arising which are clearly being dealt with in a manner that steps away from the agreed process.”

He warned: “This is only fuelling our members’ discontent and it is very obvious that we are fast reaching a crisis point in this store.

“Mandate is firmly of the view that the company has stepped away from the collective grievance procedures in this and other similar-type cases and this thus provides that under clause (9) (3) of the 1991 Industrial Relations Act which states, ‘procedures shall be deemed to be exhausted if at any stage an employer fails or refuses to comply with them’, we can properly consider industrial action.”

Mandate activists at Tesco vow ‘enough is enough!’



UP TO 100 Mandate activists working at Tesco Ireland met on September 9 in Dublin to determine the future for all workers in the company.

Tesco has been attempting to de-unionise their workforce through an initiative, dubbed ‘Project Black’, over the last number of years. They have engaged in a campaign of anti-union activities, victimisation of trade union members, attacks on terms and conditions of employment and the refusal to abide by their own procedures and agreements.

In September these activists said: “Enough is enough!” Mandate Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light gave a presentation on the imminent escalation of the Tesco workers’ campaign at the meeting which was held in the CWU headquarters.

It involves a significant industrial relations element including a claim over “hourly

pay rates, pay equality, weekly hours, full-time jobs, rostering, dignity, respect and representation rights.”

This campaign will be driven by Mandate members working in Tesco.

According to Mandate, the union has an army of activists throughout Ireland ready to take action and to ensure that Tesco abandons ‘Project Black’ because decent terms and conditions of employment – including respect and dignity in the workplace – only come about when workers are prepared to act collectively and stand in solidarity with each other.

A comment from one of the workers at the meeting highlighted the current situation in Tesco: “They put up a notice on our noticeboard telling us that they are ‘a great place to work’. They did this at a time when they’re making our lives hell on earth.”

Don't be conned by bogus titles, organise

OVER a number of articles in past editions of Shopfloor I have outlined the rapid changes that are taking place in the world of retail. Clearly what is being witnessed is the demise of traditional brick and mortar stores as consumers in significant numbers turn to online shopping to conduct their transactions.

Already we have seen signs that the future which evolves from such



VIEW *from the* SHOPFLOOR Gerry Light

Assistant General Secretary
Mandate Trade Union

a scenario is not positive for retail workers and their dependents. Consequentially the call that I and Mandate have been promoting is for workers to understand what is coming down the tracks and not to leave it too late to take measures in order to protect their interests.

The most effective way of doing this is through collective action and by being a member of a trade union.

Even at this stage of the game many workers will not or do not want to heed this message. However, another bad news story emanating from one of the UK's traditional retail powerhouses clearly shows that workers should never become complacent or for one moment believe when push comes to shove that an employer will prioritise employees interests over that of the business.

The John Lewis Partnership employs around 83,000 workers across its retail outlets which includes the Waitrose supermarket chain. The name of the company derives from a business model which deliberately does not refer to staff as workers rather they are called partners.

The JLP is not alone in adopting this approach as many other retailers have followed similar approaches by referring to staff as either associates, collaborators or stakeholders to name but a few. This well-used tactic is a deliberate attempt to try and convince workers that they are more deeply embedded in the business in order to get them look beyond the traditional worker/employer relationship and the natural conflicts that will inevitably arise from time to time.

One of the other reasons why employers adopt this strategy is to make it less likely that their employ-

ees will turn to a trade union in time of need.

Under this corporate driven structure rarely does the power of workers extend to the boardroom and the important decision-making processes. Neither does this employer-bestowed status protect workers from the cold winds of change that is blowing through the retail sector at the moment.

Evidence of this is in the fact that in the last year alone the JLP has made more than 1,888 partners (workers) redundant and its much-heralded, profit-sharing scheme is unlikely to yield a dividend this year as profit levels are so low to be non-existent.

Another indication of how rapid the changes taking place comes in the recent news that Boohoo, one of the leading online clothing retailers, has just poached the CEO from Primark, currently the most successful store-based business. The attack on traditional retail is on and it's coming from all quarters. Once again this type of development will not be good for workers while on the other hand the ex-senior Primark executive has been offered a bonus of up to £50 million if he succeeds in signifi-

cantly increasing the market value of Boohoo over the next five years.

Along with the above two examples we have also recently witnessed the near or partial collapse of other major UK retail institutions such as House of Fraser, Homebase and Debenhams. With the uncertainty of Brexit around the corner, one thing is for certain we have not seen the end of these type of stories for the foreseeable future.

Any worker who continues to believe that the benevolence of an employer will extend to a point where parity of esteem will be applied when a business hits the wall is sadly mistaken.

It is at times such as this that the disingenuous and shallow nature of spurious collaboration employment models that use fancy names for employees and meaningless promises of worker democracy and participation are seen for what they are – nothing more than a deliberate deception trick commonly used by certain employers to weaken and ultimately remove the power of workers acting either individually or in combination, with the latter being the ultimate objective.

NEWS

€2,500 compo paid to Mandate member over 'untidy beard' claim

MANDATE Divisional Organiser Michael Meegan has won a significant case in the Workplace Relations Commission after a retail outlet was ordered to pay €2,500 to a worker who was sent home and remained off work for months without pay for having an "untidy beard".

WRC adjudication officer Jim Dolan described the sending of the worker home without pay over the 'beard incident' as "a punitive action" by the retail company.

He said that while the scale of the worker's loss of earnings was not clear, he was recommending a compensation payout of €2,500.

The staff member had worked with the chain since June 2012 with an exemplary record, including winning a number of awards for his service.

In his submission to the WRC, Mr Meegan said the Mandate member – who remains employed with the retail chain but is on sick leave – claimed that "management began a vendetta against him because he had a beard".

He said that the management's behaviour towards him deteriorated from mid-2014 due to his facial hair.

The union pointed out that the company's staff handbook stated that staff are allowed to have a beard as

long as it is neat and tidy – which the worker claimed applied in his case.

Mandate told the WRC that the man's treatment regarding his beard was "totally unacceptable and was a form of bullying and harassment".

The union said that the suspension was given to him without subjecting him to the disciplinary procedure, which is a blatant breach of fair procedures.

The company handbook states that "beards and moustaches should be neat and tidy and always well-groomed".

Mr Meegan said that management failed to supply their employee "with

the proper beard nets and instead of trying to resolve the issue in a timely manner, they compounded it by suspending him for four months without pay".

He added that when the worker sourced his own beard nets, management refused to let him wear them and sent him home unpaid.

The worker said that because of the unacceptable treatment over his beard, he suffered depression and was certified unfit for work due to work-related stress, which he is still suffering from today.

The WRC adjudication officer, Mr Dolan, as part of his investigation vis-

ited three of the chain's stores and reporting seeing a number of male employees with beards of various shapes and sizes.

He said there were no male, bearded employees wearing beard nets. However, some were working behind food counters. He concluded that local store managers had a degree of discretion in relation to what constitutes a neat and tidy beard.

Dolan said the retail chain should consider a suggestion by the worker that management display pictorially what constitutes a neat and tidy beard.

COMMUNICATIONS

Training Course (QQI Level 3)

DO YOU HAVE A DESIRE TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS? BUT NEVER GOT AROUND TO IT?

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

- Starting from scratch this course helps you to improve your communications skills.
- Courses are open to members who have not achieved their Leaving Certificate or who have an out of date Leaving Certificate.

Communication Skills:

For those who want to brush up on their writing and spelling skills while also developing personal and interpersonal skills which are important for dealing with workplace and personal situations.

Evening Courses take place one evening per week for a duration of 12 weeks in a venue near your workplace.

If you are interested please contact Mandate's Training Centre on **01-836 9699** or by email **mandateotc@mandate.ie**

Check out **www.mandate.ie** for further training courses. Places are limited and are allocated on a first come, first served basis. Courses are delivered by the Education and Training Board in a location near your workplace.

€15/hour campaign gathers steam...

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

THE Organise for €15 per hour events have continued to take place across a number of Mandate divisions. So far, Arklow, Athlone, Bray, Castlebar, Dublin and Sligo have hosted gatherings.

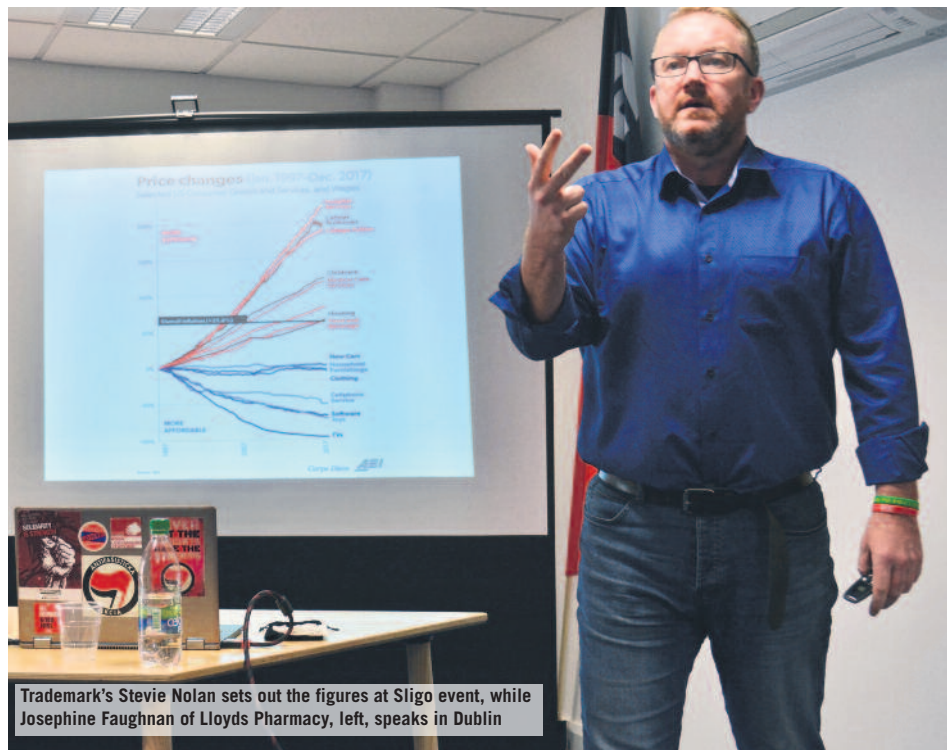
The meetings have been well attended with great feedback from members who believe it is time they raise their own expectations about their pay and conditions of employment.

Those attending the event hear how the compensation Irish retail and bar workers get is well below the EU average yet profit levels among some retail outlets is high – and growing.

Mandate believes that workers have a right to have expectations of at least the Living Wage (€11.90 per hour) with that rate growing to €15 per hour over a short period of time. Of course, where an employer cannot afford to pay these rates, then accommodations can be made. But, crucially, many employers can easily pay these rates, they simply choose not to.

The campaign is not only about headline rates of pay, it's about secure hours, decent rostering, increased annual leave entitlements and fair sick pay schemes, among other benefits.

More than 100,000 workers say they are underemployed, meaning they want more hours at work, but cannot get them. Mandate is campaigning through the *Secure Hours = Better Future* campaign to change legislation so that low paid and precarious workers are protected on these issues. This is also part of the Organise for €15 objectives.



Trademark's Stevie Nolan sets out the figures at Sligo event, while Josephine Faughnan of Lloyds Pharmacy, left, speaks in Dublin

Winning improvements in terms and conditions of employment has never been easy. Since the foundation of Mandate and its predecessor trade unions, benefits have always been won by workers and never been delivered by a benevolent employer.

If we are to improve the living standards of our members, we must first raise our expectations, then get ourselves organised.

Our employers are in trade unions (IBEC), our doctors are in trade unions, even our professional footballers and GAA players are in trade unions. They understand that there is strength in working as a collective. And so should you.

SLIGO

At the Sligo Organise for €15, speakers included Denise Curran (Tesco), Jason Kavanagh (Tesco), Colette Connaghan (Penneys), Brian Forbes (Mandate), Stevie Nolan (Trademark Belfast), and Thomas Pringle TD (Independents4Change).

CASTLEBAR

Keith Leonard (Tesco), Mark Drew (Tesco), Rowena Gillespie (Penneys), Ciaran Campbell (Mandate) and David Gibney (Mandate) spoke at the Castlebar event.



Speaker from the floor at Organise for €15 meeting in Sligo, above, while Brian Forbes speaks in Athlone, below left. Audience in Castlebar, below right



DUBLIN

Speakers at the Dublin event included Josephine Faughnan (Lloyds Pharmacy), Joan Gaffney (Brown Thomas), Amy Moran (Jigsaw in Arnotts), David Gibney (Mandate) and Stevie Nolan (Trademark Belfast).



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

TESCO CASE VICTORY

WRC recommends written warning be removed

THE Workplace Relations Commission has recommended that all references to a first written warning issued to a Tesco worker for alleged serious misconduct for failing to deliver a customer order be removed from his employment records.

Mandate appealed to the WRC on behalf of a member who worked at the time as a delivery driver at the Clarehall store in Dublin. The appeal was lodged under Section 13 of the Industrial Relations Act 1969.

Industrial Officer John Callan Dublin North set out the background to the case.

He told *Shopfloor*: "The member has been employed by Tesco for more than 11 years. He is an active member of the local union house committee and the elected health and safety representative for the store. It is a role to which he has dedicated a significant portion of his own time to training and he is committed to ensuring his store is a safe place to work.

"In April 2017, it was alleged our member failed to deliver an order to a customer. A number of investigation meetings took place where our member explained that he could not deliver the customer's order because no parking was available due to local restrictions in place at the time in the city centre.

"He also explained that he followed his training and the normal process



Censured Tesco worker, employed as a delivery driver at the time, has been vindicated by WRC recommendation Picture: Lars Plougmann (CC BY-SA 2.0)

for such an incident by phoning into the Customer Service Centre. However, the investigating officer decided to forward the matter to a disciplinary hearing.

"A disciplinary meeting took place in July 2017 and once again our member pointed out he could not deliver the customer's order because of health and safety concerns."

In October 2017, the member was issued with a first written warning.

He later appealed this in December 2017. However, no outcome was received by Mandate to this appeal and the case was subsequently referred to the WRC in June 2018.

At a WRC hearing in August 2018, Mandate argued that the member had been unfairly issued with a first written warning. The union insisted Tesco had ignored genuine health and safety concerns and had failed to consider a less punitive sanction.



John Callan: investigation process flawed

positive relationship with the stores health and safety local management team and pointed out that the issue of health and safety should not be a cause of conflict between workers and management.

"She noted that our member was passionate in his role as a health and safety representative and encouraged a more constructive relationship going forward between both sides.

"She also recommended that our member be supported in availing of training to improve his skills as a health and safety representative and it was also recommended that Tesco remove all references to the first written warning of October 2017 from his file."

Mandate also argued that the investigation was flawed, flagging up concerns over the disciplinary process. These included the fact that basic records had not been made available to the member's trade union representative along with unprecedented delays in the issuing of outcomes.

Mr Callan said: "The adjudicating officer in her recommendation encouraged our member to develop a



Computer Applications Basic Skills QQI Level 4

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.

Venue: Mandate Training Centre, Distillery Road, Dublin 3

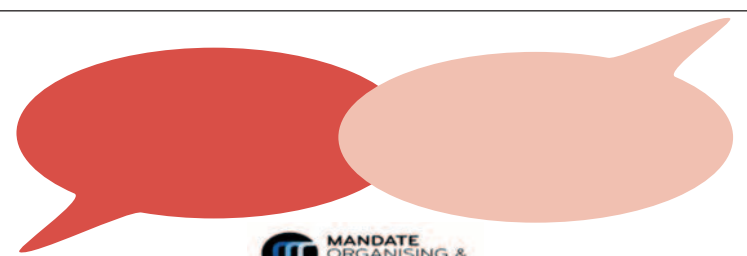
Cost: Free of Charge **Eligibility:** Mandate members



Evening Courses take place one evening per week for a duration of 12 weeks.

If interested contact Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email **mandateotc@mandate.ie**

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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

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

Cash, chaos and strategies for change



MONEY exists in an opaque space, with its own language and gatekeepers to knowledge. As citizens we are required to support the profit-seeking strategies of financial institutions, but we are not supposed to question those strategies, the logic that underpins them, nor the power relations that envelop its world.

Money is just a thing, the economists say, one that is too complicated for ordinary and feeble minds.

Yet as the 2008 crisis showed, when finance crashes, societies follow. The hold it has on our lives is not abstract. It is real, and it is vicious.

In the case of Ireland, the decision to give an almost blanket guarantee to six banks was in effect a bailout of those institutions and a cohort of their property-based clients. The fact that it failed does not take away from the intention. It was an exercise in genuine political and economic power, one that put certain vested interests over the well-being of the state.

All across Europe governments imposed austerity. It was an act of self-preservation by financial institutions that was implemented with zeal by

central banks, politicians and bureaucrats. It amounted to a direct attack on the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

The naked threats of the European Central Bank and European Commission to cut funding to non-compliant states, the use of the euro as a bludgeon for political and economic purposes, is a far cry from the standard definition of money as an asset that simply functions as a store of value, a unit of account, and a medium of exchange. It is a benign reading of money does not fit too well with the evidence we have of it being used to cajole and bully entire peoples into political and economic decisions that are clearly against their collective interests. The financial system works for those who wield the most influence over it. This is a class interest and it has deep roots.

The question, then, is how do we replace private financial interests with social solidarity, and how do we do it without making things worse? Without a workable method of implementation any vision put forward of a progressive and equal Ireland is merely an aspiration. The model

“ Money is just a thing, the economists say, one that is too complicated for ordinary and feeble minds. Yet as the 2008 crisis showed, when finance crashes, societies follow. The hold it has on our lives is not abstract. It is real, and it is vicious ”



Illustration: Frits Ahlefeldt-Laurvig (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

that has the best chance of achieving this is that of a commonwealth of civil society and trade unions working in tandem with a progressive political sphere. This presents its own challenges of course, but the alternative is acquiesce, and that is no alternative at all.

No plan of course survives contact with reality. The more intricate the design, the more likely it will fail. To coin an old phrase, 'Man plans and God laughs'.

The strategies that work are the ones that leave room for creativity and spontaneity. They have to do this, for the world has a way of throwing curve balls that knock you over when you least expect. This means that a progressive movement cannot simply follow a plan as if life is some sort of predetermined pathway.

A progressive movement needs a set of objectives; an organisational structure to harness the societal energy that is out there for progressive change, a plan on how to achieve those objectives, and crucially the ability to think and rethink the plan while it is in operation. The objectives stay the same, the flexibility is in the methods we adopt to get there.

This is about education, in particular activist education, all framed by a class consciousness and a gendered analysis of societal relations – that is, an awareness and understanding of how class and gender works, their economic and gendered necessities, and the organisational solidarity needed to tackle overcome them.

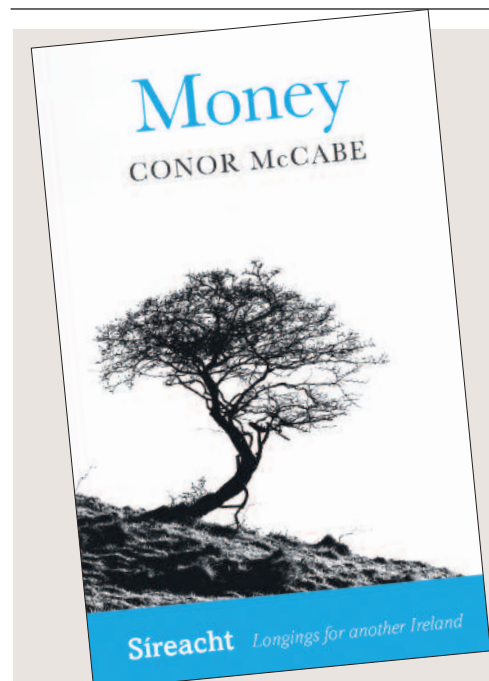
Education

Activist education, done properly, does not teach you how society works so much as teach to think about how society works. It does that for a very specific and practical reason: activists are on the ground and they need to be able to adapt strategies as and when the need arises. They need to be able to think clearly about how to achieve the same objectives but by different means as circumstances change.

When we talk about education we are talking about a way of harnessing the experience and creativity of activists, and placing that energy within a conceptual framework of economic class and gendered power relations and how they operate in Ireland today. Education used in this way simply gives direction and focus to what is already there. Education is not knowledge; it is understanding. It is not passive; it is active.

Education is a tool that builds a deeper understanding social and economic power relations by using the knowledge and experience of activists on the ground. A movement that is able to think for itself – genuinely think for itself – is genuinely transformative.

It is entirely achievable.



The financial class in Ireland holds enormous sway over our lives, and is deeply embedded within the institutions of the State. **Money** by Conor McCabe outlines the way that class operates. It will demystify the subject of money and its power, and it will provide cogent plans of resistance as we work to build a more democratic and accountable state.

A frequent contributor to Shopfloor, **Conor McCabe** has written extensively on Irish finance and is involved in activist education, working with political, trade union, and community groups in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Price: €9.95

Published by Cork University Press

Uniformly condemned

Mandate slams changes to flat rate expenses following Revenue review

FOLLOWING a review of flat rate (employment) expenses by the Revenue Commissioners, the decision has been made to cease the current automatic system which applies to shop assistant grades. This will take effect from the end of the 2018 tax year.

All shop assistants were entitled to an un-vouched income disregard allowance of €121 a year. This was to cover the purchase and maintenance of staff uniforms necessary for the performance of their duties as sales assistants.

Submission

So for workers earning more than €16,500 a year this meant an annual net benefit of either €24 or €48, depending on their tax band and earnings.

Mandate made a detailed submission to the Revenue Commissioners seeking the retention of the old flat rate expense system but to no avail.

It is understood that other groups of workers such as hotel workers, bar staff (€93) construction workers (€103 - €175), rail/bus staff (€160) have also had their 'flat rate' expenses targeted and withdrawn.

According to Mandate, it is a clear case of those in public office not understanding the realities of working



Revenue headquarters – do the number-crunchers understand the realities of life for lower-paid workers?

Picture Forsa

in the real world. Mandate members are lower paid workers and while €24 or €48 per year might not seem too much to lose to the policy mandarins in the Revenue Commissioners, it means a lot to them.

Mandate will continue to lobby with other unions for a full restoration

of the allowance. In the meantime if members earn more than €16,500 a year (i.e. the national minimum wage – below which you pay no tax) and you have not got your €121 flat rate allowance each year, contact Revenue Online Service (ROS) through 'myAccount' and make a claim to be backdated for the al-

lowance. From 2019 if members continue to spend money on either purchasing or maintaining their uniforms, or any incur other expenses "wholly and exclusively necessary in the performance of your duties at work", make sure all receipts are kept and make a claim with these receipts at the end of 2019.

RALLIES & DEMOS

ICTU to meet Garda chief over policing

THE Irish Congress of Trade Unions has called for a meeting with the Garda Commissioner at concerns over the policing of rallies and demonstrations.

The move followed a meeting of the Congress Executive Council at which the policing of recent housing protests was discussed.

General Secretary Patricia King said: "Congress condemns outright the sinister nature of the recent removal of peaceful activists and protestors by private and unaccountable persons, with masked gardai present.

"We believe this escalation and intimidation of peaceful activists is a serious misuse of the civic power and should not be repeated.

"In addition, those operating within the private security sector must at all times act within the law and the regulations that govern their sector. This was clearly not the case in the recent case of the eviction on North Frederick Street, which is a matter of deep concern."

She added: "Congress also condemns outright the online intimidation and threats directed at members of An Garda Síochána which it finds abhorrent and deeply unacceptable."



Health and Safety Representation for Elected Reps QQI Level 5

This five-day QQI Level 5 Health and Safety Course is for elected Health and Safety Representatives. The following topics will be covered on the course:

- Health & Safety Legislation ● Role of Health & Safety Representative
- Safety statements ● Role of Health & Safety Authority
- Occupational health ● Identification of hazards and risk assessment
- Accident investigation ● Fire safety ● Effective communications
- Health and safety promotion

Members who successfully complete this Training Course will obtain a QQI Level 5 Certificate in Health and Safety.



Please contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 if you are interested in taking this course; or alternatively you can email your request to mandateotc@mandate.ie



Negotiation Skills Level 2 'Building Skills and Knowledge'

This one day progression course in Negotiation Skills is for union activists, union representatives who have a desire to improve their knowledge and understanding in conflict resolution and negotiation skills, managing the process and the psychology of the negotiating environment.

There are three levels:

- Introductory ● Building Skills and Knowledge ● Negotiations in Practice

Course content:

- The Negotiating Team – formation; delegation ● An Evolving Plan – sitting around the table
- Different roles for different people ● Who takes the lead? ● Who takes the notes?
- Who provokes the other side? ● Who watches the other side?
- Handling problems without sensation and becoming emotional
- Producing Facts to support arguments ● Predicting counter arguments
- Benchmarking – what are the markers to work towards? – top; middle and bottom

Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate certificate. Members who complete this course may progress to Level 3 Negotiations in Practice.

Please contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 if you are interested in taking this course; or alternatively you can email your request to mandateotc@mandate.ie



Deaf activist **Micheál Kelliher**, who recently won a discrimination case at the WRC, insists a stand must be made on the issue

Don't let them get away with it

I AM deaf and an activist in the Deaf community. I am passionate about social justice and a believer in democratic socialism. It's really important that as a society we start to understand the perspective of the Deaf community on current issues such as housing, healthcare, education and employment.

I love being involved in the Deaf community. Many Deaf people spend a lot of years volunteering within our community, campaigning for recognition of our language, Irish Sign Language (ISL), which was signed into law on December 24th last year – a nice Christmas present for our community.

As an activist I, along with many from the Deaf community, became involved in the Deaf Community Together for Yes campaign. It was great to be involved in such a positive campaign, raising awareness on reproductive rights in our own language – Irish Sign Language (ISL) – and adding Deaf perspectives and the experiences of Deaf women to the debate.

Unfortunately many Deaf people feel extremely marginalised in society and in their workplaces and from public services. There was no access to the helpline during the Cervical Cancer scandal and no access to the public consultation process on the new proposals for Bus Connects, yet many in the Deaf community rely heavily on public transport.

Discrimination is one of biggest issues in Deaf community. Most Deaf people experience discrimination on a regular basis in the workplace, whether they are looking for jobs, or because of lack of promotion opportunities or access to training, as this is rarely provided in Irish Sign Language.

The biggest barrier to employment is not our deafness, it is the poor attitude and lack of understanding of employers and potential employers towards us. The other barrier would be the misinterpretation of Health and Safety laws to limit or block us from the prospective jobs.

Audism practices (i.e. preferences of hearing peers over Deaf people) had affected us as well, even for jobs that are relevant to Deaf community, such as ISL teaching jobs!

It is very frustrating to hear the personal stories from my friends and colleagues who have been discriminated against because of their deafness. They are well able and capable of work.

In fact, I have worked alongside many of these people on campaigns and social events – they have run sport clubs, cafés and fundraising nights. We have to work harder than most when we are looking for jobs because we have to find HR staff and managers who are open-minded and willing to give us a chance.

I would like to acknowledge that there have been sporadic attempts by Deaf people to highlight their experiences of discrimination in the Labour



Determined: Micheál Kelliher

Court in the past. There were many other Deaf people who had experienced discrimination on a daily basis but who hadn't acted due to a lack of awareness of their legal rights or because the effort of bringing a company to the WRC had put them off.

From my own personal experience, it didn't take much effort to sue the company for the discrimination.

I have three Level 8 qualifications, four years' work experience in IT and seven years of volunteering in Deaf community. I have also campaigned on numerous social issues such as Right2Water, Together for Yes and Campaign for Public Housing.

And yet I continuously experience employment-related discrimination. The reactions I get from prospective employers are always focused on my ears – and not on my abilities.

Recently a company expressed an interest in interviewing me. When I explained that I am deaf and would require an ISL/English interpreter for the interview, the company changed its mind and refused to interview me as promised. I had told the company that there was a grant covering the interpreting fees. But they made excuses and essentially discriminated me from my hearing peers.

I was fortunate to have a record of all communications with this company as it had been carried out by email. So I decided not to let them get away with their discrimination against me.

I used the emails as evidence and

brought them to the Workplace Relations Commission. Later I received a legal letter from the company, trying to discredit my case by using communication breakdown as their excuse. But there was no communication breakdown at all and the emails proved that.

The first thing I had to do was to fill in forms (i.e. Workplace Relations Complaint Form) for the WRC stating the nature of the discrimination against me and provide any evidence or witnesses.

I also went to the Citizens Information Centre at the Deaf Village Ireland (DVI) based in Cabra. It was a good place to get legal advice and support. A member of their staff is fluent in ISL and is training to be a legal advocate.

The office also provides solicitors with experience in employment law. If you are lucky, they could take your case on a pro bono basis. You can also contact your trade union or an employment law solicitor for legal support.

I had a couple of meetings with a solicitor and legal advocate at the Citizens Information Centre to prepare my case for the WRC Adjudicator. Having legal supports made my case a lot easier. And as my case was very strong I was able to secure a settlement.

Discrimination against Deaf people is unfortunately very common – many of us experience discrimination multiple times. An Irish Deaf Society survey, *Signing In Signing Out*, com-

“ The reactions I get from prospective employers are always focused on my ears – and not on my abilities ”

piled back in 2006, during the Celtic Tiger economic boom, revealed that Deaf people had higher than average unemployment rates.

Of those at work, a higher than average proportion was employed in manual jobs with low pay levels, with a large proportion earning below the average industrial wage.

The survey also confirmed that promotion rates for Deaf workers are extremely rare. Access to training is a major issue with less than half of the survey participants having any access to training – and, of those who did, communication remained a barrier.

The WRC can be a useful tool to combat discrimination. I feel that it is really important to raise awareness of the procedures of the WRC and would encourage people to use its mechanisms rather than allowing companies to discriminate against them.

The more people who stand up against the discriminatory practices of companies, the more likely it will discourage them from treating people with disabilities unfairly.

The current government passed a Bill to recognise Irish Sign Language and have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These pieces of paper will remain worthless if companies are allowed to ignore our constitutional and legal rights and continue discriminating against us.

People with disabilities are looking for the same things as everyone else – we should have a right to work just like our brothers and sisters do.

An injury to one is an injury to all.



Micheál received expert legal advice in the Citizens Information Centre at Deaf Village Ireland in Cabra



MANDATE MEMBERS HOME & MOTOR INSURANCE

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

Features include:

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- 24 Hour emergency and claims helpline
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For further information on Mandate facilitated insurance solutions please contact:

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1800 200 200
www.mandate.jltonline.ie



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Education grants for Mandate members

The National Executive Council has decided to provide financial assistance under certain conditions to members who wish to attend further education or classes in the academic year 2018/2019. The conditions are as follows:

1. Preference will be given to applicants with a record of union activism at the various committee levels and who have enrolled in courses covering trade union or business studies. Members should provide details of union activism in the relevant section on the application form. This element of the application requires sign off from your local Union Official. Failure to receive sign-off will result in your application not being processed.
2. Applications for grants for courses or classes on leisure activities will not be considered.
3. Fees for the courses in question must be paid and the receipt attached. No application will be considered in the absence of a receipt. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the appropriate documentation is attached application.
4. All or any payment made will be at the discretion of the National Executive Council.
5. To ensure the continued participation by members who are awarded grants in the courses selected, the National Executive Council reserve the right to pay any grant sanctioned in two or more instalments or as may be decided
6. Consideration of applications will be confined to those with receipts for fees paid which are received in your local union office by the closing date **Friday 9th November 2018**. Applications received after that date will not be considered.
7. The decision of the National Executive Council on all matters relating to this scheme will be final.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THIS IS BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF MEMBERS IN YOUR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

● Copies of this application form can also be downloaded at <https://bit.ly/2ptwaao>



Picture: GoCredit (CC BY 2.0)



EDUCATION GRANT APPLICATION FORM 2018/2019

(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS)

Surname:		Forename:	
Home Address:		Employer:	
		Employer Location:	
Union Division:	Union No.:	Telephone:	Email Address:
Details of Your Union Activity:			
Course Classes for Which You Have Enrolled			
1.	Course Fee €		
2.	Course Fee €		
Receipts Attached for Fees Paid €			
I have read the conditions and agree to be bound by same.			
Signed: _____			

Office Use Only

Local Official Comments			
Application No.:	Last Payment Date	Granted 2018	Granted 2019

Please Return Completed Application Forms and Receipts to your Local Union Office

SHOP STEWARDS TRAINING PROGRAMME 2018

Course Title	Course Dates	Duration	Location	Closing date
Training and Development Part 1	October 1/2/3/4/5	5 days	Dublin	13/08/2018
Trade Union Representative QQI Level 5	October 8/9/10	3 days	Dublin	13/08/2018
Health and Safety Level 5	October 15/16/17/18/19	5 days	Dublin	13/08/2018
Union Representative Introductory	October 22/23/24	3 days	Galway	13/08/2018
Union Representative Advanced Senior	November 5/6/7	3 days	Dublin	13/08/2018
Negotiation Skills 3	November 12	1 day	Dublin	13/08/2018

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

● Dublin courses will take place in Mandate Organising & Training Centre ● Please note venue/dates may vary ● To secure your place book early to avoid disappointment

HEADLINE FINDINGS...

- Survey shows retail workers continue to face abuse at work
- Sexual assaults, death threats and racist abuse reported
- Many employers fail to provide adequate support for staff

WE DEMAND RESPECT

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

TEN years ago Mandate launched the Respect Retail Workers campaign with the hopes of tackling the scourge of abuse at work.

The campaign raised awareness among the general public of the abuse retail workers receive and called on them to respect staff who were treated in such a way – just for doing their job.

While abuse at work is always unacceptable, the reasons behind customers abusing retail workers tended to be issues outside the control of the worker.

They included: refund policies; sale policies, such as tobacco and alcohol ID policies; and issues involving stock availability or understaffing. Unfortunately not much has changed.

Motion 18 at Mandate's Biennial Delegate Conference, put forward by the Clonmel Local Council, called for the "relaunch" of the Respect Retail Workers campaign due to "the increasing mental health difficulties suffered by workers in retail, many of whom are expected to work under unacceptable levels of stress with no support from employers, while suffering abuse from customers."

Mandate re-launched the Respect Retail Workers survey in July, completed by more than 2,300 workers, with stark findings:

- 75% of those who completed the survey were women.
- 44% said they had experienced verbal abuse during the last 12 months.
- 19% said they had experienced verbal abuse or violence when selling age-restricted goods or services (alcohol or tobacco).
- 270 people (15%) said they had been threatened in the last 12 months.
- 156 people (9%) said they had experienced physical abuse during the course of their employment.

Why are workers receiving abuse?

The key issues cited by respondents as leading to abuse from customers includes:

- Refund policies.
- Sale policies (such as asking customers for identification when buying age restricted goods (alcohol & tobacco).
- Customers being drunk.
- Understaffing.
- High prices.
- Implementation of the plastic bag levy.
- Debit/credit card failure.
- Customers breaking up multi-pack goods and expecting them to be sold as individual items.

All of these issues are not within the control of the individual worker who is simply enforcing company policies or legislative requirements. If they didn't implement those policies, they could face disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal.

CAMPAIGN LATEST

One worker said: "We generally get aggressive behaviour from customers when you are unable to return an item due to the policy of the store. It happens on an almost daily basis."

What type of abuse is being leveled at workers?

One worker stated: "I was called a 'bitch', 'stupid bitch' and most recently a 'fucking spastic c**t', for not selling alcohol to someone with no ID. The manager on duty just smiled and didn't even ask me if I was OK while customers witnessing it showed way more concern and were actually standing up for me."

Another worker wrote: "Very often customers attempt to purchase two or more products containing Paracetamol. When they're informed they can only purchase one, they can become very hostile. Additionally, despite requests to do so, the store management refuse to display signs on the shelves containing the Paracetamol, informing customers of the current legislation."

Worryingly, there were numerous reports of racist abuse.

"One person called me a foreign bastard and told me they'd see me after work,"

said one respondent. Another said: "I receive racist abuse including swearing, verbal abuse, death threats and threats that the customer is going to damage my vehicle or burn it." In one of the most extreme examples of racist abuse, the worker said: "A customer called me a 'black monkey', a 'black bitch' and worse. I've also been told to go back to Africa many times."

Another very worrying aspect is the level of sexual abuse leveled at female workers in particular. "I've had sexually explicit harrasment."

"Two male customer made sexual comments towards me and it took a female customer to protect me."

Another said: "I have been made very uncomfortable by the comments made by many men who come into the workplace. They make rude, inappropriate and sexual comments towards me and many other female staff."

“ I receive racist abuse including swearing, verbal abuse, death threats and threats that the customer is going to damage my vehicle or burn it ”



MEMBERS' SURVEY

WE DEMAND RESPECT

From page 15

Threats

The threats and intimidation of workers has a long-term effect on the mental health of the worker. Most threats relate to a customer implementing company policies, but unfortunately, many feel they don't have enough protections.

"Today one boy threatened that he will kill me because I was protecting stock from being stolen."

Other workers said: "A customer threatened to pour petrol over me for not giving him a refund that he wasn't entitled to" and "thieves have told me they are 'going to blow my brains out'."

Another said: "I've had threats from customers that they would beat me up or have my house burnt down. I've also had customers explain 'things they'd like to do to my wife'."

A female worker said: "A drunk man said he would find me and rape me because I wouldn't sell him alcohol."

“ I was bitten on the hand by a violent shoplifter when part of an apprehension team ”

Management abusing workers

Many respondents explained how management and deputy management are not shy of giving abuse to workers in some instances.

"A manager was shouting at me in the store. When I walked away she kept following me giving verbal abuse even when I asked them to stop." Another worker stated: "Managers tend to use inappropriate language in front of others, staff members and customers."

“ I have had my breasts squeezed, bottom smacked and over-tight hugs from a male member of staff which I reported to management ”

Assaults

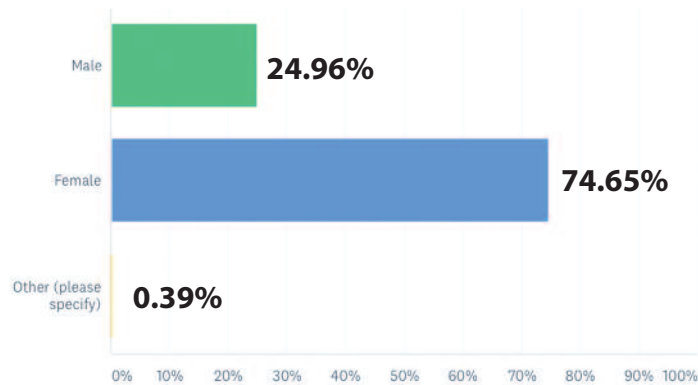
Almost one in 10 retail workers said they had been physically abused. "I was punched in the stomach by ten-ish year old boy whilst pregnant. The mother saw and did not even apologise."

Another said: "A customer actually threw a stapler at me while working at the customer service desk. Security were called and I was told he was barred from the shop, but to my greatest surprise and dismay he was in the same store shop-



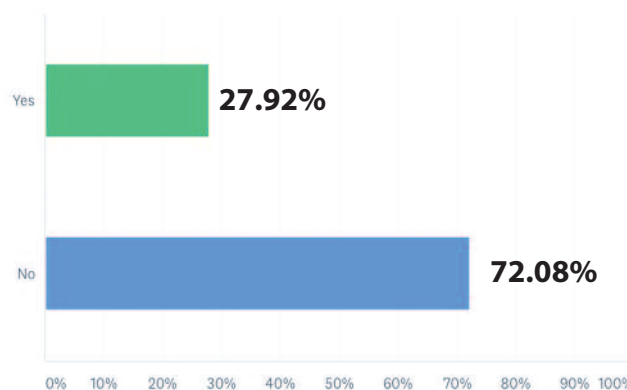
What is your gender?

Answered: 2,290 Skipped: 27



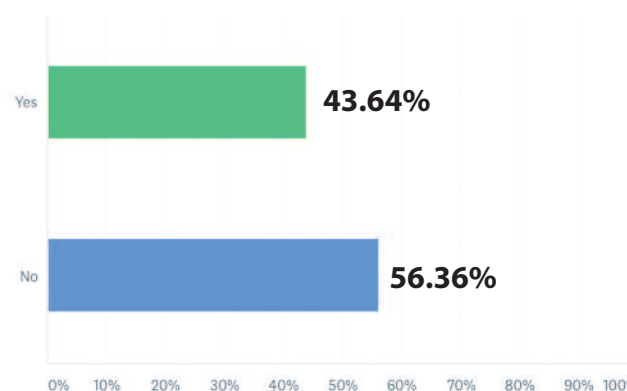
Are you aware if your employer has a policy protecting staff from customer abuse?

Answered: 1,783 Skipped: 534



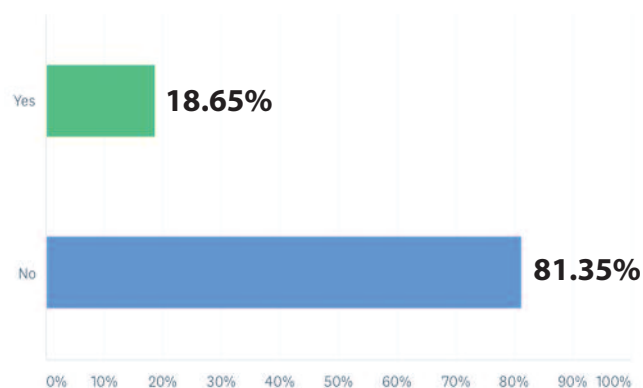
Have you experienced verbal abuse during the last 12 months?

Answered: 1,766 Skipped: 551



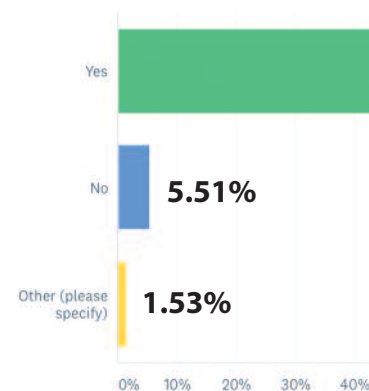
Have you ever had experience of verbal abuse or violence whilst selling age-restricted goods or services (for example alcohol and tobacco), including when asking for ID from a customer?

Answered: 1,772 Skipped: 545



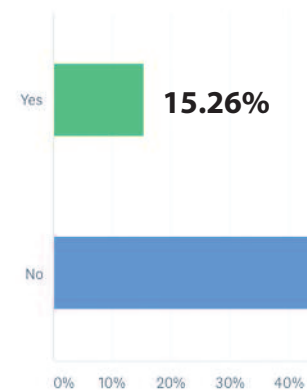
Would you like to see changes to criminal law workers in the retail sector, including those

Answered: 1,762 Skipped: 555



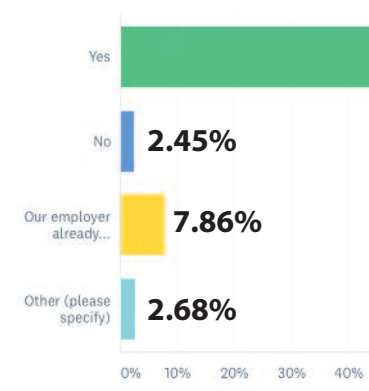
Have you been threatened during the last 12 months?

Answered: 1,759 Skipped: 558



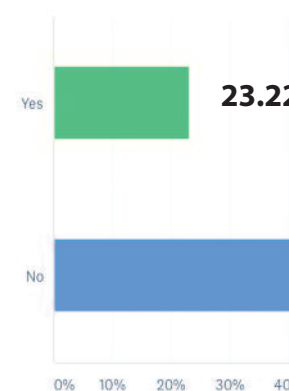
Do you believe your employer should provide training on how to handle abusive customers and de-escalate the workplace, particularly for workers selling age-restricted goods or services?

Answered: 1,758 Skipped: 559

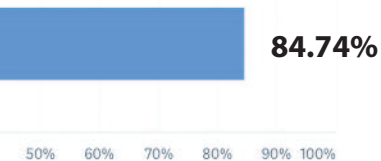
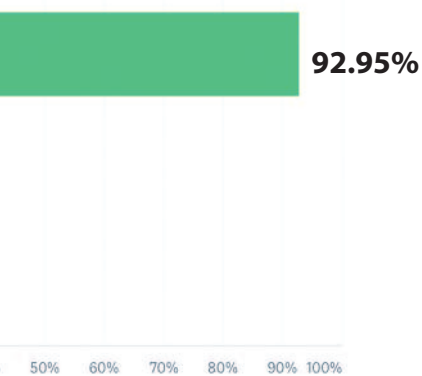


Do you feel your employer does enough that you are protected from abuse?

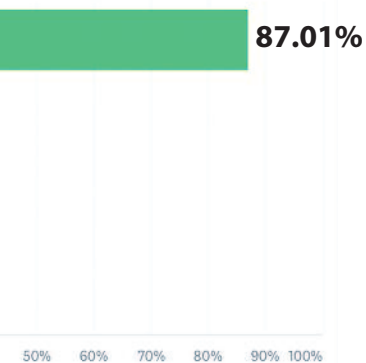
Answered: 1,743 Skipped: 574



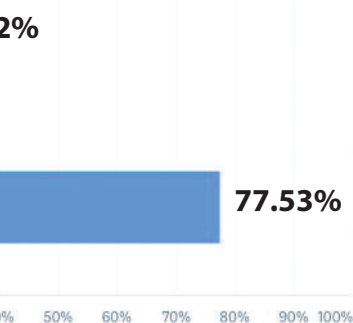
How in order to strengthen protections for selling age restricted goods or services?



Provide training for workers on how to de-escalate potential threats in the workplace when selling age-restricted goods?

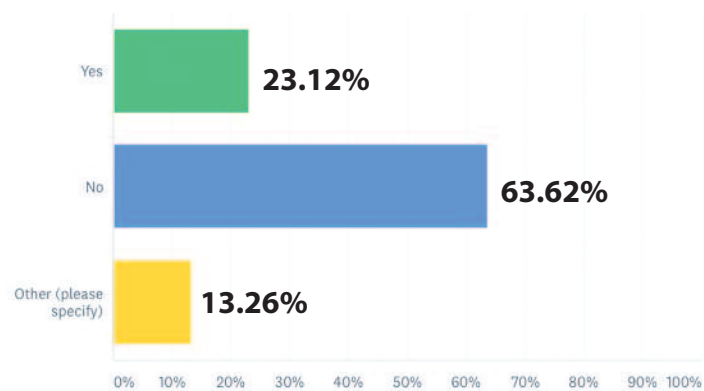


How to ensure...



Does your employer offer any employee assistance with mental health issues (counselling, paid time off, etc)?

Answered: 1,707 Skipped: 610



ping last week. Each time I see him in the shop I freeze and my working day is messed up with anxiety.”

“I’ve been punched in the face and punched in the arm,” added another worker. “Goods were thrown into my face,” said another. Other regular occurrences are being spat at and being bitten: “I was bitten on the hand by a violent shoplifter when part of an apprehension team.”

Some workers have been exposed to extremely volatile situations too: “I was physically held at knife point during a robbery.” Another said: “I was stabbed in the hand with a broken bottle and punched in the face.”

Workers, women in particular but not exclusively, were also exposed to sexual assaults: “I have had my breasts squeezed, bottom smacked and over-tight hugs from a male member of staff which I reported to management.”

Another woman said: “A man groped my chest whilst I was working on a till,” and another said, “I’m not sure if it counts but a customer was hugging me in front of my manager and then decided to move his hand to my breast area.”

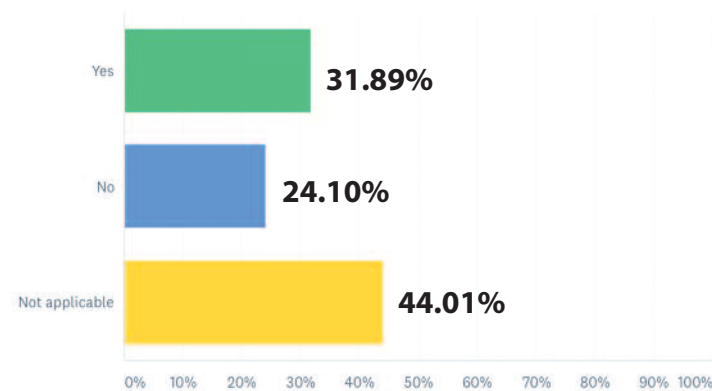
This type of behaviour is reprehensible and should not only be condemned, but the offenders should be prosecuted. Unfortunately many retail workers do not feel comfortable enough or confident enough reporting these incidents and often put it down to being “part of the job.”

Further survey results

- 72% didn’t know if their employer had a policy protecting staff from customer abuse.
- 87% believed their employer should provide training for workers on how to handle abusive customers and de-escalate potential threats in the workplace, particularly for workers selling age-restricted goods. Only 8% said their employer already provided this training.
- 78% felt their employer isn’t doing enough to ensure they are protected from abuse.
- 56% said being verbally abused or physically assaulted affected

If you have answered yes to being verbally or physically abused or threatened at work, did this affect your mental health?

Answered: 1,455 Skipped: 862



their mental health.

● 73% said their employer does not offer any employee assistance with mental health issues (counselling, paid time off, etc).

● 93% said they would like to see changes to criminal law in order to strengthen protections for workers in the retail sector, including those selling age-restricted goods or services.

Solutions

When asked what additional measures their employer should take to protect them, many of the respondents had some very positive and innovative ideas for preventing abuse and protecting workers. But, worryingly, many didn’t even know if their employer had a policy on abuse at work.

One of the key comments repeated over and over again was the need for training on how to handle abusive situations.

Other suggestions included the provision of counselling for those who have received abuse. Workers frequently cited the fact that management is never around when volatile situations occur and asked that they make themselves available to shop floor staff more frequently.

Others said their employer should employ security staff in outlets that have none, employ more security officers in places that already have some and extend the hours of security staff to include the most dangerous times of the day.

“Managers should step in and inform any abusive customer that their behaviour is unacceptable. But they don’t – they completely take the customer’s side, no matter what the situation. This leads to even more abuse as the customer thinks their behaviour is justified if the

“ We should be allowed to answer back reasonably to customers without being afraid of being hauled to the office if we get a complaint ”

Continued page 18



WE DEMAND RESPECT

From page 17

manager sides with them," was one comment.

An interesting complaint is management always taking the side of customers. Workers who have followed procedures are regularly overruled by management and customers are frequently rewarded for their abuse with vouchers, coupons or discounts.

"We should be allowed to answer back reasonably to customers without being afraid of being hauled to the office if we get a complaint."

Many workers stated that the company should have clear and easily seen statements displayed about premises stating that abuse will not be tolerated.

"I'm a strong believer in having a notice visible to customers that states that they will be removed from the store if they are verbally abusive to staff." Others said the company should be clearer on refund policies and sale policies so the employee is not isolated when implementing the company's demands: "Clearer, basic information on internet refunds – possibly printed on to invoices as customers don't remember once they have come off the website."

Many believed that employers could focus many more resources on ensuring that not only the physical but also the mental health of their workers is protected:

"It would be nice for them to treat mental health seriously. I've gotten so upset at work and get very anxious and stressed going in at times if a customer has been verbally abusive to me when I'm doing the best I can at my job. I just do what I'm told, I'm not the company. If it's having a bad effect on my mental health I should be able to go home, if needed, using that as a valid reason. This generally happens a lot around Christmas time and during school holidays and it's awful."

Another respondent said: "Basic compassion for the increase in mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression etc. I know for a fact that they are quite dismissive of these illnesses from stories [I have heard] from colleagues. For example, a colleague who is diagnosed with anxiety was told that he shouldn't be working the job if he isn't mentally healthy at all times."

One solution put forward by one worker who completed the survey included: "Depending on how it is affecting the employee, provide medical and counselling services and also have a 'right to refuse' sign displayed, letting customers know the company policy."

One respondent posted a substantial comment: "There should be WRITTEN reminders in-store of behaviour that's expected of both cus-



“ I'm a strong believer in having a notice visible to customers that states that they will be removed from the store if they are verbally abusive to staff ”

tomers and staff. This should be put in full view of everyone – on the floor, at the tills, at customer service desks and in employee-only areas.

"The notice should state that both customers and staff should be treated with respect and that any verbal, physical or any other type of abuse should be reported to a manager and definitely NOT tolerated under any circumstances.

"There should be a type of incident reporting record for when abuse takes place, and incidents within it should be brought to the attention of HR and other managers. This should then be escalated by consulting with the person who suffered the abuse.

"This will be more delicate, of course, if the abused person is a customer. But more often than not, sadly, it's the employee that is abused."

course, if the abused person is a customer. But more often than not, sadly, it's the employee that is abused."

Abuse is not part of the job

No matter the situation, abuse is never part of the job. Everybody has the right to go to work and be protected from all types of abuse. Employers have a large responsibility in this regard and they really need to step up to the mark.

Healthcare professionals are protected from abuse, but the evidence provided through the Respect Retail Workers survey 2018 shows that retail workers are victims of similar abuse, but that they generally don't have the same protections.

Mandate intends to re-invigorate the Respect Retail Workers campaign over the coming months and hopes to receive buy-in from workers all across the country.

We need to educate our customers and members of the public that any level of abuse is unacceptable. We also need to demand that there are legislative protections for workers in the retail and services sector.

If you want to get involved in the Respect Retail Workers campaign, please email news@mandate.ie



Wearing well...

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists

By Jenny Farrell

ROBERT Tressell's book *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* is the first important working-class novel in English literature, written between 1906 and 1910 and first published posthumously, and very abridged, in 1914.

The working class has championed this novel about their experience and written from their own point-of-view like no other working-class novel in Britain.

Its author, Robert Noonan, was born in Dublin in 1870. The family moved to London, where Robert trained as a sign-writer and decorator. From 1894, Tressell spent some years in South Africa, involved with the trade union movement and helping organise an Irish Brigade to fight on the Boers' side against the British.

In 1901, Tressell settled in Hastings and joined the then only Marxist group, the Social-Democratic Federation. Frequently unemployed, Tressell wrote *the Philanthropists*. He died of TB in a workhouse hospital in 1911 and was buried in a pauper's grave.

The transition from industrial capitalism to monopoly capitalism at the end of the 19th century necessitates a change to the traditional novel plot. Cash Nexus replaces personal "stories" between members of opposed classes. Tressell portrays honestly typical characters in typical circumstances and develops a collective "hero", thereby revolutionising the genre and contributing to socialist realism in the English novel.

The Philanthropists presents an epic portrait of working-class existence in the early days of imperialism. For the first time, an impoverished group of workers takes centre-stage in an English novel. They are duped by what they read in *The Daily Obscure* and Tressell castigates them for the 'philanthropic' acceptance of their destitution, their acquiescence that a good life is not for "the likes of us" and that their children should inherit this lot.

The boss Rushton ('rush-it-on') and his middle-men force the workers to hurry and slobber the work, use inferior materials, while charging high prices, and looting the premises for their own benefit.

They threaten the casual labourers with unemployment, effectively the workhouse and destitution. They control the workers politically through the city's council and through the church. Thus, their economic power is copper-fastened by hegemony of the political and religious spheres, as well as domination of the 'private life' domain of the pub.

Working-class life is traced from the cradle to the grave, from Easton's

Picture: Public Domain



Robert Tressell



human life. A character's attitude to labour is a touchstone of his or her humanity.

The book's individual hero is Frank Owen, named after the utopian socialist Robert Owen. His decorative painting of the drawing room in the Moorish style is a supreme example of fulfilment through work. During this work, the socialist Owen achieves his fullest humanity and the bosses lose control of him.

Owen strives to persuade his work-mates of his way of thinking. His dinner break lectures on Marxism comment on the novel's events. A central talk is where Owen explains, "Money is the real cause of poverty" and describes "the Great Money Trick". Using bits and pieces from the dinner baskets, Owen illustrates the creation of surplus value.

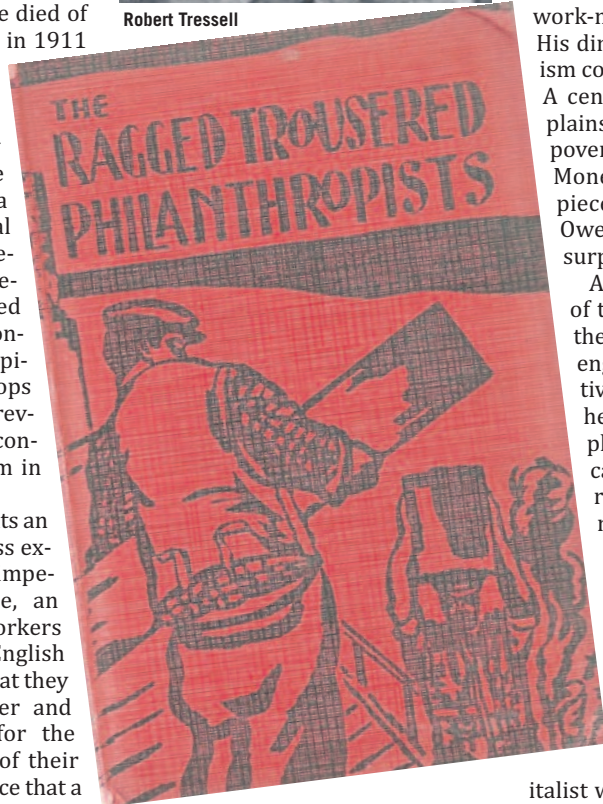
Although he only reaches some of the workers, the portrayal of the others is not negative. They engage with him and take an active part in these lectures, by helping to dramatise the examples. In these scenes of theatrical enjoyment, their collective reaches its highest development.

An important theme in the novel is the scamping of work. Misery commands the men non-stop to "slobber it on", cover dirt, cracks and structural weaknesses for long enough to pocket the profits.

While this is typical capitalist work ethic, it also epitomises the general drive to alienation in imperialist society and furthermore becomes a symbol for the entire imperialist set-up, where putrefaction, corruption, fraud and structural weaknesses are covered with a shoddy façade of illusory luxury and ineffectual half-measures.

Working people today easily recognise the 'slob-it-on' work ethic of ever less resources, fewer people to do jobs, deteriorating wages and conditions, part-time work, unemployment. All who sell their labour are essentially in the same boat.

More than 100 years after its first publication, *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* continues to be a revelation for most readers, a novel of the utmost relevance today, as a book that describes the world as it is.



baby, through to Jack Linden, who dies in a workhouse after a life of hard labour. While the working-class characters are individualised, the bosses are types.

Working life potentially encompasses all aspects of truly human living, while the ruling class is beyond consideration as a human way of life; its purpose being to thwart the workers' free development. This is a brilliant reversal of the usual pattern of individualised middle-class lives and worker stereotypes still propagated in contemporary novels.

Never before in the English realist novel, had the actual labour process been central to the depiction of class struggle. Tressell reverses the assumption that life begins where work ends - work is essential to fully lived

LEGISLATION

ICTU backs progressive step on leave but more must be done

CONGRESS has called recent reports that the Government is considering introducing a paid parental leave scheme as part of a commitment to increase paid parental leave in the first year of a child's life a "progressive step" but pointed out that it falls short of addressing the needs of working families and their children.

It is understood the proposed scheme would introduce a non-transferable (between parents) paid parental leave in the first year of a child's life, rising to seven weeks parental leave over a three year period from late 2019.

This would be in addition to existing schemes of 26 weeks paid maternity leave and the recently-introduced two weeks paternity leave (to be taken during the 26 weeks following the birth of a child).

Congress Equality Officer, David Joyce told *Shopfloor*: "This is a progressive step that would in effect mean that parents would have up to

42 weeks of some form of paid leave during the first year of a child's life. It will enhance families' ability to reconcile work and family life and enable fathers to play a more active role in family responsibilities."

He said Congress had long held the position that such arrangements should cover the full first year of a child's life - the current proposal as planned falls short of this by 10 weeks.

Mr Joyce continued: "We note the discussions at European level towards a new parental leave directive to be agreed in 2019 and will be working with our colleagues in the European Trade Union Confederation to try and bridge this gap and to secure the best outcome for working families."



Welcome: David Joyce



Employment Law Introduction Level 1

This one day progression course in Employment Law is for union activists, union representatives who have a desire to improve their knowledge and understanding of employment law.

The introductory course in employment law will enable course participants to gain an understanding of the legislative environment within which the employment relationship operates.

● Sources of Irish Law

Common law,
judicial precedent;
Equity;
Constitution.

● Statute Law

Primary legislation;
Secondary legislation;
Role of EU law directives.

● The role of law in regulating working conditions

● The role of law in promoting equality, Health & Safety and best practice in the workplace

● The rights and duties of both employers and employees in the workplace

● Contract of employment:
Distinguish between an independent contractor (contract for service) and an employee (contract of service);
The nature of employers defences;
Redress/remedies in Employment law.

Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate certificate. Members who complete this course may progress to the Advanced Employment Law Level 2 course on September 3rd, 2018



If you are interested please contact Mandate's Training Centre on 01-836 9699 or by email mandateotc@mandate.ie. Check out www.mandate.ie for further training courses

Irish Govt in lockstep with EU on military spending



By Frank Keoghan

LAST December, the Oireachtas voted to join PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) – widely viewed as a precursor to an EU Army – even though there was no obligation under the Treaty on European Union (TEU) to do so. It committed us to “regularly increasing defence budgets in real terms, in order to reach agreed objectives.”

Increasing military spending from the current 0.6% of GDP – to 2% would set us back an extra incredible €2,000 million a year... Up in smoke! This is criminal!

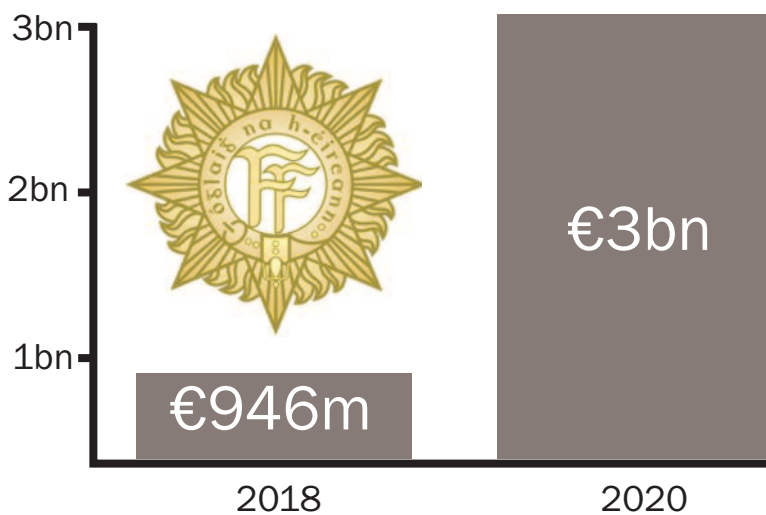
The only agreed commitment we know about is 2% – the same pledged by EU NATO member states at the recent NATO summit (Table 1).

The World Bank says that we spend 0.3% on the military. That would suggest a 560% increase or €5,600 million. This commitment to 2% of GDP equates to 3% of GNP – our real earnings retained in the country, as GDP also reflects repatriated earnings of multinationals based here. So, it’s an even bigger chunk of the national cake going to feed the emerging EU military-industrial complex.

And were we asked whether we wanted to make this sacrifice when so many urgent social needs must be met? When the Government ‘can’t afford’ special medical care for those in urgent need and chase women with terminal conditions through the courts? Not at all!

Fine Gael with the support of Fianna Fáil even tried to curtail the Dáil debate, eventually conceding three hours for statements. In the resulting vote, 42 TDs voted against joining PESCO and others who were absent have since voiced their objection.

TABLE 1
Irish Defence Forces spending increase 2018 - 2020



Picture: Irish Defence Forces (CC BY 2.0)

Each PESCO participating member state must provide a plan for national contributions and other efforts they have agreed to make and in a further ceding of national sovereignty, these national implementation plans are subject to annual assessment by the EU.

And then there’s our contribution to the EU budget, out of which the EU Defence Fund is supported. Varadkar has told the EU Parliament we are ‘happy’ to increase our contributions to the budget. Add to that the proposed change in the rules governing the European Investment Bank, which can now invest in armaments industries and our real liability is likely to exceed €3bn a year.

We could use this money to build the equivalent of two new hospitals each year – the new children’s hospital is set to cost €1.0bn; €1m per bed.

Of course there would be additional ongoing staffing costs etc. but we could definitely build the equivalent of two 1,000-bed hospitals with private rooms per year or extend existing hospitals to that extent.

How else could this cash be spent?

- Build MetroNorth – originally projected at €2.4bn over 10 years... and fast-track the construction.
- Abolish property tax and have €2.0bn left over to quadruple the social housing build.
- More than halve USC – it brings in about €4bn per year.
- Boost social housing builds.

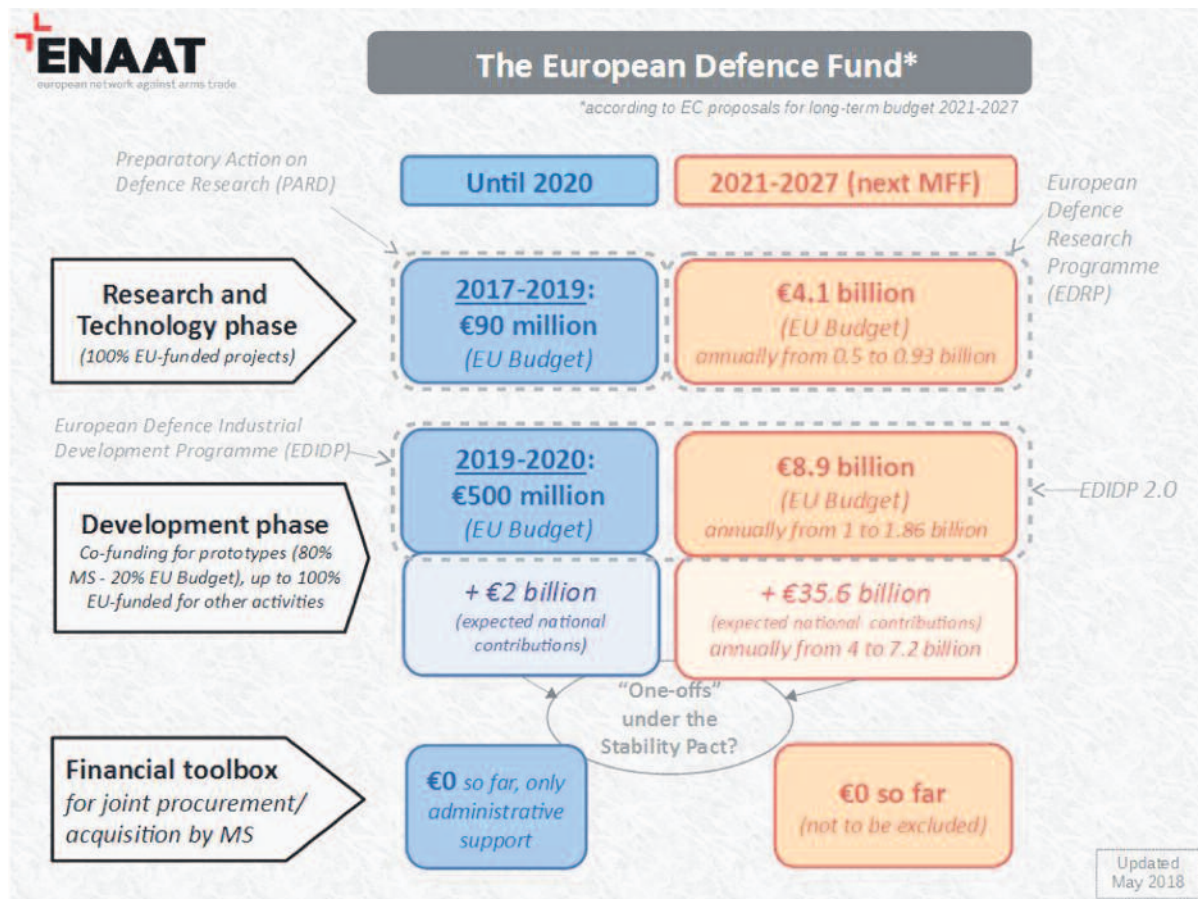
Minister Donohoe has increased the housing budget to €1.9 billion, which he said would see an additional 3,000 new-build social houses ready by 2021. If €2.0bn was added to that per year we could have 6,000 new social houses. There were 92,000 people (households) on the social housing waiting list last September and just fewer than 6% were on the waiting list because they were ‘homeless or living in institutional/emergency accommodation’.

So, 6,000 homes would clear the ‘homeless’ waiting list. Seven years later – add a couple of years for bottlenecks – at a build rate of 21,000 per year and the current problem is solved.

The knock-on effect of such an injection into the construction industry or through employment would be enormous. But the FF/FG coalition wants to burn it instead. But they’re well used to it – haven’t they already burnt billions (literally), following the banking crisis?

The European Defence Fund, the vehicle for most of this spending – latest figures suggest a total of €49bn

TABLE 2



for the period 2021-27 – will be comprised of different public funding tools to finance Research and Development (R&D) projects in technologies and hardware for military purposes. The main recipients will be companies and applied research groups and priorities will relate to “cutting-edge” technologies such as autonomous systems (including drones), intelligence-surveillance, etc.

The Fund is made of two main parts with a third implementation phase as can be seen in Table 2. The first financial package is structured to fund the Research and Technology phase of military R&D. This part is already under way through a preparatory action and offers grants to companies and applied research groups active in the military sector

The European Defence Fund also proposes to develop a ‘financial toolbox,’ to support member states in the acquisition of military equipment resulting from this R&D process.

The official objective of such a fund is twofold: on the one side to strengthen and standardise the military capabilities of the EU member states and thus, eventually, the EU Army, and on the other to contribute to growth and jobs in the EU by supporting the competitiveness and innovation of the armaments sector. It doesn’t mention profits for the arms manufacturers.

A normal jobs and growth stimulus would involve such measures as state intervention in key industries, either through subsidies or acquisition and strengthened welfare programmes; all measures that would result in some redistribution of wealth and increase the possibility of workers organising. But ‘investment’ in armaments redistributes upwards and just as importantly for the EU elites, leaves current social relations intact.

There is a clear trend towards considering the arms industry as a ‘normal’ business and ‘defence’ as a top priority: this paradigm shift was ob-



Leo Varadkar: ‘happy’ to increase spending



Jean-Claude Juncker: paradigm shift

vious in the 2016 ‘Statement to the Union’ of the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and all Commissioners have been asked to look for ways to contribute to the strengthening of the armaments industry in their own field of action.

As a first step, the Commission will facilitate access by arms companies to a range of EU funding. In its European Defence Action Plan, for example, it proposed an increased use of the EU structural funds and of the regional funds, encouraging the creation of “regional clusters of excellence” in the field of defence.

The arms sector also became a priority under the new Skills Agenda for Europe, by supporting an “industry-led European Defence Skills Alliance” and making use of EU funds such as Erasmus+, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport!

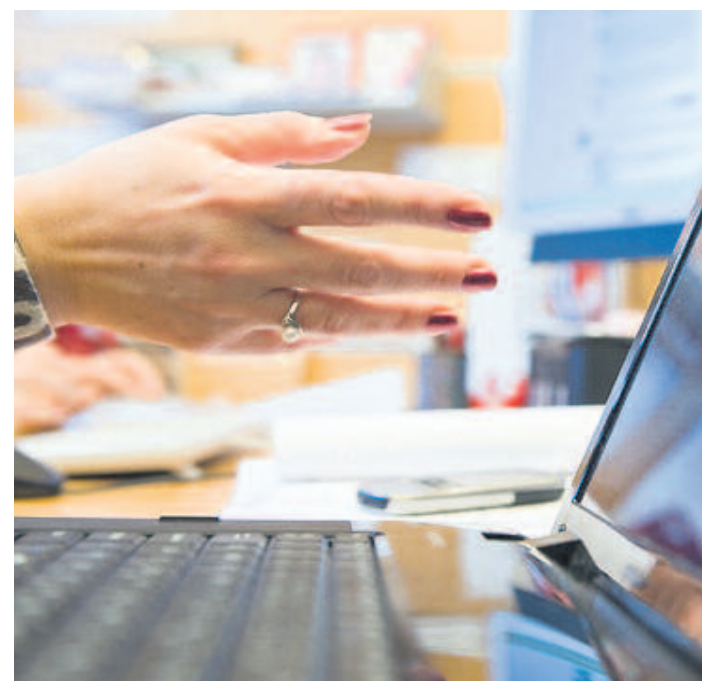
The Plan also called on member states to adapt the lending criteria of the European Investment Bank (EIB), which are so far excluding investments in projects related to weapons production and sale. This move would open access to the €21 billion guarantee fund of the European Fund for Strategic Investment to the arms industry.

Aside from the considerable moral and ethical considerations associated with militarisation and the increased risk of conflict, this is an appalling waste of resources at a time when the poor are getting poorer and the rich richer. Inactivity is not an option when faced with this development, so we ask you to talk with your friends about it and become active in opposing it.

We must call on the Government not to increase the military budget – unless it is to enhance the pay and conditions of the rank and file, many of whom are on such low pay that they are eligible for supplementary welfare payments – and to divert any planned military spending to socially useful projects.

We must also demand the Government immediately withdraws from PESCO before we become inextricably embroiled, by the simple process provided for in the EU treaties (TEU) – Article 46.5. states: “Any participating Member State which wishes to withdraw from permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) shall notify its intention to the Council, which shall take note that the Member State in question has ceased to participate.”

Only through withdrawal from PESCO can we stop this criminal waste of such badly needed resources.



Computer Training Course QQI Level 3

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

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

Courses are open to members who have not achieved their Leaving Cert or who have an out-of-date Leaving Cert

Evening Courses take place one evening per week for a duration of 12 weeks in a venue near your workplace.

If you are interested please contact Mandate’s Training Centre on **01-8369699** or by email at **mandateotc@mandate.ie**

Please see Mandate website for further Training courses at **www.mandate.ie**

Email: **mandateotc@mandate.ie**

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

Right2Water set the template for real change – so let's do it!



US bank Lehman Brothers collapsed 10 years ago, heralding the beginning of a financial crisis that two years later caused the Irish economy to go into meltdown.

Nowadays, though, the Irish government and its cheerleaders maintain that Ireland has recovered and the country is booming, many workers – including the brave employees of LloydsPharmacy – would surely beg to differ.

A range of key economic indicators illustrates the nature of our so-called recovery. Nothing reveals the real story better than a recent statement by Barnardos chief executive, Fergus Finlay, when he said that an estimated 138,000 children are living in poverty and that Ireland has thousands of children with no home.

Bear that in mind when you learn that there are more than 80,000 millionaires in the Republic of Ireland. Significantly too, half of all TDs in Leinster House are worth more than €1 million.

Change

Surely something has to change or be changed?

Let's keep in mind from the outset that a worker's wellbeing depends on two sources of income. In the first case, there is the weekly wage packet, which all too often is modest to the point of being inadequate.

Equally important, therefore, is what trade unionists have long defined as the social wage, which includes commonly accessible goods provided through the state.

This latter package should cover essential items such as: housing, education, health and welfare services as well as public transport.

Clearly these entitlements are of real importance in a majority of working class households. Moreover, expanding and improving the social wage offers a straightforward means of redistributing wealth and improving conditions for the great majority of citizens.

We don't need a major dissertation to identify just how poorly this republic is at serving working people in this respect. Look at the evidence.

As Fergus Finlay points out, we have a shameful housing crisis. Look too at education. While theoretically free at the point of delivery, educating children has expensive ancillary costs for parents earning a low or even average wage.

Comprehensive healthcare? That's a privilege reserved for the well-to-do, and as for those dependent on



Tapping into the zeitgeist: Right2Water protest in Dublin, showing people's hunger to transform society for the better Picture: Sinn Fein (CC BY 2.0)

public transport; provision of service is all too often deeply unsatisfactory.

Don't be taken in either by right-wing baloney. Services such as these should not be deemed as luxuries but must be viewed as a minimum benchmark in any decent and progressive society.

Nevertheless, and in spite of the fact that the state-delivered social wage is of immediate concern to working people, organised labour often struggles to make a direct impact in this field.

For trade unions – particularly those operating largely in the private sector, such as Mandate – it would be impossible to imagine how they could raise an issue such as education or public housing when negotiating pay and conditions with an employer. Housing, health care or education are areas that, in reality, require the type of state level input available only to government.

Traditionally, trade unions have sought to assist their membership in this regard by putting pressure on legislators, and to do this they look to organised political parties to advance their case in the Dáil.

There is an obvious rationale for this strategy. After all, only the state has the authority and the power to effect these types of complex social programmes. Hence the practice here and in Britain of developing a working relationship with political parties deemed supportive of labour's needs.

In Britain, for example, this has led progressive sections of the trade union movement to endorse Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party and thereafter to strive to have him elected Prime Minister.

As a strategy, it is not without merit but only if it works and there is no certainty of that happening. In spite of the fact that there has been an enormous expansion of party membership since his taking the reins and delivering a decent general election result under his stewardship in 2017, the prospects of him entering Number 10 are uncertain at best.

The reason for this is easy to see. The establishment has embarked upon a concerted campaign to prevent him implementing his progres-

Number of millionaires in the Irish Republic...



sive proposals. Right-wing media outlets, including the state-funded BBC, have conducted a relentless drive to undermine his position.

The most damaging attacks, however, have come from within his own party. A sizeable cabal of Labour MPs have endeavoured to sabotage him from the very outset and are now claimed to be contemplating breaking away to form a so-called 'centre-left' party.

The parliamentary political makeup in the Republic is not identical to that of Britain. Nevertheless, with so many millionaires in the Dáil (and associates lobbying outside), it would be naïve to believe that similar forces would not endeavour to stymie a decisive move to challenge privilege and free-market economics in this state.

We have had decades of bitter experience with elected representatives masquerading as workers' champions. Some among our readers will undoubtedly recall when Bertie Ahern claimed to be a socialist. Ahern's grandstanding was then topped when he was upbraided for his showboating by a Labour Party leader intent on entering into an electoral pact with Fine Gael.

Dilemma

This creates a dilemma for trade unionists. It is difficult to see how delivering a meaningful and comprehensive social wage package (including pro-worker legislation) might be brought into being without input from the apparatus of state. At the same time there are daunting obstacles in the way of making the political establishment take the necessary steps.

There is, however, a useful lesson from the recent past with the extra-parliamentary yet perfectly legal mass movement that was the Right2Water campaign.

That marvellous mobilisation of working people, facilitated by our most progressive unions, foiled the dithering of populist and centrist politicians. Ultimately, this movement forced a very conservative Irish government to make a dramatic U-turn and change legislation.

Similar thinking emerged recently in a Morning Star editorial as it reflected on the difficulties faced by a Corbyn-led Labour Party. The British-based newspaper called for a strengthening of grassroots movements that are more resistant to right-wing onslaughts and specifically identified, "...campaigns such as the People's Assembly which, not being party political, can play a mass campaigning role without getting bogged down..."

Therein lies a simple but powerful message. Organised labour and its allies do not have to wait passively for the state to do the right thing and provide the type of services that so many working class people desperately need.

We have demonstrated through the Right2Water initiative that we have both a viable precedent and the power to see it through. What we need now is to identify a plan of action that mobilises this capacity without drawing us too close to the machinations of the neo-liberal state.

What about a People's Assembly or a People's Dáil with organised labour leading the process? Well of course, so why not just do it?



Illustration: Rob Sheridan (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

The Misery Machine

Why the labour movement must address mental health

By David O'Donoghue

THE rise of industrial capitalism was a truly horrible business. Here, from the watchtower of the present moment, the whole thing seems like an abstracted inevitability, shorn of its rougher edges by the distance of history and sanitised into our school-books.

It is scrubbed so clean and concise, slotted in between the United Irishmen and the Easter Rising, it could go almost unnoticed by even the most attentive schoolchild taking the now grimly optional subject of history.

Some factories sprung up out of the aether and smiling agricultural serfs popped inside, worked for a bit, and shook their bosses' hands at the end of the day before taking the tram to their brand spanking new urban housing.

But the labour movement doesn't forget.

If the labour movement has an advantage other than solidarity it is history. It is the common heritage of men and women struggling for centuries against exploitation. It is the illumination, inspiration and guidance offered by the many who came before us, heroes whose names are writ in fire across songs and screeds alongside the nameless toilers who lit the way even through the shadows of their unknown history.

We remember the Lockout. We remember Blair Mountain. We remember these and countless other struggles and horrors. We recognise, more than anything else, that the steel and concrete of the industrial world did not suddenly appear, any-dye and immediate, in a puff of



Picture: Jason Woodhead 23 (CC BY 2.0)

Going underground: life was brutally hard down the pits...

smoke at history's command.

They were the works of the brains and hands of human beings, who fought relentlessly to be fairly compensated for their weariness and wonders. We will rage against the history books with long picket lines turned into paragraphs and the rattling breath of black-lunged, militant miners disappeared into the margins.

But the capitalism of the 21st century is altogether more sly and insid-

ious. Will the generations to come look at the dilapidated husks of customer service call centres and stop their breath with wonder? Will they watch a drone buzzing through their window, carrying a package and groceries, and reminisce fondly about the speed and efficiency of the young bike courier made obsolete by the little machine? This much is unlikely.

But although the 21st century capitalism may seem both sleeker and

less threatening than its upstart, smoke-belching historical predecessor it is no less insidious.

The bosses who sent bold workers up skyscrapers and down mines polluted our world plenty in the process. They mutilated the bodies of workers in William Blake's 'Satanic Mills', rotted the lungs of miners and poisoned the environment. But the pollution and rot being spread by the modern working environment is fair less obvious than fish gobbing their gills in death spasms at the top of murky water (those unsightly necessities are left to the underdeveloped to shoulder out of sight).

It is a pollution evident only in shaking hands and substance abuse, toxic fumes given off as crying fits in employee cubicles and counting out change to see whether you can be behind enough on rent this month to afford a vital counselling session. Anxiety and depression seep and seethe throughout our society, propagated by the same demented economic logic and model of workplace relations that gave us billowing smoke stacks and corpses on the slag heap.

Ireland is experiencing a mental health crisis, a fact so evident that

even the most conservative commentators can agree. ReachOut Ireland, which provides support for young people with mental health difficulties, reported a 108 per cent increase in users accessing their content on social anxiety.

In response the mainstream carefully skirts around mentions of economic sources of this distress and even vehemently denies that socio-economic reform and mass movements might be a key part of the solution. The solutions most commonly suggested among our betters in the press and public life are as insubstantial as the pay-packet of the poor trembling, call-centre worker they hope to reassure.

Take a walk. Have a cup of tea. Go for a kick about with your mates. Don't challenge your boss. Don't question your landlord. Keep trying to make the pennies stretch further and whatever you do, do not look at the man behind the curtain.

I can say first hand, and I know I speak for many of my fellow young workers in low-paid and precarious conditions, that my job exacerbates my mental health struggle. It's difficult to go for that head-clearing walk when you've been on your feet all day and your stomach gurgles from the insufficient packed lunch that is all you can afford to tide you over the 10-hour shifts.

How can you make it to meet friends when the world outside your house seems grim and oppressive, suffused with the dark vapours of constriction and discipline that float smog-like from your nearby workplace.

We will not solve our society's epidemic of depression and anxiety until we jam the screeching gears of the misery machine that churns that terror out, the same way it once produced car parts and consumer electronics: massive wealth inequality, precarious employment and skyrocketing rent.

But the labour movement can fight it. The labour movement fought thousands strong under conditions worse than these.

Women worked 13 hours days in textile mills and discussed *Das Kapital* around the dinner table with not a scrap of formal education between them.

Migrant workers with withheld visas and passports have fought the fruit magnates of the United States with hardly a word of English.

The labour movement can turn suffering into strength and warm conversations about shared hardships can solidify into the fire of solidarity and action in our bellies.

We must oppose the establishment voices that would claim we simply need a change of mindset or scenery to clear away the gloom and that our spectral existence in internships and gig work in no way contributes to our feeling half-human at the end of it all, counting out coins to meet the latest rising rent payment.

When the darkness seems to close in and our chests get tight with worry, the labour movement can look to our past, and the millions of men, women and marginalised people who brought organisation and power out of that same gloom, to illuminate the way and bring forth a new and brighter future.

David O'Donoghue is a member of Mandate's Youth Committee

After Repeal success, we need to



Ciaran Campbell

THE IRISH people's electoral victory in repealing the Eighth Amendment of the Irish constitution, providing for legalised terminations of pregnancy, marked a watershed moment in this country's history.

Irish women of all ages, with the support of their progressive male counterparts, freed themselves of the religious and politically archaic shackles that have dominated and oppressed Irish society for generations.

But the repeal of the Eighth Amendment – although incredibly important in itself – also provides an opportunity for Irish people to further promote future struggles that successfully deliver a more just, equi-



table and socially inclusive society, – an Irish society of equals.

At present, Ireland lags well behind its European counterparts regarding income equalities and forms of social support. And while it might be assumed that Ireland's so-called emer-

gence from the crash and austerity decade will now address this, it is now the case that Ireland's lead in adopting precarious employment practices and contracts – which are equally prevalent in the UK – are being held up by the European Union

as the model for all countries.

Like the Eighth Amendment, these employment practices – inherently immoral and unethical in social terms – have a more adverse impact on women, as they directly impact low-wage industries which employ pre-

dominantly female workers, e.g. the retail and wholesale sectors.

What makes matters worse is that the employers in those industries are normally global multi-billion-euro enterprises which can more than afford to offset their large profit margins with better types of employment contract.

Mandate and a number of other Irish trade unions have been and are currently in long struggles with numerous large and highly profitable employers; struggles that are exposing those employers' practices in offering different types of employment.

But while these industrial struggles are waged in the workplaces and the streets, the political will to properly legislate for real and meaningful collective bargaining rights for workers and the prevention of precarious employment practices remains elusive.

The Irish and UK employment models are the EU's template for the future European employment land-



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 Workshops

Our House Committee Workshops are designed to assist Activists in their role as Union Representatives. Our Workshops run for about 3 hours and can be delivered and tailored by your Mandate Trade Union Official/Organiser to ensure the best time and location is used for our member's convenience.

Learning Outcomes:

- Briefing on Current Industrial Relations Environment
- Understanding House Committee Roles and Structures
 - Communication Skills
 - Workplace Organising
- Dealing with Workplace issues
- Tips for Representing Member/s in Grievance Meetings
- Tips for Representing Members/s on Disciplinary Matters
 - Principles of Natural Justice and Fair Procedures

Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course can apply to do our Union Representative Introductory training which is currently delivered over 3 days.

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

seize the initiative...

scape. It is dressed up as “competitiveness”, but it is simply the ongoing class war between capital and labour. While the UK stutters through Brexit, it will at least have the space and scope to address this class war at a national level, free from the EU shackles.

For the rest of us, and especially in those countries where the working classes are rightfully rising to protect their hard-won gains in employment and social support, there is a real need to exert pressure as an internationalist class vanguard that consistently exposes the EU’s real interest... capital!

The current excesses of global capitalism and financial imperialism have ravaged our peoples at a class level by promoting and promulgating wars, displacing whole populations, creating misery for immigrants and migrants on an epic scale, impoverishing workers, creating underemployment and unemployment, generating huge income inequalities

“ The Irish and UK employment models are the EU’s template for the future European employment landscape. It is dressed up as ‘competitiveness’, but it is simply the ongoing class war between capital and labour ”

and social inequalities across the board, and so on.

The EU’s slavish support and pursuit of capital’s interests has been to the fore in creating this smorgasbord of human violations and costs.

Global capital’s excesses and impacts, alongside the politics of social democracy which acquiesces to capitalism’s whims, have sown the seeds of fascism and continue to provide the very oxygen that has given rise to the far-right.

The political vacuums that are being created must be filled by the internationalist left with strategic and coherent class-based approaches/struggles which expose the infantile positions of the fascists and social democracy, and provide a real alternative that appeals to and motivates real class change.

We need to organise at all levels... workplaces, communities, trade unions politically! We need to reclaim our class identity and fight for it! This Europe is not our Europe.



Negotiation Skills Level 3 'Negotiations in Practice'

This one day progression course in Negotiation Skills is for union activists, union representatives who have a desire to improve their knowledge and understanding in conflict resolution and negotiation skills, managing the process and the psychology of the negotiating environment.

There are three levels:

- Introductory ● Building Skills and Knowledge ● Negotiations in Practice

Course content:

- Review of Level 1 & 2 ● 1st Exercise: producing a team plan and objectives
- Real topic to negotiate on (recorded) ● Learner assessment by Tutor
- Individual learner feedback ● 2nd Exercise: based on feedback
- Supports for negotiations – media strategy if appropriate, member info and commitment

Progression:

Members who successfully complete this 1 Day Training Course will obtain a Mandate Certificate.

Please contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** if you are interested in taking this course; or alternatively you can email your request to mandateotc@mandate.ie

Salaries Employment Health Grievance Protection Law
Representative Employees COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
Process Negotiation Agreement Productive Working Hours Terms Rules
Employer Union Wages Group Overtime Safety Establish Cost
Issues Circumstances Health Cost
Limits Work Fair Salary
Regulate Contract



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

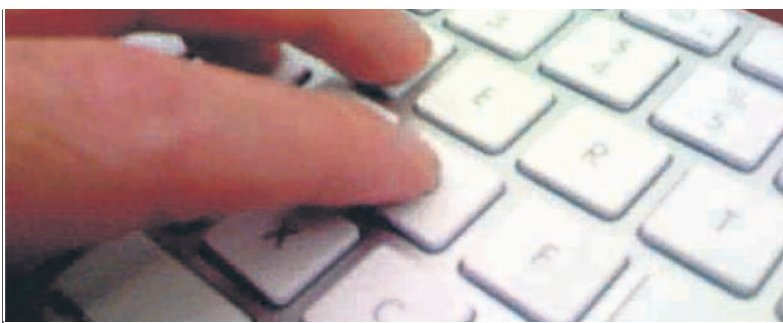
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Information Technology Skills QQI Level 5

What you'll learn...

- **Word Processing: Document Formatting, Graphics, Mail Merge**
 - Create documents applying a range of processing features
 - Use proofing tools such as spell-check, thesaurus & search/replace
 - Learn File Management
 - Use Windows Explorer
 - Open, edit, and print a document
 - Enter, edit and sort data
 - Insert and delete rows and columns in a worksheet
- **Enter formulae**
- **Microsoft Outlook - send and receive emails.**
 - Excel - create spreadsheets
 - PowerPoint presentations

If you are interested in taking this course in 2018, contact Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email mndateotc@mandate.ie to secure your place

Places are limited and are allocated on a first come first served basis and are open to Mandate members who are currently unemployed.

Please see Mandate website for further training courses at www.mandate.ie

NEWS



Future of the union: young activists at the inaugural Mandate youth conference held in July

Mandate holds its first ever youth conference

MANDATE held its inaugural youth conference on July 10 at its O'Lehane House headquarters in Dublin.

Almost 30 young retail and bar workers attended the event, all making contributions to the meeting, expressing their hopes and aspirations for the future of Mandate and, in particular, for the setting up of a permanent youth committee that could influence policies and activities within the union.

Following the conference, Colette Connaghan was elected Chairperson of the committee. Amy Moran was elected Vice-Chairperson with Adam Fallon being elected Secretary.

Some of the key issues and objec-

tives discussed at the conference included:

● **Education:** participating in talks at schools and universities; encouraging young workers to sign up for Mandate training courses; generally raising the profile of and encouraging participation in Mandate Youth.

● **Engagement:** renewed focus on building local councils; encouraging young workers to run for shop steward or house committee positions; engagement with the National Executive Committee and having a positive influence on the NEC; ensuring young workers are represented on national negotiating teams; making sure there is a slot for the youth committee at

union biennial delegate conferences.

● **Communications:** helping to put together a welcome pack; developing a 'join your union' pack for young workers; organising regular meetings of young workers to discuss issues of relevance to them; developing memes for social media; contributing to *Shopfloor* and collaborating with other youth committees.

The next meeting of Mandate Youth Committee will take place on Wednesday, November 7 at 3pm in O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1. All Mandate members under the age of 35 are welcome to attend.

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PADDY POWER BETFAIR

WRC victory for betting shop workers

By David Gibney
Mandate communications officer

FOURTEEN Mandate Trade Union members employed by Paddy Power Betfair plc have been awarded between €750 and €1,000 each by the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) for the denial of rest breaks.

The workers successfully took the cases through their union under the *Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997*.

Mandate say the WRC adjudication officer found the company to be in breach of the Act and urged more Paddy Power workers to come forward to prosecute claims where merited. The union has since writ-

ten to the company seeking a meeting to discuss the implications of the WRC's decision.

General Secretary John Douglas told *Shopfloor*: "These decisions vindicate our members in their claims and I congratulate them on their successful cases. There are tens of thousands of workers in Ireland currently being denied their rights at work because their employer believes the law shouldn't apply to them. We're here to tell them that it does."

He added: "All workers should protect themselves against breaches such as this and should join their trade union in order to ensure their rights are upheld."

And Mr Douglas warned Paddy Power workers of requests from management to "single-man" shops.

"Workers should not put themselves at risk by working alone for prolonged periods and should take precautions at all times, including shutting the store if necessary. Paddy Power is a highly profitable business and can afford to sufficiently staff their premises so that workers are safe and can avail of their legal right to rest periods."

Subsequent to the WRC decisions, Mandate has served a comprehensive claim on Paddy Power Betfair over pay scales, step up duty pay and premium payments, along with a number of other issues.



Picture: Ewan Munro (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Rest break entitlements

SINCE the WRC decision, the company has notified all its staff of rest break entitlements. These are:

- A 15 minute break when you have worked for four-and-a-half hours.
- If you work more than six hours you are entitled to 30-minute break, which can include the first 15-minute break.
- If you work more than six hours and the hours of work include the period 11.30am-2.30pm, you are entitled to a one-hour consecutive break which must occur between 11.30am-2.30pm.



Completely gutted: the iconic Bank Buildings in the centre of Belfast

Plan agreed for blaze-hit staff

UK shopworkers' union Usdaw and Primark have settled on a long-term plan for staff affected by a major fire at the landmark Bank Buildings store in Belfast.

General Secretary Paddy Lillis welcomed a deal that provides some guarantees for the future for staff at the store which was gutted by a major fire on August 28.

In a September 7 briefing to employees, store bosses said they would be paying all Primark Bank Buildings staff until December 31. They indicated that those staff impacted by the blaze would be back at work from September 17 and that individual workers would be allocated to other Primark stores.

The firm is also holding one-to-one discussions with staff to ensure that issues such as additional travel ex-

penses are resolved.

Usdaw General Secretary Paddy Lillis said: "Usdaw has been supporting our members and reps affected by the fire through this very difficult period and we have been working closely with the company to get the best possible deal for them."

"What we have agreed so far provides some future security for staff and we will continue to support, advise and represent our members through the transitional period and beyond."

"This has been a tough time for the staff and all concerned and it is going to take time to get things back to normal, if that is even possible. We welcome the company restating their commitment to Belfast and we will be working with them to deliver on that."



Occupational Health and Safety Awareness Training

This three-day QQI Health and Safety Course is for elected Health and Safety Representatives. The following topics will be covered on the course:

- Module 1** History and Principles of OSH
- Module 2** The Law Part 1
- Module 3** The Law Part 2
- Module 4** The Safety Statement
- Module 5** Hazard Identification and Risk assessment
- Module 6** Safety representative - role and rights
- Module 7** The Health and Safety Authority and Enforcement

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a progression route into the QQI Level 5 Certificate in Health and Safety

Please contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** if you are interested in taking this course; or alternatively you can email your request to mandateotc@mandate.ie



Negotiation Skills Intermediate Level 1

This one day progression course in Negotiation Skills is for union activists, union representatives who have a desire to improve their knowledge and understanding in conflict resolution and negotiation skills, managing the process and the psychology of the negotiating environment.

There are three levels:

- Introductory ● Building Skills and Knowledge ● Negotiations in Practice

Course content:

- Psychology of the Negotiating Environment
- Strategic approach to negotiations ● Collective Decision Making
- Identifying goals to be achieved ● Prioritising issues
- Developing tactical plans ● Tactics in negotiations – both sides – *Key Learning
- Stone walling ● Cooling off periods

Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate certificate. Members who complete this course may progress to Level 2 Building Skills and Knowledge and Level 3 Negotiations in Practice.

Please contact your Mandate Union Official or Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** if you are interested in taking this course; or alternatively you can email your request to mandateotc@mandate.ie





Save the NHS marchers head towards the Tory Party conference in Manchester
Pic: TUC (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)



Mel Corry

An all-Ireland National Health Service? It's a realistic goal!

OUR late comrade in Trademark Belfast, Joe Law, had a unique way of explaining the significance of the National Health Service in Northern Ireland, especially to young people who assume it has always been there and always will be.

Joe had a brother Roy, who was born in the 1930s. Joe's mother often had to make tough decisions about whether her young baby was ill enough to warrant bringing him across from the Shankill Road and down into Sandy Row to pay sixpence to see a doctor.

That sixpence might have been all she had and the child might well have recovered enough by the next day. By the time Joe was born there was a National Health Service in place and poor people didn't have to make decisions of that nature. If a child was sick you rang for the doctor.

We know and understand that the NHS is under attack from the British Tories and their puppet masters but it's still there. In the Republic of Ireland we have never had a proper health system, we handed that responsibility to the Church and charities – look where that got us.

The creation of the NHS in 1948 revolutionised conditions for the working class of Britain and the North of Ireland – although it should be pointed out that both the British Medical Association and the Ulster Unionist Party, which ruled in the North, resisted the implementation of the National Health Service.

The first Labour Minister for Health, Aneurin Bevan said in relation to allowing consultants to continue with private practice: "I stuffed their mouths with gold."

The NHS has given 70 years of service despite that rear-guard action

by the Tories to dismantle it almost from the start. They hate the principles that underpin the service: universalism, treatment based on need not on ability to pay and free at the point of delivery.

They also resent the service given to the NHS by thousands of immigrants from the remnants of the empire. The NHS was a never intended as a charity but rather social solidarity by way of a national insurance contribution.

Gruesome

Likewise the ruling class in this state have adopted the same antipathy towards universal healthcare preferring instead the gruesome American model of no insurance – no healthcare.

The BBC recently celebrated the 70 years of the NHS and in one programme women of the Windrush generation who came to Britain from the West Indies to work in the new NHS remarked about the general health and hygiene of the British people in an era of post-war austerity. They were riddled with the diseases of poverty and malnourishment.

The same austerity threatens the very existence of a publicly-funded healthcare system today. On both sides of the border we are seeing the re-emergence of the diseases of poverty: tuberculosis, rickets and children going to school hungry.

The Tories know that the institution can only be dismantled by stealth. A few cuts here and there to

funding create holes in the system and when services start to creak under the pressure we hear the calls for privatisation.

Corporate vultures are already circling the NHS and picking at its carcass before it is even dead. In the Republic, the Fine Gael, Fianna Fail, Labour axis along with their allies in the Church have consistently hampered any attempts to create a citizen-focused national health system.

It has been Government policy in the Republic to promote an insurance-led health system. In order for private providers to run profitable services requires around 30% of the population to be using private services.

As former Health Minister Brendan Howlin explained: "...in order for that to happen, they really required the public system to be inferior. Why else, if it was first rate, would people pay for a private system?"

In the spring of this year, British Prime Minister Theresa May announced a funding boost of £3.4bn a year for the health service citing a Brexit windfall as the prime funder.

The British people are not fooled. Not long ago, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of Britain to celebrate 70 years of the NHS. They also to sent a clear message to their rulers: "We demand that the NHS be given the resources to provide the services we as citizens need. We want more staff, more beds, no more cuts and an end to creeping



Universal healthcare: free at the point of delivery... Picture: Agencia de Noticias ANDES (CC BY-SA 2.0)

privatisation." Former Taoiseach Enda Kenny famously said he would end the scandal of patients on trolleys, but the scandal only gets worse, exacerbated by continued austerity imposed upon the Irish people.

The deepening housing crisis must surely impact on health care needs and provision. The rising costs of mortgages and rents coupled with stagnating wages place a further burden on those who are least able to withstand the onslaught. As always, the poor are disproportionately negatively affected by government policy. So, who stands up for the poor?

Decent health care is a basic human right. That's why we in the Irish trade union movement should be rallying round a co-ordinated defence of the National Health Service

in the North and demanding the creation of a health service for every citizen in the country.

It is a scandal that in modern Ireland people are making the same decisions that Joe Law's mother had to make in the 1930s. Health inequality in Ireland is at levels not seen since 1918. Adequate and comprehensive health care from the cradle to the grave is the hallmark of civilised societies the world over. It is within the gift of democratic governments everywhere – to resist this is a political decision, a decision made in the interests of the corporate class.

What will deliver for the Irish people is a strong campaign using the vast resources and talents that lie at our disposal. For future generations it's the least we can do.

'Capitalism can't be reformed - abolish it!'

ACTIVISTS and workers gathered in Bodenstown, Co Kildare, for the annual United Wolfe Tone Commemoration on August 19th heard an impassioned plea that trade unions must move beyond the "every day issues" to "much more radical demands".

Dublin District CPI chairperson Jimmy Doran, who gave this year's oration, said pushing demands such as universal public housing, health and education would forge "class consciousness and unity" and "give power back" to the trade union movement "to fight back against the war that is being waged on workers home and abroad."

Claiming that nothing had changed since the time of Tone, Marx and Connolly, he said everything that they had fought against and tried to expose had come true.

"The ruling elites rule in their own interest - and their interest alone - at an enormous expense to the rest of us. Wherever there is a massive accumulation of wealth, there is an equivalent poverty and disenfranchisement of somebody else."

Doran pointed out that wealth did not just "fall from the sky" but was produced by the interactions of two things: "the natural resources of this planet and our labour".

Workers were paid a wage for their work but the rest of the wealth was "taken and hoarded by capitalists to lavish on their class".

And he called on workers not to be "conned" by this process. "There is no crisis that capitalism cannot get out of so long as the working class are willing to pay for it or can be conned into paying for," he said.

Drawing parallels between British rule in Ireland and globalisation, he said that Tone recognised that it was only through the unity and strength of those he called "the people of no property" that the "common enemy" would be defeated and an Irish Re-



public built. Doran added, quoting Connolly, that "only the Irish working class are the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

He said that Connolly had also warned of "timid leaders" and

"treacherous auxiliaries" seeking to betray the working class, warning "... all around us we are surrounded by treacherous forces who insinuate themselves into our ranks to lead us in a different direction - their direc-

tion." Blasting those he called "wolves in sheep's clothing", Doran said: "Reformism is not an advance for our class; it is but a forced compromise and a pillar that props up and strengthens capitalism by distracting, dividing and confusing the working class."

He continued: "Ruling by fooling is all done to divert attention from the real battle of defeating capitalism and stop us building a socialist republic - because the building of the republic will end their rule, power and exploitation."

And he insisted: "We cannot reform capitalism that naturally produces poverty, inequality and division - it must be abolished."

The day of the hiring fair is back, Doran claimed, with low pay and precarious employment "the order of the day" leaving workers in "never ending uncertainty" of knowing what they will earn from one week to the next.

The attack on social benefits and

health provision meant the "social contract compromise" between citizens and state was "almost a thing of the past".

"Hospitals are overcrowded with people waiting for days on a trolley or in a chair to receive emergency treatment often at the very end of their lives. The last couple of hours on this planet your privacy your dignity stripped from you. That's capitalism, comrades."

Doran pointed out that since the 2008 crash the global rich had got richer and "everybody else got decidedly poorer".

"Inequality is at an all time high - the richest eight people in the world have more wealth accumulated than the poorest 50% of the world's population."

No 'nice' capitalism

And he warned there was no such thing as a "nicer form of capitalism".

"By its very nature capitalism is anti-people - it will always place the pursuit of profit above everything else. Today most trade union battles are defensive rather than offensive - that is to prevent things getting worse. It's time for workers to go on the offensive in the interest of all humanity we can either save humanity or capitalism - we cannot save both."

He called on the workers movement to "seriously reconnect with the defence of international workers, humanity and the environment" in a bid to forge an "anti-monopoly strategy", against imperialism and for working class unity as the "only route to a sustainable society".

"Irish workers and their trade unions must stand together against this globalisation and exploitation of the most vulnerable people in the world. As a people we have suffered tremendously as result of British imperialism, we cannot stand idly by and contribute to this modern day slavery."



Higher Level Computer Training Advanced Word Processing



- To manage a word processing application to include customising menus & toolbars & automating common tasks by using macros
- To utilise advanced file handling techniques
- To generate complex documents
- Organise information of different types within a document
- To format complex documents

- To edit complex documents using advanced editing techniques & tools
- To prioritise efficient work practices in relation to the use of the computer, printer and materials
- To take responsibility for own work and or the work of others while planning and adhering to timelines within a supervisory capacity

Evening Courses take place one evening per week for a duration of 14 weeks.

If you are interested please contact Mandate's Training Centre on **01-836 9699** or by email **mandateotc@mandate.ie**

Places are limited and are allocated on a first come first served basis and are open to Mandate members who are currently unemployed.

Communications & Professional Development (CPD)

The objective of this course is to provide you with tools and techniques that will allow you to know more, learn more and develop yourself, your knowledge and your abilities for your own personal and professional development.

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- **Finding the right information that will steer you in the right direction**
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- **Social, political and economic landscape of unions**
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- **Social Media – What it is all about?**

Evening Courses take place one evening per week for a duration of 12 weeks.

*If you're interested, contact **Mandate's Training Centre** on **01-836 9699** or email **mandateotc@mandate.ie***



This training course is FREE and designed for YOU!



SPECIAL OFFER FOR MEMBERS OF MANDATE TRADE UNION



HMCA have nearly 40 years' experience in offering voluntary and optional benefits, specially tailored to members of professional associations and membership groups. The plans are only available exclusively to members of an association so we can ensure and maintain low cost rates for members and their families.

Hospital & Medical Care Association (HMCA) have specially arranged the following low cost plans for all Mandate Trade Union members and their families:



Care Cash Plans provides tax free cash towards medical expenses such as Overnight and Day-Case Hospital admissions, G.P. and Consultants, Scans, Physiotherapy, Acupuncture, Podiatry, Optical and Dental



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Travel Plan provides €12 million cover on Annual or Single trips, whilst travelling in Europe or World-wide.



Vehicle Breakdown Recovery provides full cover for Home-starts, Roadside-assistance and recovery following an accident or breakdown.



Dental Plan provides you with tax free cash towards any dentists for Routine examinations, Hygiene, X-rays, Remedial and Restorative treatment

You can enquire or join HMCA by telephoning 01 6130316 or by visiting www.hmcaireland.ie/mandate

OUR HERITAGE...

Unchanged, unchanging: bedrock values as set out by our trade union forebears in August 1918

Another anniversary 100 years on...

AS IT was on the 21st August, 1901, that the Association was formally and permanently launched, our Organisation will, ere another issue of the journal appears, have entered upon its 18th year. Although several discussions on the matter took place amongst a few assistants in Dublin prior to the date mentioned, it was on the 21st August that the first representative meeting was got together.

There were seventeen present at the meeting, and we are glad to say that they have all, with one exception, since weathered the storm and are in the land of the living, many in very prosperous circumstances.

It is not our intention here to give even a brief history of the Organisation, or even of the incidents which led up to its establishment. Even were we so inclined, it would take many issues of the *Drapers' Assistant* to do so adequately. Someday, perhaps before the Association reaches its majority, we shall place all these details before the member.

At present our intention is, rather briefly, by way of contract, to compare the conditions of today with those existing at the time of the Association's foundation, not we consider the conditions of to-day at all ideal, far from it, but at the same time it may not be out of place occasionally to remind the members, "Lest we Forget," of what has been achieved on their behalf by the pioneers to whom we have just referred.

At present organisation is the order of the day. It is accepted by all thinking men and women, and is the essential condition of existence, but seventeen years ago organisation, more especially Trade Unionism amongst shop workers and clerks, was tabooed. Many of them at the time did not know the difference between the term Trades Unionist and Anarchist. They were steeped in false



notions of respectability, and, as Mr. John Burns at the time so epigrammatically described them, "they had to be eternally young and infernally civil; had to dress like Dukes on the wages of a dustman, and had to maintain the polish of a Cabinet Minister on the salary of a footman."

However, with the growth of the Association and the spread of its educative force, the shop assistant and clerk no longer remain the butt of criticism and sarcastic remarks. He is out now through the instrumentality of combined effort to better his condition. In the old days 48 hours a

week was considered a dream. Now we consider 40 hours a week quite sufficient, and even if it were adopted in the morning profits would not diminish one penny. We are out now to demand as a right a share in the profits of the concerns in which we work, a reasonable share, a good share, because we claim that the first upon all profits should be the adequate remuneration of the workers.

It must be remembered that this revolution in shop life was not brought about by the wave of a magic wand, as it were. It was brought about by years of hard, persistent, plodding; years of argument, years of endeavour, by way of meeting and personal canvass in every city and town throughout the land, because it must be remembered also that in those days organisation or Trades Unionism were not fashionable at all.

The men who took a prominent part in the movement at the outset risked their position, their very existence, by so doing. Today the organisation is recognised and, if not exactly respected, it is at least feared by every employer in the country.

Seventeen years is but a short period in the history of a movement such as ours. In fact, to us it seems but yesterday we were engaged in drafting the circular convening the first meeting. Yet, to those who were but mere children at the time it may seem a long way back.

On this anniversary we should like to avail of the opportunity of issuing a special appeal to all the members, young and old, to, during the balance of the present year, endeavour to create a record in so far as strengthening the movement is concerned. There is still a wide scope for everyone's energies in this direction, and the work

should not be left to a few.

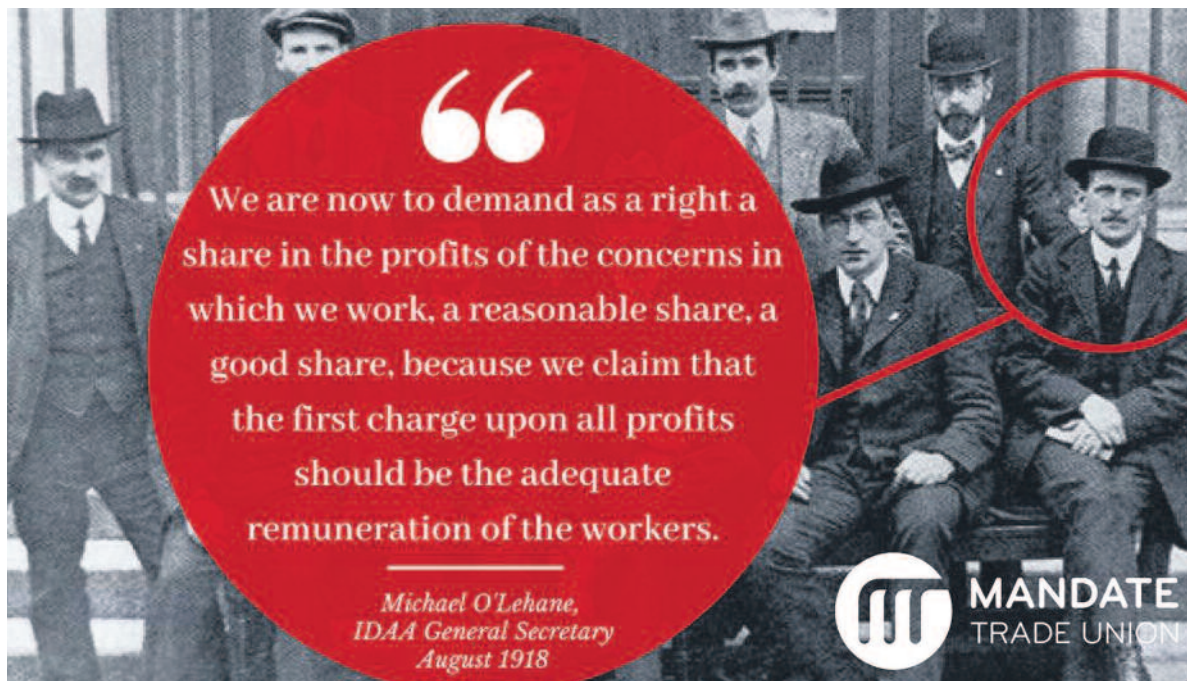
Although the establishment of the Organisation was a pressing necessity, long deferred, it is safe to say that if we are to maintain our present position, if we are to protect and safeguard our privileges which have been secured after years of strenuous labour, it is more than ever essential today.

No one knows, and no one can predict, what the future, even the immediate future, may bring forth. We are living in a period of great and epoch-making events, and it is indeed truth to say that "every day produces something newer than the last, and imagination halts behind reality."

There is much levelling up still to be done. A minimum wage has not yet been established. In many cases women, girls, and men, too, are paid a miserable pittance, whilst the firms in which they work are making huge profits.

Our Organisation, as well as the Trade Union movement as a whole, must be up and doing, and must, if necessary, adopt new methods and aim at greater cohesion and a closer co-operation amongst all that goes to make up the Trades Unionism in Ireland.

Each section has been far too long fighting on its own, the other sections frequently standing idly by, ignorant or regardless of what the particular unit fighting at the moment is fighting for or what the result may be, forgetting that what is one section's trouble today will assuredly be the other section's trouble tomorrow, and also forgetting the basic principle of combined and united effort, viz., that "an injury to one is the concern of all."



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 & 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 QQI 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 QQI Level 3 Award. Skills for Work is funded by the Department of Education & Skills.

WHAT HAVE OUR UNIONS EVER DONE FOR US?

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PAY INCREASES
SICK LEAVE
LUNCH BREAKS
SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE
BANDED HOUR CONTRACTS
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THE WEEKEND
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