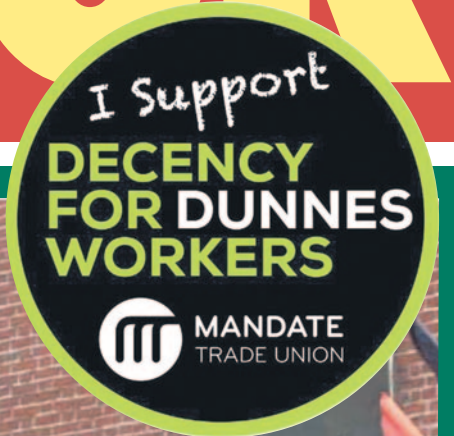


# SHOPFLOOR



- RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION ● FAIR PAY ● ANNUAL LEAVE
- FULL-TIME JOBS ● ALLOCATION OF HOURS ● SCHEDULING

# OUR CLAIM IS JUST

... Dunnes workers set down marker



# To VOTE or NOT to VOTE?

**AS THE dust settles on the Local and European election results we ponder the significance of these results and what they mean for workers, their families and their communities.**

More than 10 years on from the financial crash of 2008 which caused and continues to cause so much hardship, we ask: is the collective memory of workers so short that they and their families have forgotten the hardships imposed by the parties to austerity? Have we forgotten the 500,000 young Irish workers who were forced to seek work in Australia, Canada, USA and further afield? The broken families? The broken lives? The broken dreams?

First thing of note with the May 19 elections is that less than half of Irish citizens entitled to vote bothered to vote, many of these are from the very communities hardest hit by the austerity policies imposed to save the global financial system.

**While one can readily understand the alienation of these communities from the political system, not voting is not an effective protest, walking off the pitch and conceding the game to the opposition achieves nothing.**

Of the 50% of those citizens that bothered to vote more than 50% voted in favour of political parties that imposed and support some of the cruellest and most severe at-

## STRAIGHT TALKING

John Douglas

General Secretary,  
Mandate Trade Union

tacks on workers, families and communities.

Is our collective memory that short or that easily erased by crumbs from the rich man's table that we have forgotten these hardships and those responsible? One might think that the 50% of those who did not vote did so because they do remember those responsible for the austerity policies and even if this is partially true, not voting acts as a buffer zone between real regime change and those elites who firmly have their hands on the levers of power.

If we on the broad left are serious about regime change, then we have an obligation to do all that it takes to educate and mobilise voters for change.

There will be a general election within 12 months in Ireland and if we do nothing, the conservative neoliberal political class and its supporters will strengthen their position.

If this transpires, anti-worker and anti-community policies will follow. We might well see the re-introduction

of water charges and water privatisation, a carbon tax targeted at those who can least afford to pay, policies that continue to favour vulture funds and landlords over the provision of public housing and a continuation of weak trade union and collective bargaining rights for workers.

The trade union movement, progressive political parties and community groups must do a lot more to reach out to the 50% of non-voters. We must instil a belief that change can happen but only if we act together. We must reject compromise and or collaboration with those parties that have imposed and continue to support a system that is fundamentally unequal.

**It's not by accident that vulture funds and banks are paying zero taxes, but because they share/serve the same interests as those in power – like the proposed water charges regime, carbon taxes will be aimed at the 'ordinary man and woman' while the big corporations and polluters get away scot free.**

We have won some minor victories during the term of this Dáil – we have stymied water charges to an extent; we have won banded hours' legislation for precarious workers; we will win legislation on wage/tip theft; and we got majority Dáil support for a Charter on Housing.

**All of this was only achieved because of the size of the broad left block in the current Dáil, any erosion of this left block will make future progress on progressive socialist issues unachievable. In fact, I predict significant row-back unless we mobilise.**

One hundred years ago our first Dáil met in the Mansion House in Dublin and adopted the Democratic Programme for the new Republic which reads as follows:

*"It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing or shelter."*

Twelve months is a long time in politics, let us mobilise together to ensure that the vision of our first Dáil in 1919 is realised.



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### IT PAYS TO BE IN THE UNION...

## Paddy Power 'cash out' €100,000 for denial of staff rest breaks

MANAGEMENT in Paddy Power have conceded almost €100,000 to staff for the denial of rest breaks in 92 separate cases.

Mandate, which represents around 300 workers at the bookmakers, said the cases have now proceeded through the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and the company has agreed to compensate the workers.

The final WRC decision by an ad-

judication officer was issued on July 5.

Mandate Divisional Organiser Robert McNamara told Shopfloor: "Our members are delighted to see this process end with compensation of between €700 and €1,000 per member for the denial of their rest breaks.

"Hopefully Paddy Power and all companies ensure their workers get their basic entitlements in the

future." Mr McNamara continued: "The company has now confirmed that it will not be appealing those decisions and has paid out on all monies owed to our members."

Mandate has written seeking a meeting with the company to discuss a range of issues, including a pay increase, a sick pay scheme, safe staffing levels and Sunday premium rates of pay.

Management has so far refused

to engage and allow their workers the right to trade union representation leaving Mandate with no alternative but to seek an intervention in the Workplace Relations Commission.

Mr McNamara added: "If the company continues to deny their workers their democratic right to representation, we will have to consult with members to determine future actions."



# Mandate lodges Dunnes pay claim as campaign ratchets up

By David Gibney  
Mandate communications officer

MANDATE has lodged a pay claim with Dunnes Stores seeking a fair pay increase for all workers in the company; a new equal pay scale that would enable all workers to achieve the top point; more full-time jobs; fairer scheduling and, most importantly, a right to trade union representation for individual and collective purposes.

Dunnes Stores is notoriously anti-trade union so it is unlikely that the claim will be achieved in full without an intensive campaign which receives buy-in from all Dunnes workers across the country.

Through *Shopfloor*, Mandate is launching an endorsement facility where Dunnes workers can express their support for the campaign. This facility can be accessed by going to <https://tinyurl.com/Dunnes2019>

## Is this claim achievable?

Mandate has lodged a similar claim with Tesco Ireland. Pay equality has proven to be a major issue for many Dunnes members and with the new Living Wage declared at €12.30 per hour, this is the starting point for the proposed pay scale with rewards for long service.

Your union believes that these conditions of employment are the minimum a worker should expect when working for a highly-profitable retail employer in Ireland.

Dunnes Stores does not publish its profits in Ireland. However, from extrapolating data from Eurostat and the CSO, we can estimate that Dunnes is generating more than €200 million in profit every year.

If Dunnes workers were to successfully achieve this claim it would mean a loss in profits of between 15%-20%. It is Dunnes Stores workers who generate the profits for the company so it is only right that those very workers should be rewarded appropriately.

## Where did this claim come from?

Mandate has conducted several surveys of Dunnes Stores workers and workers in the retail sector generally. Through those surveys, and through discussions with members and activists we have developed this claim, which was amended and sanctioned at a meeting of Dunnes Stores activists on Wednesday, July 10.

## What next?

The next steps in our campaign for decent jobs in Dunnes Stores is for all Dunnes workers to get engaged. We need as many workers as possible to sign the endorsement of this claim and be prepared to mobilise others to support it.

In the coming weeks and months Mandate will be organising local meetings and all Dunnes workers are encouraged to attend.

GO TO: <https://tinyurl.com/Dunnes2019>



**I call on Dunnes Stores Ireland management to engage with my union to address our pay and benefits claim for 2019.**



Picture: Phalinn Ooi (CC BY 2.0)

## 1. RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

**Dunnes Stores management must recognise and respect their workers' right to individual and collective representation by their trade union.**

## 2. FAIR PAY & ANNUAL LEAVE

**Create one equal pay scale starting at the Living Wage with access to top point after 10 years service. Additional annual leave entitlements based on service with the company.**

SERVICE	RATES OF PAY	ANNUAL LEAVE
YEAR 1	€12.30 (LIVING WAGE)	21 DAYS
YEAR 2	€13.30	22 DAYS
YEAR 3	€14.30	23 DAYS
YEAR 4	€15.30	24 DAYS
YEAR 5	€16.30	25 DAYS

## 3. FULL-TIME JOBS & ALLOCATION OF HOURS

**The creation of more full-time jobs with a ratio of one full-time to one part-time worker. Additional hours should be offered on a fair and equitable basis to existing staff before hiring new workers.**

## 4. SCHEDULING

**Fairer scheduling for a better work/life balance.**

## PENNEYS

# Management's response to pay and benefits claim blasted

MANDATE representatives have expressed "extreme disappointment" at the "less than satisfactory response" from Penneys management to the 2019 pay and benefits claim lodged by the union on behalf of members working for the retailer.

Negotiations began at the start of the year but agreement could not be reached following a number of meetings and the claim was later referred

to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). The union had sought:

- 3.4% increase for 12 months across all hourly rates;
- Improvements to the banded hours agreement;
- Improvements to rostering; and
- Increased service days.

Two meetings took place at the WRC, the second on July 26, but again there was no meeting of minds and

the matter was referred to a full hearing of the Labour Court.

Penneys had responded to the claim by offering:

- 1.7% pay increase; and
- An adjustment (downwards) to the unsocial hours premium from 7am to 5am.

In a July 26 communication to Mandate members in Penneys, Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light

wrote: "Your union representatives expressed extreme disappointment at what they considered to be a less than satisfactory response from the company and the fact that your pay increase is eight months overdue.

"Given the unprecedented success of the Penneys business here in Ireland they believe that you the workers who are largely responsible for the huge amounts of profits that are

being generated deserve greater recognition for your hard work in the form of a better pay increase.

"This is why they have no hesitation in sending your claim on to the Labour Court for their consideration.

"You should also be aware that when an agreement is finally reached your union will insist that all back money due from the start of this year will form part of it."



# We demand respect and dignity in the workplace

By Brian Forbes  
Mandate National Coordinator

A PACKED meeting of Tesco activists took place on Wednesday, July 24 at the CWU HQ in Dublin. Its purpose was to discuss Tesco Ireland's current anti-union position towards Mandate as well as the increasing difficulties and frustrations being experienced by union activists at store level.

Despite the anger expressed at the gathering – aimed exclusively at the retailer – the meeting was exceptionally positive. It left everyone present in no doubt as to the resolute determination of the union's Tesco membership to have their voice heard loud and clear both in the boardroom of Tesco Ireland and across the national network of local Tesco stores.

Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light told the meeting: "In April of this year your pay and benefits claim for 2019 was launched. Together we sought the creation of one equal pay scale which would have the effect of moving everybody upwards in relation to what they currently earn.

"We sought fairer scheduling for a better work-life balance, which means greater certainty over working patterns and which means everyone gets a minimum of a four-week roster."

## Agreements

He continued: "We want to see the creation of 1,000 full-time jobs and, most importantly, to get your employer, Tesco Ireland, to fully respect and comply with all existing collective agreements negotiated in the past with your union, which means they accept your right to be individually and collectively represented by your union.

Mr Light added: "Make no mistake, this last demand – which calls for respect and dignity in the workplace – is critical because without it your voice at work will be weakened significantly over a surprisingly short period of time until it is silenced and ignored altogether by Tesco."

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas underlined the need for a sustained campaign to secure a voice for workers at Tesco.

He told activists: "The successful delivery of our Tesco pay and benefits campaign will require continued intense engagement with our members and the continued development of a sustainable and robust union infrastructure in Tesco.

"We are exceptionally proud of the work being done in Tesco by our union officials and organisers working alongside our local union activists



General Secretary John Douglas and Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light answered questions from the floor at the July 24 meeting



Activists Tony Meehan, above, and Denise Curran, below, make contributions to what was a lively and robust debate held at the CWU HQ in Dublin

who have demonstrated a unique understanding of exactly what it would mean for them and their families if Mandate wasn't active and delivering on the ground at local level and nationally on behalf of all our members.

Mr Douglas concluded by saying: "Working together we all must ensure that we have a very good chance of achieving the aims and objectives of our claim, so it is imperative that every individual stands behind their union because by standing together with one union voice in Tesco, we can and we will win."

As a vital component of Mandate's pay and benefits campaign members were given the opportunity to indi-



vidually endorse the claim online – and members responded in their thousands. Importantly, the overall response towards endorsing the pay and benefits claim has been exceptional and certainly without precedent within Mandate.

Not surprisingly, albeit disappointingly, despite being requested by Mandate to engage around the issues contained in the claim, Tesco senior management have to date refused to do so.

However, one thing is for sure, Tesco bosses cannot claim ignorance about the depth of anger felt by Mandate members working for the retailer. Following the July 24 meeting,

Gerry Light wrote to Frank Timmins, Tesco Ireland's Head of Employee Relations, to apprise him and the company of the feelings that had been expressed by union activists.

He informed Mr Timmins that the mood at the gathering was "both angry and determined", adding that, "it was unanimously decided that such non-engagement around important issues as those contained in the claim would not be tolerated any longer."

Accordingly," he continued, "I was instructed to write to the company one last time to once again seek engagement on all aspects of the claim."

In the letter, dated July 26, Mr Light underlined to Tesco management that if they did not engage "within a reasonable timeframe", the union would then "immediately commence to organise its members in Tesco Ireland, their families, their communities and the wider trade union movement and political parties" to take part in a national day of public protest to highlight how the union and its members had been treated over the last three years.

## Warned

He warned Tesco that if such an action failed to achieve its "desired objective", then a national shop stewards meeting would be convened "to discuss and decide on further actions up to and including industrial action at a time and manner of our choosing."

In a video message later broadcast over social media, Mr Light, addressing Mandate members and non-members in Tesco, said: "At this stage we have taken all of the reasonable steps to try and get your employer to meaningfully engage with you through your union. It is clear after nearly three years that they are determined not to do so.

"Equally you must be determined to show that you will not be treated like this any longer and that collectively you are prepared to bring your fight for respect and decency at work to a new level.

"This is what the thousands of union members who have endorsed the current claim want and whilst your employer thinks they can just ignore this reasonable demand your union does not.

"That is why together we should be all determined to do something to bring about positive and lasting change for you and your fellow union members employed in Tesco Ireland."



# Pay and benefits claim



Picture: olama (CC BY 2.0)

TESCO members of Mandate lodged a claim for improvements to pay and conditions of work for all Tesco workers on April 3.

The claim would dramatically improve living standards for Tesco workers, including pay increases, fairer scheduling, full-time jobs and a voice at work.

## Pay rises and the Living Wage

All new employees in Tesco start on an hourly rate of €10.56, but where an employer can afford it, such as Tesco, workers should be paid the Living Wage of €11.90 per hour.

The Living Wage is determined by an independent technical group comprising of researchers, academics and economists and it seeks to "provide an adequate income to enable individuals to afford a socially acceptable minimum standard of living."

As we all know, the cost of living in Ireland is extremely high, with housing costs rising by more than 80% since their lowest point in 2013. Meanwhile, most Tesco workers' wages have only grown by 8%.

The Living Wage has already been paid by some of Tesco's competitors, including Lidl, Aldi and IKEA.

Tesco can easily afford to pay it too.

Two separate surveys of thousands of Mandate members working in Tesco indicated that "pay equality" is at the top on their agenda, with more than 90% supporting it.

In order to achieve pay equality, we need to move workers towards one pay scale, as proposed by Mandate [SEE TABLE 1].

While Tesco management would prefer to harmonise workers' pay downwards, which is already on their agenda (see pre-1996 dispute), the 2019 pay and benefits claim would move all workers up to the highest point on the pre-2006 pay scale of €15.49 per hour.

When you factor in a pay increase for 2019, that figure becomes €16 per hour.

## What does this mean for you? Here are a few examples...

- If you were employed after 2006 and you work 30 hours per week, it will mean an extra:
  - +€3.05 per hour
  - +€91.50 per week
  - +€4,758 per year.

- If you were employed before 2006 and you work 35 hours per week, it mean an extra:
  - +€0.51 per hour
  - +€17.85 per week
  - +€928.20 per year

Here's a chart [SEE TABLE 2] that should help any post 2006 workers to calculate what increase you would be entitled to should the claim be successful.

## Is the claim affordable for Tesco Ireland?

Tesco do not disclose their profits in Ireland. Instead they hide them within their UK figures. However, we can estimate profits using data from the Central Statistics Office and Eurostat, while also taking into account how they are doing across the UK and Ireland combined.

One indicator of how the company is doing is contained in a newspaper headline on April 11, 2019: **'Tesco's £2.2bn profit beats expectations on turnaround'**

The article continued: "Releasing full-year re- August 2019 | SHOPFLOOR

TABLE 1

Current Pay Scales	Union Claim for 2019
€10.56 (starting)	€11.90 (1st year)
€10.98 (after 18 months)	€13 (2nd year)
€12.95 (after 3 years) – Top	€14 (3rd year)
Pre 1996: €14.31	€15 (4th year)
Post 1996 – Pre 2006: €15.49	€16 (6th year)

TABLE 2

	Hourly benefit	20 hours	25 hours	30 hours	35 hours	40 hours	Potential annual benefit
Year 1	€1.34	€26.80	€33.50	€40.20	€46.90	€53.60	€2,787.20
Year 2	€2.44	€48.80	€61.00	€73.20	€85.40	€97.60	€5,075.20
Year 3	€3.02	€60.40	€75.50	€90.60	€105.70	€120.80	€6,281.60
Year 4	€2.05	€41.00	€51.25	€61.50	€71.75	€82.00	€4,264.00
Year 6	€3.05	€61.00	€76.25	€91.50	€106.75	€122.00	€6,344.00

TABLE 3

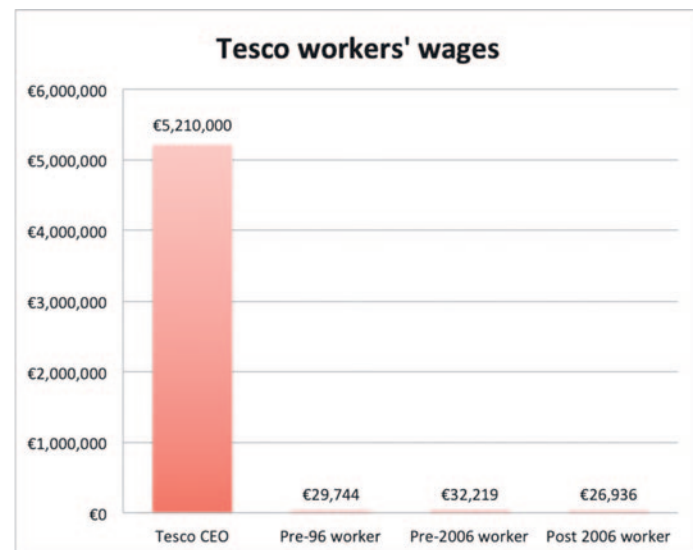


TABLE 4

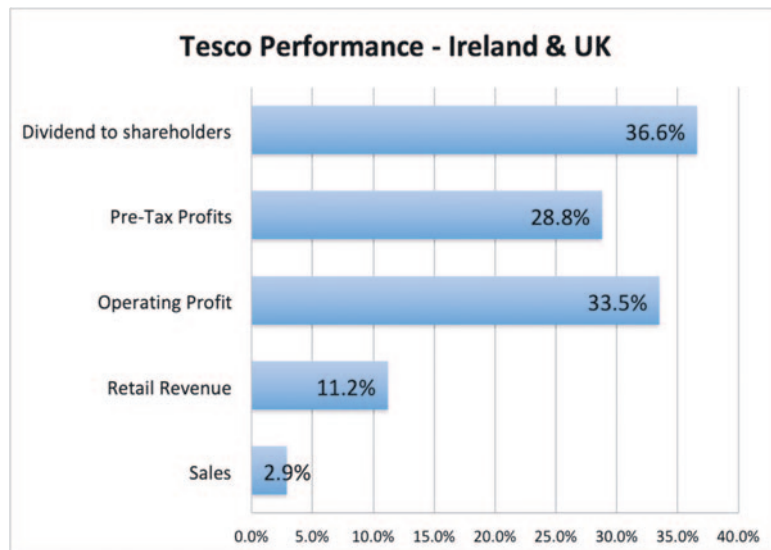
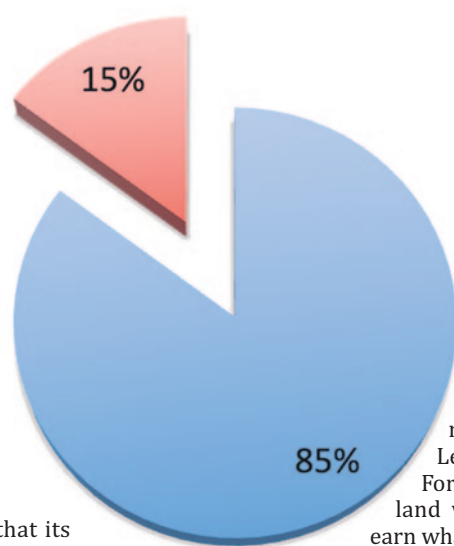


TABLE 5

## Estimated Tesco Ireland Profits v Cost of Pay Claim

■ Tesco Profits ■ Cost of Pay Claim



sults, Tesco said that its sales rose 11.3% to £56.9bn (€66.1bn) in the 12 months to February on a constant currency basis, while its operating profit surged 33.5% to £2.2bn (€2.5bn)."

In Ireland, its retail revenue, came to €2.68bn for 2018, compared to €2.57bn in the previous year, an extra €110 million.

The Irish chief executive, Kari Daniels, said the company had "increased volumes, transactions and basket sizes."

So who is benefiting from these improve-

ments? It seems senior executives are taking more than their fair share of the profits.

Earlier this month it was announced that Tesco's CEO Dave Lewis earned €5.21 million in 2018. For context, it would take a Tesco Ireland worker more than 200 years to earn what the CEO earned in just one year. That's obscene. [SEE TABLE 3]

As for shareholders, they're also getting their cut. Another article published in April stated: "Tesco doubles annual dividend as profits surge by a third." [SEE TABLE 4]

It is estimated that the company is generating between €250m and €370m in profit from its Irish operations. The full cost of implementing the pay and benefits claim would come to approximately €37m, meaning the company would be required to share only 10-15% of its

profits with its workers. [SEE TABLE 5]

It is clear that Tesco is a highly profitable employer, generating enormous profits, dividends and generous pay packets for its executives, so it can certainly share some of those profits with its workers if it wished to. It won't succumb without pressure from union members though.

Tesco's strategy to date has been to divide workers and play one group against the other. They pitted pre-1996 workers against post-1996 workers where they are refusing to pay some workers an 8% pay increase.

Once Tesco have finished with this group of workers, they will go after the next cohort, the pre-2006 group who now earn €1.18 per hour more than the pre-1996 workers. After that, it's the post-2006 group.

The pay and benefits claim for 2019 is fair and achievable provided all workers stay united in their union.

Of course management will tell you that it is not possible. Obviously it's in their interests to keep workers' pay low. They will probably offer a 2% or a 3% pay increase which is entirely insufficient for a company making the enormous profits that Tesco are.

## Next steps...

If you believe Tesco workers are entitled to better pay and conditions of employment, and you support the Pay & Benefits Claim for 2019, you go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/ir/CG3K9ZG> to express your support.

Together we are stronger.





HNFTU Executive Vice President Kou Wuijiang, second right, headed up the delegation. A range of issues were discussed during the subsequent meeting in Mandate HQ



Brian Forbes, left, accepts an exquisite china vase from delegation head Kou Wuijiang while, below, Kou shows John Douglas a book of traditional Chinese design, both gifts from HNFTU. The Chinese delegation received in return copies of the 1916 Proclamation, trade union medals and bottles of Irish whiskey



United front: Mandate officials join with the HNFTU delegation along with CWU's Steve Fitzpatrick, fourth right, in front of a portrait of celebrated trade unionist and republican activist Patrick Moran, executed in Mountjoy Prison along with five others on March 14, 1921

# Irish welcome for Chinese trade unionists

RECENTLY, Mandate was delighted to host a fraternal visit to Dublin by a group of senior trade unionists from the Henan Federation of Trade Unions (HNFTU) in China.

Henan is located in the centre of the country and is known as the "central plains of China".

The visit was coordinated by Mark Zhang, General Secretary of Ireland China Friendship Association, and it gave both Mandate and the HNFTU an opportunity to engage in a range of discussions including the organising and campaigning work of Mandate, the Chinese community in Ireland and the work carried out by HNFTU in China.

The detail and scale of unionisation

## HNFTU delegation in fraternal visit to Mandate HQ

covered by our Chinese comrades in comparison to Ireland is staggering and drew envious gasps from the Mandate attendees.

HNFTU governs 18 municipal union federations, 18 provincial industrial trade unions and 19 grassroots trade unions. Each country-level city or district of cities under the province has founded federations of trade unions.

At present, the number of union members in grassroots trade union amounts to 215,000 while the overall figure of union membership in Henan

stands in excess of an impressive 18 million members.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China forms the fundamental principle for union activities and in accordance with the trade union law of the People's Republic of China and the constitution of the Chinese trade unions, the HNFTU plays a vital and important role in Henan's political, economic and societal aims.

HNFTU union structures operate in the tried and tested system of democratic centralism.

Mandate National Coordinator

Brian Forbes told *Shopfloor*: "We talked at length about what Mandate could do to assist our Chinese communities."

"Having met previously with the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland we were in a good position to outline to our Chinese comrades many of the difficulties facing the Chinese population living and working here in Ireland."

"We talked about issues related to the international student visa system, family reunification, undocumented status and what we see as a targeted

approach by WRC Inspectors against many Chinese restaurants resulting in deportation orders.

"Frankly, much more could and should be done by our Government to improve the lives of first, second and third-generation Chinese immigrants to Ireland."

"As Irish trade unionists we must strive for improved conditions for all our ethnic communities in the same way that we'd love our own Irish emigrants to be treated in other countries."

The fraternal visit ended with an exchange of gifts and a firm promise that we'd meet again to further consolidate our international solidarity.

Workers of the World Unite!



# Step Up Programme

## Mandate launches search for Member Organisers...

Mandate is delighted to announce the re-introduction of our exciting and innovative Step Up Programme as an initiative to help promote activism from within our union and to demonstrate our intention to place workers at the heart of our union. Member Organisers will be deeply involved in our campaigns, in our organising, in our industrial relations strategy and in our training and development. Successful shortlisted candidates will attend an assessment day in Dublin and if found suitable will be placed on a panel for any Step Up vacancies that arise over the next 24 months.

## Purpose of the Step Up programme...

Mandate's member organising programme will provide a development opportunity for activists to be seconded from their employment to Mandate for a period of time to help activate our current membership, to work and learn alongside our organising team and to organise and recruit non-union workers. The Member Organiser will learn new skills that will help them to be work site leaders, have a better understanding of how their union works and the principles of how workers gain power at work by forming and/or joining a union. In essence joining our organising department as a Member Organiser for a period of time will equip individuals with all the skills required to help make a real difference in the lives of thousands of undervalued and underemployed workers in retail.

## Why Member Organisers are important...

Member Organisers will work on a range of different aspects of organising campaigns. They will spend dedicated time with experienced union organisers learning the fundamentals of organising before returning to their original workplaces and putting the learning into practice. Members are very effective in helping organise retail workers. They have the advantage of being able to establish a higher level of trust with non-union workers because they can speak from personal experience. Member Organisers will understand and relate to the problems that workers face on the job and will learn to explain how being a union member can help make changes in the workplace to correct those problems. Member Organisers are an important initiative under the Step Up Programme dedicated to the principle of building and developing capacity within the ranks of our own membership base.

## Get involved...

Mandate would encourage members to check out details of the Step Up initiative on our website [www.mandate.ie](http://www.mandate.ie) and if you think you have what it takes to become a Member Organiser then forward your written application to us straight away either by hard copy to: **Mandate Trade Union, Brian Forbes, Mandate National Coordinator, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1**, or by email to: [bforbes@mandate.ie](mailto:bforbes@mandate.ie)





TESCO

# Labour Court ruling backs the Arklow 14

THE Labour Court has found that Tesco's decision to launch disciplinary action against 14 of its workers for their involvement in "lawful, official industrial action" at the retailer was "unjustified and inappropriate".

Those involved – 12 workers from Tesco Arklow and two members of the union's National Executive Committee (NEC) – had been issued with final written warnings for taking part in industrial action in support of their contracts of employment and fellow workers.

The Labour Court supported Mandate's arguments in all 14 of the cases.

Explaining some of the background, Divisional Organiser Michael Meegan told *Shopfloor*: "A general meeting and ballot was held for members in Tesco Arklow in early 2016. Members locally voted not to support their pre-96 colleagues as part of national dispute.

"This meant that a picket could not be placed on the Arklow store during the subsequent dispute. Therefore, the 14 pre-96 members in Arklow – who had already voted in favour of industrial action – were given no choice but to withdraw their labour and attend at the picket line at Tesco Greystones."

Welcoming the Labour Court ruling, Mr Meegan said: "All of the members are delighted that they were vindicated by the Labour Court and that management was told that they were wrong to issue them with final written warnings and that all said warnings have to be removed from the members' personnel files.

"Furthermore – and of more importance – is the fact that the Labour Court confirms that the Tesco industrial action was lawful and, as such, the members were justified in their participation and support of the industrial action."

On the cases involving the 12 members from Tesco Arklow, the Labour Court ruled: "It is clear to the Court that the picket in which the workers participated was undertaken in full compliance with the requirements of the 1990 Industrial Relations Act and constituted at all times lawful, official



industrial action and [that] Tesco had been notified in writing to that effect in advance by the workers' union.

"It follows that Tesco's decision to commence disciplinary action against the workers was unjustified and inappropriate. Therefore, the outcome of that disciplinary action – the final written warning – should never have been placed on the workers' personnel files and, therefore, the record of that warning should be removed from all of their files."

## Immunities

Regarding one of the Tesco members, who is also a member of the union's NEC, the Labour Court found: "It was confirmed to the Court by the union that not only was the worker a member of the union's NEC, he had, in fact, been also an elected officer – the vice-president of his local division/branch of the union – at the time of the industrial dispute and was, thereby, undoubtedly covered by the immunities provided under the Industrial Relations Act."

The Labour Court ruling emphasised that as an elected branch officer, he had the legal right in his own time to attend pickets outside of his own place of employment in support of lawful industrial action by his own union.

It continued: "In fact, the employer

revealed that expired warnings are left on personnel files as it is an administrative inconvenience to remove them. This does not strike the Court as good practice.

"In the circumstances of this case, as disciplinary action ought not to have been imposed, the Court is of the view that the final written warning should be removed physically from the worker's file and that this should be confirmed to him in writing.

"Therefore, the worker should not have been the subject of disciplinary action. In this case, the final written warning should be removed physically from the worker's file and he should be advised in writing that this has happened."

Turning to the other NEC member and vice-president of the union, the Court noted that the worker's position within the union had been flagged up to the Store Manager who conducted both the investigation and the disciplinary stages of the process, but that he had "neither comprehended nor had regard to" the worker's status.

It continued: "It is common case that both the investigation meeting and the disciplinary meeting were conducted by one and the same individual i.e. the worker's Store Manager. In his outcome letter following the investigation meeting, the Store Manager stated: 'I can confirm that you were not covered by formal strike notice and therefore you engaged in unofficial industrial action. Notwithstanding that you were on your own time, the capacity in which you participated in this action had effect of engaging in activity that was damaging the business of your employer'."

The Labour Court ruling stated that it was clear the Store Manager had "arrived at conclusions" at the investigatory stage of the process "that went beyond his fact-finding role".

It continued: "In fact, he concluded, at that early stage of the process, that the worker had engaged 'in activity that was damaging to the [company's] business'. It follows that the Store Manager could not have undertaken the disciplinary stage of the



Michael Meegan

IT PAYS TO BE IN THE UNION...



## More concessions from Lloyds Pharmacy 'positive step forward'

IN MID-May Lloyds Pharmacy announced more major concessions on a number of specific union demands.

The move was welcomed by Mandate and described as a "positive step forward" that would make a "significant difference in the lives of all members of the union working there".

A Mandate spokesperson commented: "It should be no surprise that the company's concessions announced on Monday, May 20, came hard on the heels of a Labour Court recommendation issued the previous Friday in which the Court recommended that Lloyds Pharmacy recognise the union.

The Labour Court decision had stated: "In all the circumstances, the Court recommends that the employer should recognise the union as the representative of those employees who are in membership of the union and should engage with it in dealing with the issues which are the subject of this claim affecting those members."

Mandate called for recognition to be given to all Mandate mem-

bers "who came together, organised and took action for decency and fairness" at the retailer over the past two years.

The union emphasised that none of these concessions would have been possible without the pressure members brought to bear on the company and claimed it was "clear evidence to anyone who is in any doubt that when workers come together and are prepared to take action, big changes are possible."

While welcoming the concessions, the union underlined that there was "still much room for improvement" to be made on terms and conditions of employment.

And in a direct appeal to Lloyds Pharmacy workers, the Mandate spokesperson said: "You are also well aware from past experience that as quickly as things are given they can be taken away.

"Make sure to continue to strengthen Mandate by doing your part by asking fellow colleagues to join the union in your own shop and beyond. Together we are stronger!"

process as an impartial and unbiased decision-maker as he had manifestly already arrived at a conclusion in relation to the worker's culpability."

In assessing the appropriateness of the disciplinary sanction against him, the Court found that the worker in question did not take part in unofficial industrial action and had attended a lawful picket conducted in accordance with the Industrial Relations Act as an officer of a recognised union and in his own personal time.

Despite this, it found that he had been "subjected to a flawed disci-

plinary process for having done so, the outcome of which was the imposition of a very severe disciplinary sanction on him".

The Court found that Tesco's decision to launch disciplinary action against the work was "unjustified and inappropriate".

It concluded: "Therefore, the outcome of that disciplinary action - the final written warning – should never have been placed on the worker's personnel file and, therefore, the record of that warning should be removed from the file."

# Deal secures 2% pay rise and improved roster notification

MANDATE members working at two branches of SuperValu in Killester and Raheny secured a 2% pay increase in May, backdated to April 1, 2019. The deal also saw the introduction of a two-week roster notification, an increase of one week on what had previously applied. This deal will run until October 31, 2020.

Industrial Officer John Callan told

*Shopfloor*: "Negotiations began in December 2018. With Brexit on the horizon and its implications on retail in general, it was agreed to reconvene talks in March 2019.

"In late April, agreement was reached on proposals which were later unanimously accepted by members in both stores. Further matters, including long-service increments,

were discussed. It was agreed the company would look into this and address the issue at the next set of negotiations."

Mr Callan added: "Staff were extremely happy with the introduction of the two-week roster as this enables them to juggle the increasing pressures of work/life balance more securely into the future."

The outlets in Killester and Raheny are part of the McKane/McCartney Group which also has three other stores in Talbot Street, Donabate, and Dun Laoghaire.

During the talks, Mr Callan sought to have the other stores included in the deal. Currently, Mandate has members at all three locations and the company agreed to commence

discussions with the union about securing talks with the group.

He said: "Mandate organisers have already started with this task and have begun to organise at all three locations so staff in these shops can secure a deal in line with their counterparts in Killester and Raheny."



# A Right Charlie!

I FULLY appreciate that drug smuggling isn't one bit funny. However, the Colombian fella who flew into Barcelona airport with half a kilo of cocaine stashed under his wig deservedly wins the Pablo Escobar 'Man of the Week' Award. Spanish police made the "hair-raising" discovery because he looked nervous and had a disproportionately large hairpiece under his hat. Toupee or not toupee, that was the real life dilemma facing this international drug smuggler. Apparently as they handcuffed him he quipped, "Ah well, hair today, gone tomorrow..."

# Biffo

The Eye That Never Sleeps

## The Bicycle Guy

TWO fingers up to all you "doubters, doomsters and gloomsters" because that effervescent and enthusiastic "can-doer", Alexander Boris de

Pfeffel Johnson, has finally been crowned by Mrs Windsor as supreme commander of the Second Galactic Empire of the UK.

This dishevelled politico, whose long list of anti-immigrant, misogynistic, homophobic and racist utterances have been variously reported in the media, now takes the lead as the Empire strikes back against that pesky European Rebel Alliance to help bring some order back to the Galaxy.

Those wonderfully endearing



Picture: Erik (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

begging for help and a ladder; that classic image of him knocking the stuffing out of a 10-year-old by sending him flying during an impromptu game of rugby; and our hilarious hero's runaway rugby tackle and televised GBH assault on Maurizio Gaudino during a charity soccer match... they haven't hurt him one iota.

None of these prime examples of utter buffoonery has dented his popularity among his right-wing conservative colleagues. In fact, his popularity has blossomed since his public utterances about Africa and "flag-waving piccaninnies" with "watermelon smiles" or his despicable description of his meeting with some young Ugandan children with Aids who performed a welcome song for him as "Aids-ridden choristers".

The "bicycle guy" with his unruly mop of blond hair and bumbling personality has inexplicably become the supreme commander. However, his circus act as 'Boris the Clown' isn't one bit funny and his popularity is worryingly suggestive of a terribly cruel streak at the very heart of British public life.

images are now seared into our consciousness: Supreme Commander Boris dangling from a zip-wire as he helplessly waves a Union Jack while



Illustration: Christoph Scholz (CC BY-SA 2.0)

# We Shall Over Comb!

WHILE we are on the prickly subject of hair, Michael Wolff reported in his book *Fire and Fury* that Ivanka Trump often described her father's hair mechanics to friends, explaining it thus: "An absolutely clean pate – a contained island after scalp reduction surgery – surrounded by a furry circle of hair around the sides and front, from which all ends are drawn up to meet in the centre then swept back and secured by a stiffening spray." The



Picture: Public Domain

age old issue of Donald Trump's hair being the subject of speculation and ridicule has finally been put to bed by Wolff and Ivanka once and for all. For those of you unsure of the finer points of gent's hairstyling, I'd best describe Trump's unique hairstyle as a 'reverse Bobby Charlton' (pictured left).

So there you have it friends, Trump's hair is real, just like his racism, xenophobia and sexism.

If Trump was really serious about ditching the coiffured German helmet hairstyle he prefers I'd be happy to suggest he goes for an *American Psycho* slicked-back look. An *American Psycho* hairstyle to suit an American psycho.

# Pinata Economics

FINALLY, I've started writing my first book, titled 'Pinata Economics'. To summarise: it's about how 'trickle-down economics' actually does eventually work but requires us all to beat the rich with thick long sticks until their money starts flowing out...

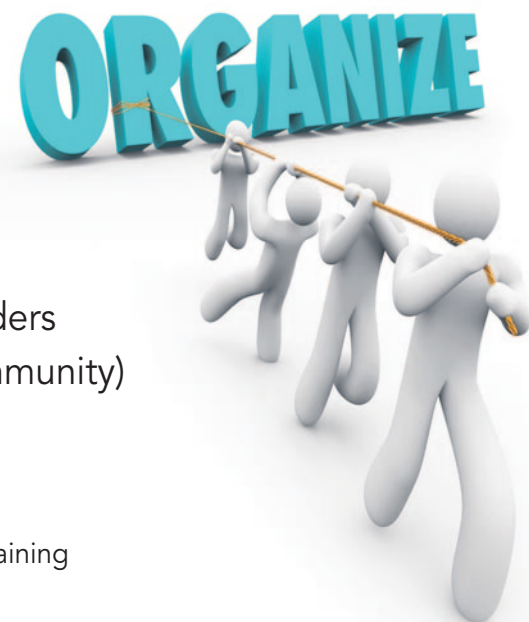


# Recruitment & Organising

This three day course is designed to provide trade union activists with the knowledge and skills to effectively contribute to and participate in their unions **Recruitment & Organising** strategy.

### Course Content:

- Building workers power
- Engaging workers
- Talking to the undecided
- Handling objections
- Base building and collective action, identifying and recruiting leaders
- Mapping (workplace and community)
- Understanding power



### Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate Certificate.

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email [mandateotc@mandate.ie](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie) to secure your place.



# Govts must get serious on retail

RETAIL has been treated for too long as “the Cinderella industry,” Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light told delegates to Congress BDC, as he seconded an Usdaw motion on the crisis in the high street.

He insisted the sector did not get the recognition it deserved “for the significant role it plays” in the economy.

The movers of Motion 27 flagged up the increased competition faced by traditional ‘bricks-and-mortar’ shops against online retailers and called on both the UK and Irish governments to focus on creating a “level playing field” as well as put in place a “robust strategy” to deal with the impact of automation.

## Engage

However, Mr Light pointed to moves being made south of the border by the retail and distribution group of the Private Sector Committee of ICTU to engage with retail employers, Retail Ireland, on the issue.

He said: “The purpose of the collaboration is to agree ways of dealing with the many challenges facing the retail sector arising amongst other things from the fallout of Brexit and the ravages being imposed upon brick and mortar stores by new forms of technology and online shopping.”

Though this engagement was at an early stage both sides had identified the “essential need” to bring about a “radical change in political thinking” to ensure that the retail sector and retail workers are no longer seen as



Gerry Light: ‘Retail sector needs radical blueprint’

“the poor relations” to all other parts of the economy.

He continued: “For too many years retail has been treated as a Cinderella industry with little recognition of the significant role it plays. Given the magnitude of the challenges facing it

what the retail sector needs is a radical blueprint that is supported by Government policies that have at their very heart the protection of traditional retailing and the hundreds of thousands of job that it provides.”

Motion carried.

# Lloyds Pharmacy: we haven’t gone away, you know

“WE haven’t gone away you know,” was Mandate’s message to Lloyds Pharmacy bosses, delivered at the Congress BDC in Dublin on July 2, as the union promised it had “unfinished business” with the retailer.

Mandate National Coordinator Brian Forbes made the comments while seconding a Communication Workers’ Union motion on the awarding of public contracts to anti-union employers.

The movers of Motion 13 claimed awarding public contracts to anti-trade union firms “facilitated and encouraged anti-worker behaviour on the part of employers”.



Brian Forbes: ‘Unfinished business’

The motion also asked the incoming Executive to lead a campaign calling on the state to make it mandatory for companies successfully bidding for public contracts “to pay a Living Wage as a minimum or the recognised union rates where appropriate and to recognise trade unions for collective bargaining where the staff organise themselves”.

Mr Forbes took the opportunity to thank CWU members for their support during the Lloyds Pharmacy dispute.

“I want to sincerely thank our CWU comrades who stood strong in solidarity alongside Mandate members on picket lines during our recent five-month industrial dispute with Lloyds Pharmacy which is owned by the McKesson Corporation, one of the wealthiest global corporations on this planet.”

He told delegates: “I also want to send a direct and unambiguous message to Lloyds Pharmacy here in Ireland and their global puppet masters, the McKesson Corporation – we haven’t gone away you know. We have unfinished business.”

## Dispute

Mr Forbes continued: “Our lengthy dispute at Lloyds Pharmacy was about pay and work conditions as well as a sick pay scheme. The irony should not be lost that we had pharmacy workers working for one of the wealthiest employers in the world... and they had to strike for a sick pay scheme!”

“The strikes were also about zero hour contracts and, very importantly, about union recognition – the right to a union voice at work.”

He explained that when the Irish Labour Court told Lloyds Pharmacy it should recognise Mandate as a union that represented a large proportion of the workforce, the retailer “simply refused”.

“LloydsPharmacy currently holds contracts with the Health Service Executive, which is a public state body, while at the same time refusing to acknowledge the advice given by the Irish Labour Court, another public state body,” he said.

“All too often this scenario is replicated across the private and public sectors as companies such as Lloyds Pharmacy actively seek out and receive state contracts while refusing to meaningfully engage with the state’s industrial relations mechanisms.”

Mr Forbes added: “These same companies will use to maximum effect any legislation that curtails the rights of workers to take industrial action. This blatant cherrypicking of rights and responsibilities by state-sponsored companies cannot be allowed to continue. Trade union rights are human rights!” Motion carried.



Mandate’s delegation at Congress BDC



● Ireland's old I.R. model 'broken beyond repair' ● 'If they break our front-line, public sector is next..'

# INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

## The tipping point has been reached



“ We are fighting with the biggest bully in the schoolyard with one hand tied behind our backs ”

THE 'voluntarist' model of industrial relations is now "in tatters" and "broken beyond repair". General Secretary John Douglas made the comments in a speech to delegates gathered for the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference in Trinity College, Dublin, on July 2.

Moving Motion 10 on collective bargaining and union access, he reminded conference that this voluntarist model had its roots in an era when major employers "by and large" accepted workers' rights to organise and collectively bargain, and respected the industrial relations machinery of the State.

But he claimed the problem now was that employers in the private sector no longer respected workers' rights to organise or collectively bargain.

"They have en masse withdrawn their consent for the system and you can't have a voluntarist model without mutual consent and respect of capital and labour," he noted, adding that employers had adopted a "new type of approach" over the last decade.

"...an approach facilitated and supported by successive governments – the approach is based on fear and intimidation of workers."

These "bully boy and fear tactics" were still a major tool of employers: "...the captive workers' anti-union meetings, the union-busting law firms, the media and customer charm offensives, the bogus redundancy packages to clear out union workers, the anti-union propaganda, the denial of access to work sites by union officials, the anti-union laws which stop unions from taking political or supportive actions..."

Because of this, the deck of cards was now stacked against unions and

workers. "We are fighting with the biggest bully in the schoolyard with one hand tied behind our backs," he warned delegates. "For too long our trade union movement has been treated as second class when it comes to collective bargain-

ing rights, we have been pawned off with lip service and legislation which – frankly – is as useful as an 'ash tray on a motorbike!" Mr Douglas gave conference examples of this type of approach encountered by Mandate. He continued: "We

have experienced first-hand how bully employers use aggressive anti-union tactics to keep their sites 'union free' and workers in their place.

"In Lloyds Pharmacy, the company set up a yellow union to block union organisation and then threw millions of euro at a so-called voluntary exit package in an attempt to clear out what remained of the union – but we are still there and fighting!"

"In Tesco after a strike three years ago, 2,000 striking workers were taken off union deductions at source, all union officials were – and still are – barred from all Tesco locations, all union and shop steward facilities have been withdrawn, collective agreements are ignored, over 80 union activists have been disciplined for taking strike action and another 180 have had a cost-of-living increase withheld for the last four years because they stood with the union.

"This is the type of intimidation and victimisation common place in private sector workplaces when workers stand up and demand a union voice.

### Prohibited

"In Dunnes Stores, all union officials are barred from entering all stores – they refuse union access for representatives or collective bargaining. All union materials are prohibited.

"In Aldi/Lidl the situation is no better – unions are barred and workers are intimidated."

Mr Douglas claimed a war for the future of organised labour in the private sector was being waged against employers who have a "whip in hand" and a "sympathetic ear" in government circles and that a "tipping point" had been reached.

"If they break through our front-line, the public sector is next," he cautioned, citing how public sector workers had been targeted with FEMPI legislation and job losses following the 2008 crash.

He told delegates that because the current game is "rigged against us", unions now demanded equal status, including a Bill of Trade Union Rights and legislation to outlaw the victimisation of union members and workers.

"Let us arise and demand a new Trade Union Rights Act which guarantees the legal right to organise and collectively bargain. If it takes a constitutional amendment, so be it."

● Jimmy Doran: Unions must get radical or become redundant – p29

**BDC19**  
Building a better future for all

General Secretary John Douglas speaks at Congress BDC

Pictures: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

## NEWS

### M&S members vote overwhelmingly for pay proposals

MANDATE members in Marks & Spencers have voted overwhelmingly in favour of a pay and benefits claim negotiated between the union and the company. Members voted by a margin of 98% in favour of the proposals.

Despite difficult trading conditions, members will now receive a 4% pay increase over two years, with the first 2% backdated to February 2019.

A reduction in temporary contracts means the company "will advertise 84 of our current temporary con-

tracts as permanent roles within the business" immediately.

Mandate Assistant General Secretary Gerry Light told *Shopfloor*: "This deal will benefit both the company and our members and is a great example of how responsible employers and trade unions can get things done for the betterment of all.

"Such a strong ballot in favour indicates how clued-in our members are to the challenges facing M&S and how responsible they are."

### Brown Thomas members vote 99% for deal

MANDATE members in Brown Thomas voted almost unanimously – by 99% – in favour of a set of pay and benefits proposals for 2019/2020 negotiated between Mandate and management at the retailer.

The proposals include a 2.5% pay increase backdated to February 1, 2019 as well as a 2% pay increase from February 1, 2020, with a new agree-

ment set for January 2021. Adjustments have been made to the pay scale which will make it more equitable and all members will receive an extra day of annual leave, bringing the total to 23 days per year.

Furthermore, from 2020 – an extra day of annual leave will be given to all members who have five years or more service on January 1, 2020.



# Constitutional protections must be beefed up

**FROM A worker's perspective the current main legislative and constitutional provisions that underpin the conduct of industrial relations and the right of workers to be meaningfully represented by a trade union are outdated, inadequate and need to be changed.**

This assertion is not based on some form of rash call for change – rather it is rooted in the reality that on an increasing basis more and more employers are reducing these provisions to the point of having little or no value.

The principal piece of legislation covering dispute resolution in this country was introduced some 74

## VIEW *from the* SHOPFLOOR Gerry Light

Assistant General Secretary  
Mandate Trade Union

years ago and it is called the Industrial Relations Act 1946. Over the years this Act has been the subject of many amendments. However, the spirit and intent that underpins it is coming under increasing scrutiny with many in the trade union movement questioning whether the manner in which it is now been interpreted by employers represents a deepening regression in the power of workers.

**Probably the most negative changes that occurred were from the 1980s on, and there can be no doubt that these changes were heavily influenced by what was happening in the UK under the Thatcher government where legislation that severely reduced the power of trade unions was being introduced.**

Our 1946 Act essentially promoted the concept of what is often referred to as a 'voluntarist' industrial relations model. In order to support this the state created institutions, such as the Labour Court, to assist both sides reach an agreed solution when they encountered difficulties.

While strictly speaking the notion of volunteerism means that parties on either side of the industrial relations divide have the right to engage with each other or not, the practice for many years saw high levels of active engagement both in the private and public sector.

It could be argued that this practice was so commonplace that the trade union movement took it for granted and didn't see the need to strengthen these rights any further.

Unfortunately recent trends shown that a growing number of employers are adopting a strict interpretation of the voluntarist approach in that they are steadfastly refusing to engage with a trade union when they are requested to

“Worryingly in the retail sector the number of employers adopting strict interpretation of voluntarist model are growing”

do so by their employees. This also means that they do not attend at the Workplace Relations Commission or the Labour Court.

In the retail sector these are not insignificant employers and – worryingly – their numbers are growing. Counted among them are the likes of Dunnes, Lloyds Pharmacy, Paddy Power, IKEA, Lidl and Aldi. When you consider the number of workers employed in these businesses you can see why the situation has reached a point where we must take stock and demand change.

**This type of anti-union/worker behaviour also seriously diminishes the value of the provision contained at section 40.6.1 (iii) of the Irish constitution which effectively gives workers the right to freedom of association – in other words, the right to join a union.**

Again the strict interpretation applied to this entitlement by many employers is while they recognise the rights of workers in this regard they, as employers, are not compelled to deal with unions.

Regrettably through the years this approach has been supported by some judicial interpretations which were, of course, heavily influenced by political and ideological values.

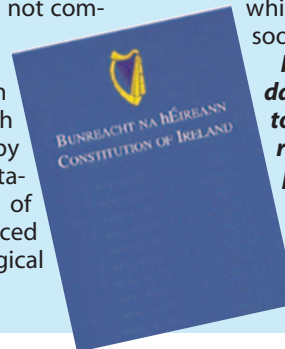
At this year's biennial annual conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions there was much consensus for the need for change. In fact, Congress has published a policy document outlining how this change might be achieved.

Basically there are two schools of thought – the first suggesting that the route should be pursued through Europe, while on the other hand there is a call for a constitutional referendum in order to strengthen the existing constitutional guarantee.

As far as Mandate is concerned the second option is the one favoured. In order to achieve this we must now commence a campaign which should be conducted with the same intensity as the one which delivered the recently introduced banded hours legislation.

The objectives of the campaign must become a key ask of the various political parties as we head into the next General Election which is likely to happen sooner rather than later.

**It has to be made abundantly clear the response to any political party or representative not supporting this call will be reflected on the ballot paper when the next opportunity arises.**



## NEWS

### ILO REPORT

# 10% of top earners take nearly half of global pay

SOME 10% of workers receive 48.9% of total global pay, while the lowest-paid 50% of workers receive just 6.4%, new figures released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have revealed.

And even more shockingly, the lowest 20% of income earners – around 650 million workers – earn less than 1% of global labour income – a figure the ILO claims has hardly changed in 13 years.

The Labour Income Share and Distribution dataset, developed by the ILO Department of Statistics, contains data from 189 countries and is drawn from the world's largest collection of harmonised labour force survey data.

The new dataset shows that overall global labour income inequality has fallen since 2004. However, this is not due to reductions in inequality within countries – at the national level, pay

inequality is actually increasing.

Rather, it is because of increasing prosperity in large emerging economies, specifically China and India. Overall, the findings detail how income inequality remains pervasive in the world of work.

It offers two new indicators for major trends in the world of work, at national, regional and global levels. One provides the first internationally comparable figures of the share of GDP that goes to workers – rather than capital – through wages and earnings. The second looks at how labour income is distributed.

The key findings show that globally the share of national income going to workers is falling, from 53.7% in 2004 to 51.4% in 2017.

Looking at the average pay distribution across countries, it finds that the share going to the middle class

(the middle 60% of workers) declined between 2004 and 2017, from 44.8% to 43%. At the same time, the share earned by the top 20% of earners increased, from 51.3% to 53.5%.

Countries where these top earners saw their share of national pay rise by at least one percentage point include Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Pakistan, the UK and the US.

“The data show that in relative terms, increases in the top labour incomes are associated with losses for everyone else, with both middle class and lower-income workers seeing their share of income decline,” said Steven Kapsos, Head of the ILO's Data Production and Analysis Unit.

“However, when the labour income shares of the middle or lower income workers increase, the gains tend to be widespread, favouring everyone except the top earners.”



## Brexit briefing for Corbyn at ICTU HQ

**CONGRESS General Secretary Patricia King greets Jeremy Corbyn outside ICTU's Parnell Square headquarters in Dublin on May 29. Ms King had invited the British**

**Labour Party leader to a briefing to hear ICTU's views on Brexit and to outline how it will impact on workers North and South of the border.**

Picture: RollingNews.ie



## CHILLING: How Colombian peace deal brought a dividend of death for many on the left



Paul Gavan

IN 2016 a Latin American country gave the world great news. The Colombian state and the western hemisphere's oldest guerrilla movement, the FARC, signed an agreement to end half a century of armed conflict.

Today, The Colombian Peace Process is in crisis. It's not hard to see why; 116 social, human rights and trade union leaders were assassinated in 2018, and 51 more so far this year.

Three FARC members were also murdered in June taking to 135 the number of former guerrillas killed since the Colombian peace agreement was signed in November 2016.

It's hard to sustain a peace process when one side sees its leaders being systematically assassinated. It's harder still after the election last year of a far-right government under President Ivan Duque that has been a constant critic of the peace process and appears at best indifferent and at worst complicit in the slaughter of civic leaders.

President Duque's support for the appointment of an army general, Nicacio Martinez, accused of serious human rights abuses, as the new head of the Colombian military is just one example of worrying policy choices under his administration.

I spent the last week in May visiting Colombia as a member of a Justice for Colombia peace monitor delegation of trade unionists and politicians from Ireland and Britain.

### Witnessing genocide

While there I met with a wide range of human rights groups and trade union leaders. One activist told me: "We are witnessing a genocide of social, trade union leaders and human rights defenders."

At a meeting with opposition politicians, in one of the saddest statements I have ever heard, Aida Avella, a member of parliament for the Patriotic Union Party, told me: "There aren't so many trade unionists killed lately, but then there aren't so many of us left."

The peace agreement promised an end to conflict, disarmament, justice for victims, comprehensive rural development, and political participation for all. FARC handed over 100% of their weapons to a United Nations mission in September 2017, and agreed to be demobilised into reintegration zones across the state. It has transformed into a political party and retained the name FARC.

However, nearly three years on the key components of the agreement remain unfulfilled. Instead of a bright new future based on inclusion, former combatants and social and trade union leaders face ever greater threats to their lives and their communities from right-wing paramilitary groups, sometimes in collusion with state police and military, and always with impunity.

The issue of rural development is one key component of the peace agreement. As one former FARC combatant explained to me: "At heart we are farmers; if we don't plant crops, we don't have a future."

As part of the peace agreement a land fund of three million hectares was to be given to peasant farmers, with land titles covering another seven million hectares to be formally regularised for the first time. To date this promise of rural reform remains unfulfilled.

At the same time thousands of ex-FARC combatants are stranded across 26 specially created demobilisation zones as the lack of rural development has made it impossible to build a viable economic future for their communities.

I visited one of these zones in the North East



Then President Juan Manuel Santos, above left, and FARC leader Timochenko shake hands during the signing of the peace deal in Havana

# 'There are not many trade unionists killed lately but then there are not many of us left'



Deadly toll: pictures of recently slain leftists

of Colombia. Tierra Grata is located high up in the hills of the municipality of La Paz in the Department of Cesar. The people I met there, ex-FARC combatants and their families, were struggling against the odds to build a future for their community.

There was much to admire about this community, especially the leading role played by women, and their adherence to democratic principles at community level. They had built basic homes, developed community facilities, and had managed to acquire a small amount of land for growing crops.

However they still depended on water being delivered each day up a very challenging dirt road and depended on a rudimentary supply of electricity through an on-site generator.

They were anxious to develop eco-tourism as a source of revenue but were mired in poverty. It was clear that the state support that was promised in the peace deal had not been deliv-

ered. One community leader explained to us: "This situation sometimes takes away our hope. If re-incorporation is a failure, then peace has failed and this is what is happening."

Perhaps the most moving meeting was with the community leaders of Cajibío, a town of around 40,000 in north Cauca. It was the pictures that will stay with me. Pictures of men, most of them young, pinned to one wall of the community centre in which we met.

All of them community or trade union leaders. Many of them members of the FENSUAGRO agricultural trade union. All of them dead – murdered by paramilitaries who appear to be able to act with impunity.

### tooth-and-claw

These paramilitaries are the dark underbelly of tooth-and-claw capitalism that holds sway in Colombia, acting on behalf of big corporations and big landowners that dominate economic wealth in this unfortunate country.

One week after my return home I read of yet another death from that same community – this time of a 16-year-old youth member of the same union, beaten to death by police last month. Startling new figures from the International Trade Union Confederation last month showed that almost two-thirds of global murders of trade unionists in 2018 occurred in Colombia.

In addition to 34 murders in Colombia, the ITUC found 10 cases of attempted murder and 172 cases of threats to life in the country. This is why Colombia is the most dangerous country

in the world in which to be a member of a trade union. On the last day of our visit we met with high-ranking government ministers and officials. The fact that they would meet with representatives from Justice For Colombia was significant, and it was encouraging to hear them express support for the goals of the peace process.

Regrettably though, much of the language used was not at all in keeping with these aims, and there was no credible commitment offered to tackle the ongoing slaughter of opposition activists and former combatants.

So what is to be done? The message from former combatants, trade union and social leaders was clear. The Colombian government must not be allowed to turn their backs on the promise of the peace process.

There must be unprecedented pressure brought to bear on the administration, particularly with regard to the Human Rights Commitments attached to the recent EU-Colombian trade deal.

The peace agreement still has the potential to deliver. If the Colombian government continues to fail to honour the agreement, it must be held accountable in a meaningful way – both at United Nations level, and in terms of international trade.

Above all the trade union movement must continue to be at the heart of the international campaign for Justice for the Colombian people.

Paul Gavan is a Sinn Féin senator and is the party's Seanad spokesperson for education and workers' rights



# ● Punish politicians at polls, rally told ● 'It's a crisis that is going to become a catastrophe'

## Housing crisis 'crime against humanity'

THOUSANDS of protestors took to the streets of Dublin in a massive Raise the Roof rally on May 18 to express their anger at the Government's inaction on the "crime against humanity" that is the housing crisis in Ireland.

They marched from Parnell Square to a rally outside the GPO in O'Connell Street, close to the statue of Jim Larkin, where they heard a number of speakers call for Fine Gael's failed policies on homelessness to be exposed and for the politicians to be held accountable at the upcoming local and European elections.

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas told the crowds that a housing emergency had been declared in October 2018 in the Dáil, but that next to nothing had been done since then to address the problem.

"Six months ago, we were successful in getting the Dáil motion passed which declared that there would be a declaration of a housing emergency; that there would be a legal right to housing; that a major investment programme in housing would commence; that there would be rent caps and security of tenure; an end to eviction and a legal right to housing..."

But what had been a national emergency, he warned, had now "spiralled out of control" to become "a national scandal". "There are 11,000 homeless people in Ireland - 4,000 of them are



Mandate General Secretary John Douglas told rally housing crisis was a 'national scandal'

Picture: Derek Spiers/Congress

children. There are people in bed and breakfasts in Gardiner Street, in cheap hotels, in family hubs all across this city. It's a national shame," he told the rally.

Pointing out that homeless people continued to die on the streets, Mr Douglas said: "Last week in my own home town in Bray, there was a homeless man found dead - for want of a decent shelter."

Against the backdrop of such human tragedies, he said that "international vulture funds" were being invited into Ireland with promises of tax

breaks "to mop up public land and mop up public housing - for sheer greed and for sheer profit".

"This Government is lining the pockets of bed and breakfast owners, of family hub owners, of direct provision owners - they're putting hundreds of millions of euro in their pockets while our citizens haven't got shelter. This is no longer a national emergency - it's a crime against humanity."

Mr Douglas called on the "risen people of Ireland" not to stand for this "for one second longer" and warned politi-

cians that "actions speak louder than words".

"It was easy to go into the Dáil and pass a motion and then do sweet F.A. for the next six months as the housing crisis got worse and worse. It's cynical and it's undemocratic."

He claimed the Fine Gael government "supported by its cronies in Fianna Fail" were betraying Irish citizens "every day of the week".

"The land is here, the money is here - what's lacking is a moral compass and a will to build public housing for the people of Ireland."

He added: "I'll tell you why they think they can get away with it because there are no consequences for them - but we must prove them wrong."

"We must make them pay for that betrayal at the ballot box next week at the local and European elections. We have to make change happen. If we don't make change happen, no one else will make change happen."

The Government's housing policy *Rebuilding Ireland* unveiled in 2016 was its response to the crisis with a promised raft of measures including public housing construction, the Housing Assistance Payment scheme and the Rental Accommodation scheme, but activist Fr Peter McVerry insisted it was not working. He claimed the "em-

peror has no clothes and until they realise they have no clothes, nothing is going to change."

Fr McVerry told RTE at the rally: "Since *Rebuilding Ireland* has come in, the number of homeless people has gone up and up and up; rents have gone to record levels; house prices are out of reach of many households in Ireland."

And he warned: "I believe it's a crisis that is going to become a catastrophe when the mortgage repossessions start to kick in..."

Orla O'Connor of the National Women's Council of Ireland claimed Ireland had the highest rate of female homelessness in Europe.

She said: "We know the devastation not having a home is having on the women of Ireland. This is the equality issue of our day."

Bulelani Mfaco, from the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland, criticised the profits being made by private companies from those living in direct provision.

He said: "Direct provision was created 20 years ago and was only meant to last six months but the Government liked it - it would deter people coming to Ireland to seek asylum and it would make a profit for those running direct provision centres."



## 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](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie)



## Presentation & Public Speaking Skills

This two day course is designed to provide trade union activists with the knowledge and skills to prepare, present and deliver presentations effectively within their roles.

### Day 1 - Course Content:

- Designing a Presentation
- Preparation & Practice
- Methods of Presentation
- Structuring a Speech
- Not Overloading
- Individual Task (Beginning your Speech)

### Day 2 - Course Content:

- Engaging the Audience
- Communication Skills Verbal and Non-Verbal  
Verbal: *Time, Pitch, Create Effect*  
Non-Verbal: *Physical Orientation, Posture, Breathing Exercise*
- Active Listening, Speech Timing
- Speech Delivery
- Overcome Nerves & Anxiety
- Individual Speech Practical Exercise

### Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate Certificate.

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email [mandateotc@mandate.ie](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie) to secure your place.





# Amazon workers stage Prime Day action in several countries

AMAZON workers in several countries, including UK, Poland, Spain, Germany and the US, went on strike recently to coincide with the e-giant's annual 'Prime Day' sales initiative, which features thousands of product launches and deals at knock-down prices.

Prime Days are some of the busiest times of the year with the extra pressure in the one-day shipping offered to Prime members falling squarely on the shoulders of already hard-pressed workers.

In a new development – and doubtless in a bid to maximise profits for the online retailer – this year's Prime Day stretched over a 48-hour period on July 15 and 16.

Stuart Appelbaum, who is president of the US retail and wholesale workers' union RWDSU, said: "Amazon needs to understand that human beings are not robots. By doubling Prime Day's duration and halving the delivery time, the company is testing hundreds of thousands of workers' physical limits as though they were trained triathletes. This is plain wrong."

"Operating at these speeds for this duration means Amazon needs to hire more workers, under more sustainable speeds that don't put workers' lives in jeopardy. Instead, we are seeing a callous indifference to worker safety."

Mandate National Coordinator Brian Forbes told *Shopfloor*: "If you're looking to bag a bargain on the next Prime Day, perhaps in future you should think again before you click 'Buy Now' and ponder what it means



Picture: Mark Mathosian (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

for workers who have to pick up the pace to fulfil those orders.

"Amazon's 650,000 workers should have trade union representation as a right, a decent wage, decent terms and conditions and a shift that doesn't leave them feeling utterly exhausted at clocking-off time."

The sales event saw a series of stoppages and rallies to highlight unfair pay and working conditions at a number of British, Polish, and Spanish 'fulfillment centres'.

Protests under the slogan 'Stop discounting workers' wages' kicked off on July 14 as some 2,000 workers at seven Amazon facilities in Germany walked off the job, with one *ver.di* official, Orhan Akman, commenting: "While Amazon throws huge discounts to its customers on Prime Day, its employees lack a living wage."

Spanish workers took part in a two-day demo outside of the San Fernando de Henares warehouse, close to Madrid, while thousands of miles away, workers outside of the Shakopee facility in Minnesota chanted, "We work, we sweat, Amazon workers need a rest!"

Meanwhile in Poland, the NSZZ Solidarity Union (Solidarność) and Workers' Initiative (Inicjatywa Pracownicza) choose July 15 to launch their campaign for a collective agreement with the company.

UNI Global Union General Secretary Christy Hoffman, speaking as the Prime Day actions commenced, said: "Amazon workers want change at the company. Today, workers are demanding an end to Amazon's brutal conditions and to its ongoing attack on their rights."

"Amazon's incredible wealth and enormous global footprint has been built on the backs of its workers, and this employee uprising is calling for greater accountability and responsibility."

And ITF General Secretary Steve Cotton offered some advice to Amazon's CEO: "Rather than put off the inevitable and risk business disruption - I would seek to negotiate a solution that is good for shareholders, management and, most importantly, the workers that have made Amazon so successful."

He added: "The starting point for that solution must be the right to organise – this is clearly a growing movement."

● Sandra Stapleton viewpoint page 25



Picture: Jevgenijs Slihto (CC BY 2.0)

## Workplace Union Representative Training

This three-day **Workplace Representative 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:

- The role of the Workplace Representative
- Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Employment Law
- Dealing with workplace issues
- Workplace Organisation & Communications
- Recruiting members and building a strong union in the workplace
- Organising and chairing meetings
- Political and Social Studies
- Supporting union campaigns
- Agreeing actions to build a stronger union in the workplace

### Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate Certificate. Members may then carry on their training and personal development

*Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 or email [mandateotc@mandate.ie](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie) to secure your place.*



**Charity Quiz** Big-hearted staff at Penneys, in Marshes Shopping Centre, Dundalk, held a quiz recently for the Cara Cancer Support Centre in the town. Industrial Officer John Callan told *Shopfloor*: "A great night was had by all and staff raised loads of money for this worthy local charity."

## Bar Workers UNION TRAINING

Mandate Trade Union is designing and developing this **Bar Workers Union Training** due to workers having identified training that they need and the need to raise awareness in their workplaces.

### Course Content:

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

### Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate Certificate.

*Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on 01-8369699 or email [mandateotc@mandate.ie](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie) to secure your place.*



# Ireland's offshore oil and gas industry: Hot air and watery wells

By **Sinéad Mercier**  
Green Party researcher

AFTER a long hiatus, last summer Providence Resources drilled for oil in the Porcupine Basin off the south west coast of Cork and Kerry. Significant public relations work was done to claim that five billion barrels of oil would be found. On August 4th, it was revealed that nothing was found but a watery well, and shares in Providence Resources fell 46%.

In Irish folklore, the Porcupine Basin is believed to be the legendary site of Hy-Brasil – for some it is known as Tír na nÓg. A mythology matched only by the fossil fuel industry's own press on the likelihood of finding oil in the area.

Indeed the failure of this watery well is no surprise; it is a fundamental feature of every fossil fuel venture off the Irish coast. Out of around 160 wells drilled since 1962, only two commercial discoveries have been found. This is a record low that has existed in a country with the second most attractive fiscal terms in the world and a governing Department of Climate Action and Environment that has never once conducted an environmental impact assessment of industry activities offshore.

Gas was found off Kinsale in 1971 and Corrib in 1996, but they are no example to follow. Not only was there a 25-year gap between discoveries, but they resulted in reputational damage to the industry. Corrib in particular led to social and political upheaval.

Corruption and a lack of concern for public or environmental safety dogged the project – finally leaving Shell with losses of €2.5bn.

The fields with the most potential have already been given out, and on extremely generous terms. Many licence periods will go as far as 2028 or 2030 – cutting it close to the zero-carbon 2050 scenarios demanded by EU and UN climate agreements. Some

accounts state that under the 2011 licensing round, companies can hold licences for 47 years – up until the year 2058.

The fact is the only oily thing in the Irish Atlantic is its abundance of fish. The number one reason why fossil fuel companies operating in Ireland can't secure a business partner is because there is simply nothing there.

According to the 2012 Oireachtas Committee Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration Report – which heard extensively from the Irish Offshore Operators Association (IOOA) – Ireland has a mere 4.8% overall success rate for a commercial find. The IOOA, Providence Resources and PwC have all admitted – in many representations to Oireachtas committees and the public – that there is only a one in 32 chance of finding anything commercial. That's compared to a one in seven chance in Norway and one in six for the UK.

## Lowest growth

Even the Government's own 2012 Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth policy lists offshore oil and gas as having not only the lowest growth potential of any marine industry, but a minus growth of -4.8%.

Ireland's seas are some of the most inhospitable in Europe, perfect for reclusive Skellig monks, but with major storms and difficult geology. No present fossil fuel technology can cope with such a testing environment. The technology is unlikely to ever be developed due to climate change targets.

The majority of the world's countries (193 to be exact) agree with 97% of scientists that we need to keep global temperatures below a 1.5C or 2C degree rise to avoid catastrophic climate change. In practice, this is widely known to mean that 75% to 80% of the known fossil fuels have to stay in the ground. Ireland's fossil fuel resources are unknown and therefore unusable.

Picture: shell/osea.com



**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.

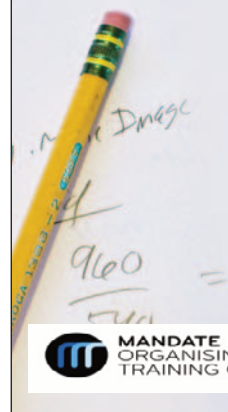
The courses are to encourage members back into learning and training while aiming towards a QQI Level 3 Award.

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.



**MANDATE**  
ORGANISING &  
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The millions that it costs to set up new fossil fuel infrastructure represent what the Bank of England calls “stranded assets”. In the past five years investment funds, public institutions and individuals have divested around US\$6.15 trillion (€5.2 trillion) of fossil fuel assets and the Irish Government itself is fast-tracking Trócaire and Thomas Pringle’s Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill to divest the state pension fund from fossil fuels. Any investment in further fossil fuel infrastructure, instead of renewables, locks in reliance on a flailing industry.

### Energy security

A genuine concern stated by Government is the need for Ireland to have its own resources for reasons of energy security. However, this is naïve. Fossil fuel extraction is a privatised industry and any fuel found in Irish seas will go to the highest bidder, not to the Irish people. Gas from the Corrib gas field is brought directly ashore. However, the development of new technologies such as Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) means most of our fuel is likely to be immediately shipped overseas.

With a growing global speculative in LNG, particularly from China who are increasingly becoming involved in exploration off the Irish coast, it is likely our resources will boost the security of supply of other countries more than our own.

Ireland has one oil refinery in Whitegate, privatised in 2001, described as “small, and not sophisticated” by the industry. Planned drill sites such as the Newgrange prospect are also located 260 km off the south-west coast of Ireland. Why would companies risk another Corrib scandal by bringing anything ashore?

Most of our gas already comes from friendly neighbours in Scotland and Norway, not Russia, and we have more than enough to last us to the extent demanded by climate targets.

There is not even a wealth of taxes to be gained from the industry. Since



Gardai move Shell to Sea protestors away from entrance to on-shore facilities



Pipeline preparations under way in Broadhaven Bay in 2013

Picture: shelltosea.com

2013, new licences are subject to a 25% corporation tax on profits which can be written off against costs. The tax take in sub-Saharan Africa ranges from 44% to 85%. Once a field starts producing it will be subject to a Petroleum Production Tax that ranges from 5%-55% depending on the field’s commerciality. This again can be written off against costs and corporation tax payments.

However, many oil and gas licences like the Newgrange prospect in the ecologically-sensitive Porcupine Basin – or the Kish Basin near the Dun Laoghaire Forty Foot – were given out before 2013 and benefit from a historic no-tax regime set up to encourage investment in exploration. As a result, if there is an un-

likely success, the millions of euro that are being poured into exploration by Providence Resources and others will undermine any Government tax bill.

Whatever paltry taxes that remain have also been undermined by Government spending to facilitate the oil and gas industry. One egregious example is the Regional Seismic Survey which was originally a “jointly funded” project between the Department of Climate Action and ENI Ireland (a fossil fuel company currently embroiled in a Nigerian human rights scandal – few surprises there).

Government and industry were to share the €20 million cost of mapping the seafloor with dangerous seismic testing. In the end, the indus-

try gave only €3.99 million to the project – though it awarded the subservient department a 2015 Maritime Industry Award for the privilege of depleting our plankton and fish stocks.

No doubt all these arguments of ‘nothing there’ served the industry well when seeking a non-existent tax rate and countering public demands that the Irish State should own its own energy resources. An argument made in Oireachtas hearings and newspaper articles by the IOOA.

But with ever increasing knowledge of the damage being done, the policy looks like expensive posturing by pin-striped suits playing JR in Dallas.

### Seismic testing

One indefensible example of this feckless machismo approach to our environment is the seismic testing that occurs in Irish waters every summer.

To map the seabed for fossil fuel deposits, sonic cannons, also known as seismic airguns, are towed behind boats creating dynamite-like blasts – repeated every ten seconds, 24 hours a day, for weeks and months at a time. At acoustic levels 100,000 times more intense than a jet engine.

As highlighted by the Irish documentaries Ireland’s Deep Atlantic and Atlantic the film, seismic testing blasts are essentially “waves of death” that cause disorientation and internal bleeding in cetaceans for distances of up to 100 miles. Causing unknown damage to the 24 species of whales, dolphins (including Fungie) and porpoises that bless Ireland’s seas with their presence.

New evidence from Nature Journal in 2017 shows that a single blast kills 100% of zooplankton larvae – the basis of the marine ecosystem – and 64% of adult krill for at least 0.7 miles. It destroys fundamental aspects of the ocean’s fabric. This is merely the most recent of many peer-reviewed scientific studies

showing the extensive effects of seismic testing on all levels of the ocean food-chain. As long as 10 years ago in 2007, the International Whaling Commission found that 250 male fin whales appeared to stop “singing” for up to several months during seismic testing.

The full damage being done is as yet unknown – the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group reported 2017 as the worst year on record for beach strandings with a 30% rise in dolphin deaths. Fewer fin and blue whales have also been recorded in the Porcupine Basin – potentially a key mating ground – since seismic testing began there in 2013.

Faced with a Department in thrall to fossil fuel industry executives, it is ordinary Irish fishing communities, many of them in Gaeltachts in Kerry and Galway, that are having to take on the role of watchdog as their fish stocks rapidly deplete. They are calling for the Petroleum Affairs Division (PAD) to place a moratorium on seismic testing until an EIA is conducted that takes into account the cumulative effect of decades of seismic testing on the Irish ocean. Despite powers granted to do so in 2013, the PAD has never once required an Environmental Impact Assessment or a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment to assess the oft-reported damage [UPDATE: the PAD has required an AA at Barryroe due to fear of a well blow-out, but no EIA was required despite significant risk to wildlife and fisheries from].

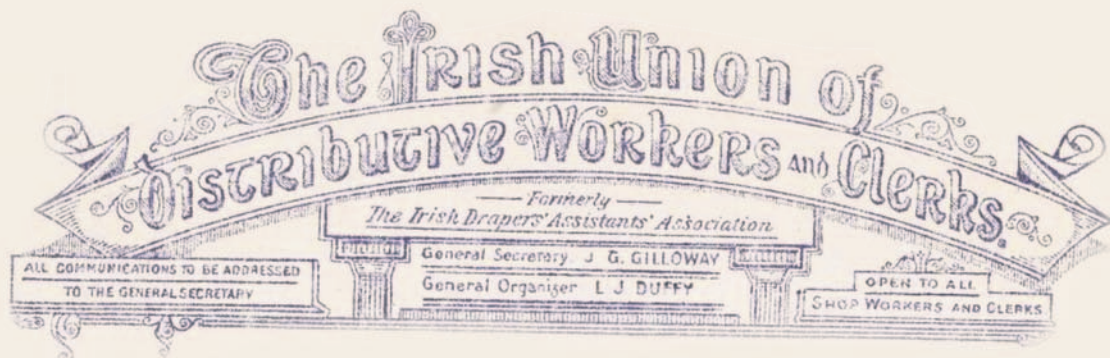
The National Parks and Wildlife Service has been severely defunded over the past number of years, meaning they are without the funds necessary to update their guidelines to incorporate new information on plankton – though seismic testing conducted in Ireland is likely to be the most dangerous in the world.

Why would Government want to allow a completely unproductive industry drill along our Wild Atlantic Way? Even if only tiny amounts of oil are found, these wells produce toxic chemicals like benzene, arsenic, and radioactive pollutants, as well as toxic metals such as mercury and lead that may accumulate in our seafood supply. The answer may be simple, lobbying – often by former Department officials that take up roles in private industry once they leave the Department. A pathway charted in detail by Dr Amanda Slevin from Queen’s University Belfast in her book Gas, Oil and the Irish State. This lobbying is made all the more effective by the general global shift towards selling off natural resources to private interests – a capitalist turn termed ‘extractivism’ by Naomi Klein.

Fossil fuel lobbyists are obsessed with building an image of their industry as eternally youthful – a mythical Tír na nÓg that will survive against all the evidence that their industry is dangerous, damaging and defunct. The worst irony is that today’s youth will suffer most from the short-sighted selfishness of their endeavours. We have a chance to stop this with the Climate Emergency Bill from Brid Smith which will ban all new oil and gas licences. Like Costa Rica and New Zealand let us move forward to a better, safer world.

*Sinéad Mercier is a Green Party researcher & SIPTU Global Solidarity Committee member. This article first appeared in Village magazine*





Written by IUDW&C President Cissie Cahalan and first published in *The Distributive Worker*, the Official Organ of the Irish Union of Distributive Workers & Clerks in October 1921.

# What kind of freedom?

AT THE moment of writing the question as to who is to rule this country is being discussed in every quarter across the globe. The conversations and conferences that are taking place between the British Prime Minister and Dáil Éireann may, and we pray with all our soul that they will, terminate in peace and freedom for our tortured people.

What the measure of that freedom will be for the workers of Ireland will soon be made apparent. Is it to be the same kind of freedom that the working classes of the great republics of France and America enjoy? – or is it freedom in the sense that P.H. Pearse meant freedom when he said: "Let no man mistake who will be lord when Ireland is free. The people will be lord and master. The people who wept in Gethsemane, who trod the sorrowful way, who died naked on the cross, who went down into hell will rise glorious and immortal, will sit at the right hand of God and will come in the end to give judgement, a judge just and terrible."

Or in the sense of James Connolly meant freedom when he said: "Ireland as distinct from her people, is nothing to me: and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for Ireland, and can yet pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland – aye, brought by Irishmen upon Irishmen and women, without burning to end it, is in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call Ireland."

Owing to the political situation and the military terrorism of the past two years those elected to represent and legislate for the people of Ireland have not defined, nor have they been asked to define, their attitude towards Irish Labour.

Since the cessation of hostilities we have had Mr. de Valera's speech to Congress at the Mansion House on 1st August last, in the course of which he said, "Were it not for the cooperation and help of Labour the fight would not have been carried on."

It was pleasing to note that Mr. de Valera refrained from promises of a golden era style to Labour, as is the custom and ways of political leaders. One must respect him for it. Mr. de Valera knows that Labour will get the amount of freedom it is able of itself to take and keep. He also knows that under our present social system in any form of government that is likely to be established capital will undoubtedly be very strongly represented, and progressive and democratic elements will be hampered and obstructed.

Meantime, Irish Labour leaders have avowed their allegiance to the doctrines of Pearse and Connolly. On them rests the responsibility (and it is no light one) of showing the way of ensuring that whatever form of native government we may be living under in the future, or whatever kind of a new social order may be founded, that the "rights of man," not the rights of "private property," shall be its cornerstone.

The time is fast approaching when Irish Labour must "nail its colour to the mast." Will Labour in Ireland become a kind of left wing of a bourgeois middle class Assembly, or will it abandon the political arena and rely upon industrial action as a surer means of securing and



maintaining the rights of the working class?

We have had some evidence recently of the temper of the rank and file. The miners at Arigna, the creamery workers at Knocklong and Bruree, the Cork Harbour Board employees, and last, but not least, the steel workers at Drogheda, having practical illustrations of their method of securing reforms.

The masses of the workers will not, if one is to judge the sign of the time by incidents such as those referred to, be at fault if the ideals of James Connolly are not on the way to realisation.

The toiling masses are no longer content with the role of Lazarus to the modern Divas and snatch at his crumbs. They know that they have a God-given right to be all the good things the earth holds for human beings. The time is past for masters who "Grudge them e'en the breeze that once a week/ Might make them feel less weary and deject."

“ Mr de Valera knows that Labour will get the amount of freedom it is able to take and keep. He also knows that under our present system in any form of government that is likely to be established capital will undoubtedly be very strongly represented, and progressive and democratic elements will be hampered and obstructed ”



Cissie Cahalan

# Brexit

The question of workers' rights is a recurring theme in the debate around Brexit. For the most part trade unions in Ireland and Britain are concerned that a hard or no-deal outcome would threaten a regression in the rights and living standards enjoyed by workers across these islands. But, argues **Dave Gibney**, there is a more complicated set of factors to take into account



In whose interests? MEPs vote at the European Parliament Picture: EU Parliament CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

ECONOMIC inequality is now higher in the UK than any time since the 1960s. Real wages have been falling since the UK joined the EU in 1973. Coincidentally, the regions of the UK with the lowest median incomes are also the regions that voted to leave the EU in the strongest terms.

Hyndburn, Torbay and West Somerset have average median incomes of £17,000, £16,900 and £16,900 respectively. Those constituencies also voted Leave by margins of 66.2%, 63.2% and 60.6%. Hyndburn also rejected the two main political parties of the Conservatives and Labour in the recent European elections, choosing instead to vote for the Brexit Party by a margin of 39.1%, Labour receiving 25.5% and the Conservatives 8%.

To some, it might be difficult to see the connection between low incomes and Brexit, but nevertheless, it is there. Juxtapose the above with the highest income constituency in the UK, London City, which has an average mean income of £58,300 per year and recorded a Leave vote of only 25%.

For many communities, membership of the EU has been fruitful. For others, there is a sense that it has provided very little. This helps to explain why those who have the least to lose were among the strongest supporters of Brexit.

Integration within the EU has occurred in an increasingly neoliberal fashion. The 'four freedoms' of the single market – freedom of movement for goods, services, labour and capital – without strong collective bargaining provisions, access for trade unions to the workplace and the protection of effective collective actions serves to exacerbate economic inequality, undermines working conditions and results in a reduction in living standards.

## A worker's paradise?

The dominant narrative is that the EU has been great for workers' rights.

In Ireland it is often said that the EU provided workers with lunch breaks, annual leave and protection against discrimination at work.

Much of this may be true. But, we need to look at where those individual rights came from in the first place.

When Britain and Ireland joined the EU in 1973, almost half of all workers in the European Union were members of trade unions, with a 46% density level. However, that figure has now halved and is currently at only 23%. Organised worker power is no longer a dominant force within the EU, if it ever was, with corporations and wealthy individuals dictating policies to a much greater extent.

## Individual vs collective workers' rights

The progress made on workers' rights on the back of strong trade unions within the EU is laudable. However, most of those workplace improvements are in the area of individual rights. The EU has delivered virtually nothing in terms of collective rights. This is evidenced most clearly by the Viking, Laval, Ruffert and Luxemburg rulings. These rulings prioritised economic freedoms and the movement of services over the right to collective action, undermining workers' conditions of employment and reinforcing the unequal power relations and economic inequality that have grown in Britain, Ireland and across the continent.

Furthermore, in recent years, the EU Commission has undermined collective action in Greece and other peripheral countries. The Commission's agenda has resulted in a decline of workers covered by collective agreements from 83% in 2008 to 42% in 2013.

Obviously we should welcome measures which protect workers against discrimination based on their gender, race, sexual orientation, or any other spurious grounds. Yes,



# Europe & the Left



'Freedom and prosperity': Ursula von der Leyen delivers her acceptance speech after being elected the new Commission President

workers should be entitled to annual leave, maternity leave and lunch breaks. And of course workers should be entitled to basic health and safety provisions at work.

However, these individual rights are the minimum we should expect in the 21st century, and certainly shouldn't be seen as a trade-off for collective rights.

## Is the EU anti-worker?

The EU does not ban industrial action outright, nor does it prevent workers from joining trade unions. Its anti-union policies are much more subtle. It incentivises privatisation and 'competition', in the knowledge that the private sector is much better positioned to undermine trade unions and workers' rights.

Privatisation is encouraged through economic rules, such as those contained in the Fiscal Treaty (though the UK is not included in this) and the Stability and Growth Pact. When a country's debt to GDP ratio is above 60%, or the state is running a deficit of more than 3%, the government of the day is incentivised into moving important public services 'off-balance sheet'.

What this means can be illustrated through the case of Ireland. When do-

“ These myths about EU prosperity don't stack up. The mainstream media consistently reports that the EU is great for jobs and workers' rights but this is not the lived experience of workers across the EU ”



mestic water charges were introduced in 2015, one of the key reasons cited by government was to move expenditure on water services 'off-balance sheet'. In order to do that, the utility (Irish Water) had to receive 51% of its funding through end-user charges. That required a metered water system. Of course, once an income stream is established through charges, it makes it easier to privatise in the future. The fact the EU tried to force Greece and Portugal sell their water utilities wasn't lost on water protesters in Ireland.

Once privatised, the EU's rules prevent monopolies, dictating that there must be competition in the market. As usual, with competition comes a race to the bottom in terms of working conditions.

Public sector employment is often the antidote to this race to the bottom and provides upward pressure on conditions of employment. The moves towards privatisation can be seen in the decline of public sector jobs. In 1992, more than 23% of all workers in the UK were in the public service, whereas today that figure is 16% – a 30% reduction. While the blame for this may not be entirely at the door of the EU, many see it as a contributory factor.

## Out-of-touch with workers' reality

In her acceptance speech to the EU Parliament, the newly-elected President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen said: "Today, 500 million Europeans live in freedom and prosperity." The fact that 22.4% of all citizens living within the EU are at risk of poverty is lost on her. That's more than 100 million people who have just been informed that they are prosperous, while they make the difficult decision about whether they feed their children or turn on the heating this week.

These myths about EU prosperity don't stack up. The mainstream media consistently reports that the EU is great for jobs and workers' rights but this is not the lived experience of workers across the EU.

In the post-war era up until the UK joined the EU (1945-1973), the average unemployment rate was 2.3%. In subsequent years up until the Brexit vote (1973-2016), the UK's average unemployment rate was 7.3%. It more than trebled.

Ireland's figures are similar. Average unemployment between 1960-1973 was 5.5%, whereas during the period between EEC membership and 2016 the average unemployment rate has increased to 10.5%, almost doubling.

This high rate of unemployment is part and parcel of the EU's demands for low inflation, while a large supply of reserve workers also serves to keep wages low.

The fact that inequality in the EU has been growing for 40 years is not a coincidence. It's structural. The EU and its rules ensure the top 1% of the population accumulates obscene wealth, and in most countries, this is facilitated further by national governments.

## Who decides?

Sovereignty was cited as the second most important reason UK citizens voted for Brexit. The perception among many Leave voters is that the EU dictates certain rules within which governments must operate.

For example, it is extremely difficult to renationalise an essential industry under EU rules. It would be virtually impossible for the UK to renationalise its rail network operations inside the EU because of the Fourth Railway Package, a new piece of legislation which will introduce market competition into rail systems, requiring countries to introduce privately operated routes.

This comes into effect in 2023 and we can expect workers' pay and conditions of employment to deteriorate as companies begin to compete with each other for lower costs.

“ The EU and its rules ensure the top 1% of the population accumulates obscene wealth, and in most countries, this is facilitated further by national governments ”

## Road to self-destruction

The 2016 Brexit vote has made it much more difficult to be critical of the European Union. Dare question EU policies in this environment and run the risk of being branded an ill-informed idiot, a racist or a Nigel Farage supporter.

This portrayal of those with opposing views to the prevailing mainstream position as backward Neanderthals is ideal for the anti-democratic forces within the EU.

It's also extremely dangerous, because without critique, they can double-down on the very practices that contributed to the Brexit vote in the first place, such as: the promotion of the worst excesses of capitalism and privatisation; increases in economic inequality and reductions in living standards; the expansion of the EU's imperial project, including the creation of a European army; and the financialisation of everything we need to survive, even water.

The problem the EU has, and which has been illustrated throughout the Brexit debacle, is that the privatisation agenda and the four freedoms valued so dearly – free movement of goods, services, labour and capital – are likely to result in the self-destruction of the EU unless there is something done to tackle economic inequality.

## The future of the EU?

This requires much stronger collective bargaining rights, including a fundamental right for trade unions to access workplaces and undertake inspections on workplace compliance, the outlawing of union-busting activities with strong penalties as a deterrent and uninhibited collective action protections.

It is clear from past experience that the EU institutions are not on the side of labour in this endeavor, and even if they were, it would require the collective agreement of 27 member states to implement the necessary reforms to address these issues.

Looking at the overall composition of national governments and the results of the recent European elections, the prospect of this seems more distant than ever.

Dave Gibney is Mandate communications officer and joint coordinator of the Right2Water campaign



# The last piece in the puzzle

By David Gibney  
Mandate communications officer

A UNITED Ireland is “inevitable”, apparently. Supposedly Brexit has seen to that.

But if there’s a lesson to be drawn from the Brexit referendum, whether you’re a remain or a leave supporter, it’s that a comprehensive discussion needs to take place about what a united Ireland that would look like post-ballot.

Having a border poll which asks whether you’d like a united Ireland, irrespective of what that united Ireland would look like, is dangerous and pointless in equal measure.

What we don’t need is a merging of two failed states. What we do need, north and south, is the creation of a brand new Ireland based on egalitarian principles.

That means a brand new constitution that’s built from the ground up. It must be truly secular, respect all ethnicities, cultures, religions and put the rights of people ahead of the rights of property.

In 2016, I met the authors of the ‘Modeling Irish Unification’ report, undertaken by Canadian consultancy KLC and University of British Columbia academics. They presented their report which stated that “Irish unification could boost all-island GDP in the first eight years by as much as €35.6bn.”

The report, of course, was predicated on the adoption of a 12.5% corporation tax rate across the whole island. So I asked: “Did you look at any models of adopting the 20% corporation rate which applies to the north.”

“No”, was the unequivocal answer.

As usual, it’s assumed a united Ireland is about adopting the Republic’s economic system, including taxation measures. Logically this must include the social implications that come with those measures: massive homelessness; elongated healthcare waiting lists; expensive medical fees, large classrooms, low paid jobs and devastating economic inequality.

The two failed entities that emerged following partition are products of deliberate division by elites for their own benefit. The divisions are a convenient distraction from the real issues we should be tackling, particularly economic inequality.

The Institute for Public Health in Ireland (IPH) in an all-island report stated that the reason 5,400 people die preventable deaths on this island every year, protestants and catholics, is due to economic inequality.

For example, if you’re born into a wealthy household who can afford to send you to a private school with low numbers of students in your class, this can ensure you have a greater chance of making it to university.

Once there, your life expectancy goes up to 81.3 years while those with a primary education would live

## UNITED IRELAND

# We need more than a border poll... we need a new country



Picture: Matt from London (CC BY 2.0)

Casting a long shadow: the Brexit debate has brought Irish unity back on to the agenda...

to 73.3 – eight years less.

You often hear people say they’d give up everything just to have one more day with their parents or a loved one. In reality, many of us have been denied almost 10 years with a loved one due to the present system of economic inequality.

### What should a united Ireland look like?

Winning a united Ireland isn’t a foregone conclusion. Convincing the people of the north to sacrifice their NHS for the southern healthcare system will fail. Trying to convince people in the south that they should pay €9bn per year to subsidise the north will also fail.

Only a unifying campaign with objectives that benefit working people will succeed. In this respect, focus should be given to a number of key policy areas: jobs and decent work; health; housing; education, national resources and democracy.

### Jobs and decent work

The new ‘Banded Hour Contracts’ legislation applied in the south – following much good work from David Cullinane TD and Sinn Fein – must be applied in a united Ireland. It outlaws zero-hour contracts and provides workers with secure hours and incomes allowing them to plan their lives better.

Workers should be afforded the right to representation by a trade union of their choice as part of an expansion of democracy into the workplace.

Trade unions should also have a right to access workplaces to discuss issues affecting workers, similar to laws in place in Australia and New Zealand.

We also need to incentivise worker-owned cooperatives and alternative business ownership models. In order to ensure equal access to the workplace, a united Ireland should provide full access to childcare facilities.

### Health

Access to adequate healthcare should not be dependent on income. A united Ireland health policy should encompass the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of all, with special focus on childcare and elder care.

Incentives to the private healthcare industry should be ceased in favour of investment in a universal healthcare system, free at the point of use which provides the highest possible level of care for all citizens, irrespective of social or economic factors.

### Housing

Homelessness across all parts of Ireland has been increasing, having doubled since 2000 in the north. It is obscene that while 10,000 people are homeless in the south, successive governments prioritised tax cuts for corporations and high-income households worth a cumulative €10 billion. This could have built 50,000 public houses.

The increased commodification of housing must be reversed and the provision of adequate shelter for all should be seen as an investment in our people and our economy.

A united Ireland should impose rent controls, ban economic evictions, implement income-based accommodation options and commence an all-island home building plan.

### Education

The provision of education should be truly free – without the necessity for ‘voluntary contributions’ – up to at least primary degree level. It should also be secular and free from interference by religious institutions.

The provision of professional and technical education should be affordable and available to all and should be equally accessible. Education is a route out of poverty and fees-based access can lock out working class people, leading to reduced life-expectancies and other social problems. A united Ireland should aim to have the lowest teacher-to-student ratio in Europe.

### National ownership

Every country benefits from their resources. Norwegians benefit from their oil. Australians benefit from their minerals. Irish people too should benefit from their resources.

It’s absurd that corporations pay nothing from the extraction of water or oil in Ireland. A united Ireland should prioritise our water; oil and gas reserves; fisheries; woodlands; clean seas; archaeological and heritage sites; and energy in the hands of the public as part of ‘resource democracy’.

In order to ensure genuine benefit to the Irish people, a minimum entitlement for all natural resources should be legislated for, and if companies are not happy paying that fair

share, they can leave the resources in the ground so that future generations can benefit. And a united Ireland should take radical steps towards tackling climate change with a just transition and renewable energy.

### Democracy

A new and united Ireland should reform our local and national democratic processes, putting citizens at the heart of decision making.

Popular initiation of constitutional referenda and parliamentary legislation should be facilitated. The right to recall representatives who break electoral promises; direct elections to the all houses of the parliament; overseas and mandatory voting should also be investigated and instigated, where suitable.

Developing a truly representative democratic system is essential in winning the unionist community over to the benefits of a new and united Ireland.

Is there support for these policies?

The rise in support for socialist policies in English speaking countries is indicative of what could bring people together in Ireland.

Jeremy Corbyn’s Manifesto – *For the Many, Not The Few* – saw the emergence of a mass movement of all creeds across the UK in support of policies such as taxing the wealthy, re-nationalising public services, improved workers’ rights, an enhanced NHS and a national home building plan.

Bernie Sanders ignited a debate about ‘Democratic Socialism’ in the US, with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez continuing that discussion, advocating for a Green New Deal and tax rates of up to 70% for the wealthy.

Both campaigns have huge public support, but have faced an organised backlash from the corporate owned media. That’s why building structures to achieve an equitable united Ireland is essential.

The counter-revolutionaries who won out after southern independence haven’t gone away, you know.

The first step should be a forum for trade unionists, political parties and community representatives to debate



Bernie Sanders – Stateside socialism



# uzzle...



Jeremy Corbyn – manifesto commitments

a united Ireland. Luckily we aren't starting from scratch. The Right2Change campaign provides a template for moving this debate on.

Sinn Fein, Independents4Change, People Before Profit and a range of other Independent representatives have already expressed their support for the above policies, while Mandate, Unite, the CWU, OPATSI and many

community groups have also expressed support. To ensure buy-in from as large a proportion of the public as possible, particularly the unionist community, this forum should be driven by politically independent representatives.

Developing principles and building independent structures that put people at the heart of a new Ireland is the best way to achieve unity. And having an honest debate about the European Union and whether an egalitarian Republic is possible under the restrictive rules of the EU, including the

fiscal constraints, pro-privatisation rules and the absence of control over our own currency should form part of that debate.

Cissie Cahalan, the first female President of the Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks (now Mandate), in 1921 asked “what kind of freedom” was being achieved in southern Ireland?

She wrote: “Labour leaders have avowed their allegiance to the doctrines of Pearse and Connolly. On them rests the responsibility (and it is no light one) of showing the way of ensuring that whatever form of native government we may be living under in the future, or whatever kind of a new social order may be founded, that the ‘rights of man’, not the rights

of ‘private property’, shall be its cornerstone.”

Unfortunately the opposite Ireland was delivered.

A tricolour flying above Stormont and Leinster House with 12.5% emblazoned in the centre, while recently evicted homeless families sleep at the gates, shouldn't be the ambition of any self-respecting republican or socialist.

If we are to achieve a united Ireland, we only get one chance to do so, and therefore we must get it right first time. We have a responsibility to ensure working people win a united and equitable Ireland that we can all be truly proud of before the counter-revolutionaries impose their united Ireland on the rest of us.



# The Fourth Industrial Revolution

## ... and what it could mean for workers in the retail sector

THE age of digital transformation and automation is increasingly threatening the world of work as we know it. Robotics and automation of commercial services have demonstrated the real changes being brought about by the digitalisation of Ireland's workforce, which has been dubbed the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'.

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), which advises the Irish Government on the current and future skills-needs of the economy, suggests that one in three jobs in Ireland are at high risk (a probability greater than 70%) of being disrupted by the adoption of digital technologies.

The report goes on to suggest that the changes will be largely driven by functional changes to tasks performed by workers and not simply job losses.

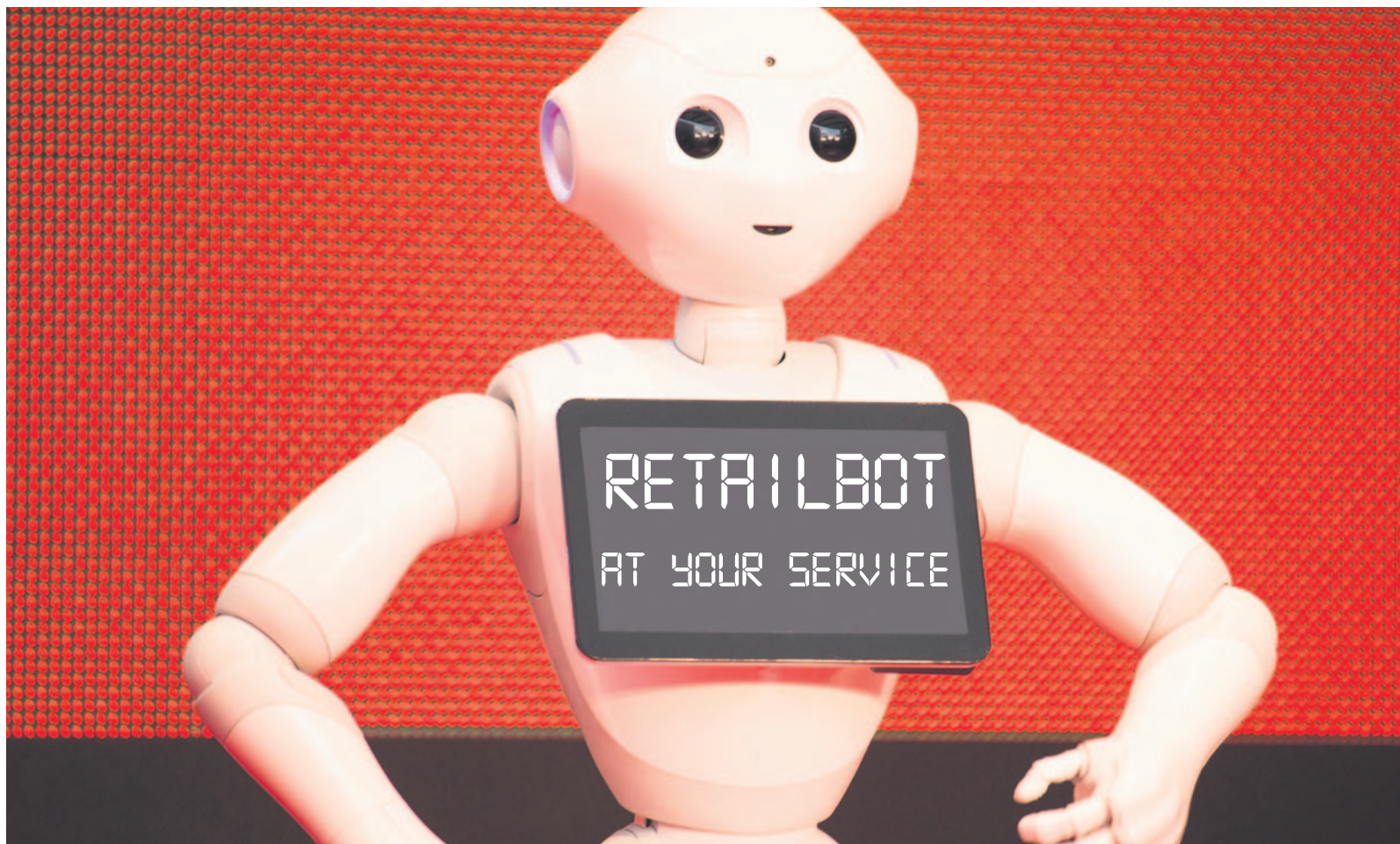
Notwithstanding this, developments in the commerce/services sector will have a consequential impact leading to job losses. While the economic growth may be stimulated by efficiencies in digitalisation and robotics, the negative consequences of these growth rates will eventually hide the displacement of jobs, traditionally done by our members.

The retail industry has witnessed these advances over the years, where self-scan ordering systems and online shopping ranging now from international purchases to local meals on wheels.

The report's research predicts that despite a "disruption from the adoption of digital technologies over the next five years", leading to a "hypothetical loss of 46,000 jobs... the majority of sectors in the Irish economy are expected to be employing more people in 2023 than they did in 2018, with overall employment at levels never witnessed before in Ireland".

As highlighted earlier, the report from the Expert Group suggests that the jobs which may be greatly impacted and at risk "of displacement by digital technologies include many elementary, low-skilled occupations, but also include several sales and customer service occupations that can be replaced through a combination of chat bots and robotic process automation (RPA)".

While government initiatives will assist pupils and students become more adaptable to these ongoing changes, access and funding for up-



Picture: Dick Thomas Johnson (CC BY 2.0)



skilling opportunities and future training programmes for the current workforce must be made more accessible to the training providers supporting those 'at risk' groups.

Mandate currently funds all training courses through its own resources, constantly seeking to reach out to its membership through new technical and competency-based learning approaches.

However, non-for-profit organisations, such as the trade union movement, that represent the interests of

many of the 'at-risk' groups highlighted in the Expert Report must be supported to assist in the upskilling of workers through developmental programmes.

All of these programmes will be critical within the next 10 years of rapid expansion plans of online services through emerging technologies, termed 'innovation accelerators'.

Again, the Future of Jobs report's research framework in 2016 took a global analysis of disruptive changes to business models, which will have a

profound impact on the employment landscape over the coming years.

Many of the major drivers of transformation currently affecting global industries are expected to have a significant impact on jobs, ranging from significant job creation to job displacement, and from heightened labour productivity to widening skills gaps.

The Future of Jobs report also agreed with the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, suggesting that workers in lower-skilled roles, particularly in the office and administrative as well as the manufacturing and production job groups, may find themselves caught up in a vicious cycle, where low skills stability means they could face redundancy without significant upskilling.

Given the pace and scale of change being brought forward by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the rapid scale of upskilling required to safeguard against complete job displacement requires a sizable investment in

workers' training and education.

For a talent insurrection to take place, employers need to constantly invest in their employees, prepare the ground for inevitable changes that are taking place and protect against the complete obliteration of a services sector, that we know of, which in time may be primarily serviced by automation and robotics.

These developments over time may result in pay premiums being applied to a product offering simply on the basis that the service is provided for by a person and not an automated robot.

Smaller training providers such as Mandate and organisations facilitating the continued development and upskilling of workers need to be supported by government initiatives and investment in order to propel an intense resurgence of re-skilling and up-skilling, preparing workers for the imminent technological changes that will shape the future of the services industry.

Spend your money where workers count

When you're shopping look for the "Fair Shop" mark. Support workers in Ireland by choosing shops that treat their employees fairly.



# Confident we can forge a better future

By Tom Healy  
Nevin Economic Research Institute

LOOKING back over almost eight years of working at the NERI, I am glad to say that a credible and 'alternative' presence has been established in the world of economic research and public policy debates.

Thanks to a number of pioneering trade unions, the NERI was formally established in March 2012. I joined along with two other colleagues in the autumn of 2011 to help prepare the ground. From there we built a team of researchers. Over time I believe that we have had some impact on policy debate, North and South due to the hard work of the whole team.

On a personal note, the publication of *An Ireland Worth Working For* in April of this year marked a point of arrival. It gathered together a diverse range of ideas and evidence to tell a story about Ireland – where it has come from and where it needs to go.

Based on the ideas of the Democratic Programme (1919), it suggested a new democratic

programme founded on the principles of equality, democracy and sustainability.

It has been referred to as the book of threes: three big challenges alongside three big ideas and three overarching goals of work, social wage and enterprise.

Work in all of its forms is central to the lives of communities and individuals.

We work to live and live to work for the good of others. I was particularly struck when someone pointed out to me during a recent visit to Derry/Londonderry that the title of the book was about an Ireland worth working for – not fighting for in a negative and violent way.

No matter what challenges arise from global tensions to Brexit to a dysfunctional economic and social policy in the vital areas of healthcare and housing I am confident and hopeful that a way forward will be found to create a better future for our children and their children.

In that regard the Irish trade union movement will play an important role. I am grateful on a personal and professional level for the support, encouragement and cooperation of so many people within the movement and beyond. I along with other colleagues present or who have moved on from the NERI leave a legacy. *Tosach maith sin leath na hoibre* – a good start is half the work!

*This was Tom's last 'Monday Blog' column for NERI before he stepped down as director in early July.*



Tom speaks at Mandate's 2014 BDC in Killarney

“Over time I believe that we have had some impact on policy debate due to the hard work of the whole [NERI] team...”

## NEWS

### PETITION



Picture: Usdaw

## Belfast shoppers asked to do the write thing!

USDaw members recently issued an urgent S.O.S. to Saturday shoppers on the streets of Belfast. Members set up a booth outside the City Hall on June 22 to urge passing members of the public to sign the union's 'Save Our Shops' petition.

It is part of a campaign to promote Usdaw's industrial strategy to create a level playing

field between online and 'bricks and mortar' retailers and to address low and insecure work in the sector.

Usdaw General Secretary Paddy Lillis said: "We need the UK Government to adopt a clear and coherent strategy for retail and to address the worries and concerns of shopworkers and of our members."



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# Dáil R for REAL representation!

LET'S begin with one of my pipe dreams – just imagine if left-wing unions, such as Mandate, combined their collective membership and strength behind the push to have trade union-sponsored TDs elected to Dáil Éireann in advance of the next General Election.

Elected TDs with a strongly supported mandate centred on the protection and advancement of workers' rights. TDs committed to the values and principles of left-wing trade unionism who would advocate for change on a range of measures to improve the working lives of our citizens.

Surely this would be an invaluable asset to our legislative parliament to have them working specifically on behalf of the tens of thousands of hard-pressed workers suffering under austerity and anti-trade union laws?

There are many excellent TDs who are good trade unionists in Dáil Éireann and who answer to their political party but there are no trade union-sponsored TDs in the Dáil who answer to workers and their unions.

TDs who understand the unequal relationship between capital and labour and who fight day and night to deliver a more egalitarian society should not fear the emergence of trade union-sponsored TDs.

In fact, they should welcome the positive focus these TDs would bring to their own worker-led political agenda. It is the austerity-loving, gombeen, parish pump capitalist TDs who would have cause for concern.

Those same TDs who happily prop up the status quo in exchange for a nice pension and a pat on the back from both Civil War parties.

The left in Ireland is in perpetual uncoordinated malaise. My experience of attempts to coalesce better on the left has resulted in a room

**LET US ARISE!**  
Brian Forbes

National Co-ordinator  
Mandate Trade Union

full of ennui, of jaded red lines and of irrevocable political ideologies jumbled up in a hotchpotch of simplistic slogans and misquotes from long dead revolutionaries who'd probably have shot them if still alive.

Despite the anger and hope given by a mass movement such as Right2Water, and subsequently Right2Change, our real hope for left coordination evaporates like snow off a ditch when we fail to capitalise on the anger.

Building a sustainable political movement for change across a range of broad left-wing political policy platforms is something that all lefties should embrace. Those that stand outside the tent pissing in for spurious "ideological" reasons are deluded and, frankly, are enemies of the working class of Ireland.

*"There are two flames burning in the human heart all the time: the flame of anger against injustice and the flame of hope you can build a better world."* – Tony Benn RIP (once despised by conservatives and labelled the "most dangerous man in Britain").

Our job as trade union activists is to go around the country fanning both of those flames. Our objective of building a real political left-wing alternative for working class voters should place workers' rights and the Irish working class at the centre of everything we do.

*"There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning."* – Warren Buffet.

Here's a true story - Warren Buffet, multi-millionaire extraordinaire, compiled a data sheet of the people who worked in his office. He asked them to record on a data sheet how much tax they paid. The majority canvassed were secretaries and clerks. It turned out that Buffet, with his immense income from dividends and capital gains, paid far, far less as a fraction of his income than anyone working in his office.

It's exactly the same here in Ireland so let no one tell you that the class system doesn't exist. Low pay and inequality in Ireland has been a problem for some time. The top 10% of people in Ireland

'There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning'

– Warren Buffet

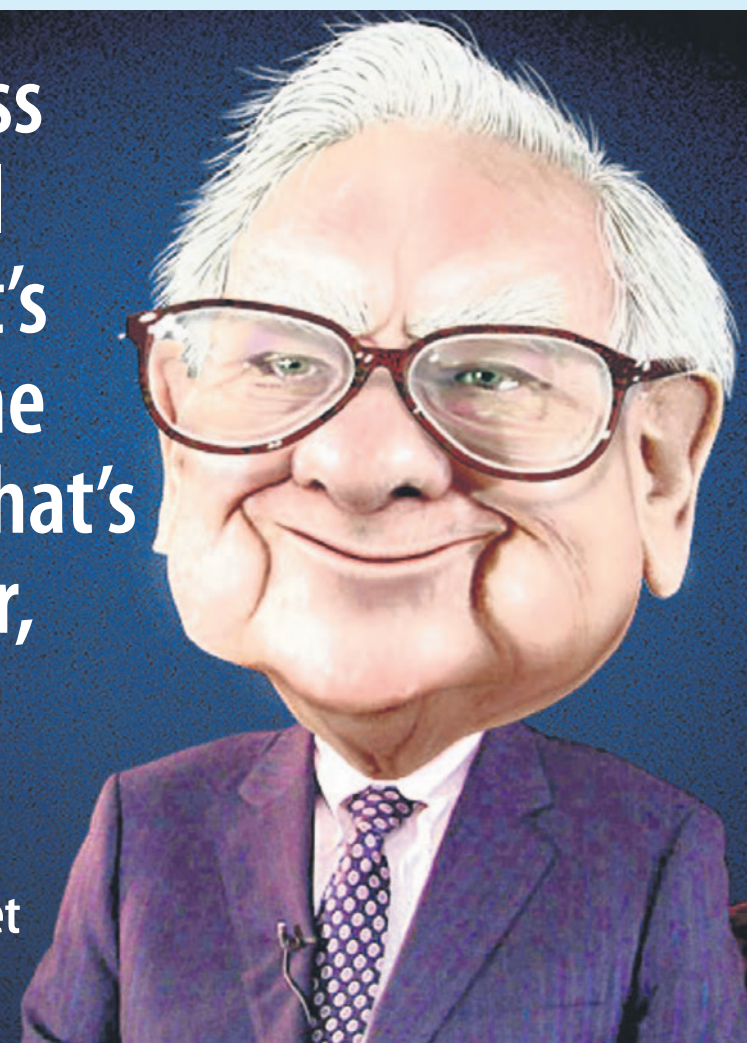


Illustration: Donkey Hotey/CC BY 2.0

own 60% of the wealth while the bottom 50% own less than 5% of the wealth.

In 2008, Ireland boasted about 13,000 millionaires; however, if predictions are realised that figure is set to rise to 108,000 millionaires in 2026 (mostly driven by property prices).

So back again to that pipe dream of mine... elected trade union-sponsored TDs could work

a l o n g s i d e other left-wing parties and independents on condition they refused to enter government with either of the Civil War parties.

These TDs would help establish much more of a focus on the many issues affecting low paid vulnerable workers and their families in an unequal Ireland.

Nothing can replace the value of well-organised workplaces; however, progressive TDs with a workers' rights agenda would be a powerful advocate for the working class of Ireland. Supported and driven forward by left-wing unions we could deliver real change and a much louder working class voice in the Dáil.

I overheard a conversation walk-

ing down Moore Street in Dublin recently that ended with a lady in a broad Dublin accent offering this nugget of wisdom – "You're dead right there love, there's fu\*k all free in the Free State nowadays." I take that to mean, if we want something we need to fight for it as it won't be freely given.

Ireland currently holds the distinction of having the most oppressive trade union laws in the European Union. We should be fighting hard for the right to a voice at work through robust collective bargaining legislation,

automatic access to workplaces for trade unions, union recognition as well as the repeal of the Thatcherite anti-union Industrial Relations Act 1990 (legislated for by the Irish government and the first time Margaret Thatcher and the IRA agreed on anything).

It is critical that we all fight the excesses of decaying capitalism which is now very dangerously transforming itself into full-blown fascism in the US and parts of Europe. No doubt this class struggle will be one

hell of a challenge especially with the Tweedledum and Tweedledee racist and fascist partnership of Trump and Johnson to contend with.

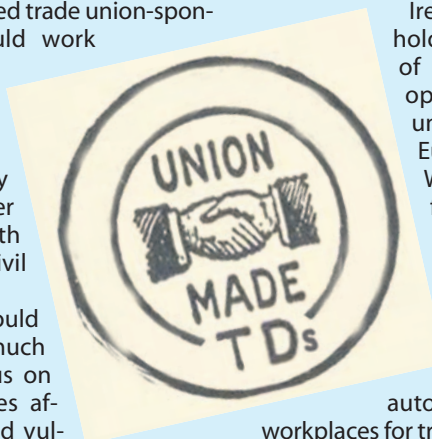
We must remain extremely vigilant to stamp out any rise of fascism on this island.

It could be argued that trade unionism in Ireland has for decades helped numb or dumb down class consciousness through aligning itself with right-wing political parties in government and social partnership.

It could be further argued that this approach in some ways diverted anger and frustration away from the exploiters and on to their own class.

It should be our objective to prove wrong the Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci's critique of trade unions as simply parasites to the capitalist system, dividing workers as wage-earners preventing the development of a "class consciousness" necessary for a social revolution.

**It is long past time for left-wing trade unions individually and collectively to seriously consider the promotion of and sponsorship of trade union TDs to the Dáil for the betterment of our own class and not Warren Buffett's class.**





# Responding to unhappy truth about what Amazon is doing to retail jobs



Sandra Stapleton

MANDATE was once again invited to attend a meeting of the Amazon Alliance in Berlin on 29th and 30th April. Some 70 trade unionists, from 18 unions across the world, were at the event which was titled 'Co-determination and labour standards in transnational corporations – aspirations and reality@Amazon'.

The meeting confirmed that the Amazon-isation of retail is a glimpse at what the sector will look like in the future. This will – and is – having a direct impact on union membership.

The more we allow *big business* to dictate to the public that online sales are the only way forward and retail outlets a thing of the past, then we are giving in too easily.

High street stores are struggling as a direct result of Amazon and their like. The fact is the need for consumers to have whatever they want shipped to them the next day is killing jobs and we, as a union, have to lead the fight-back.

## Warehouse outlets

As a group of unions, whether or not we have members in these call centres/web centres, we should be ready for if and when Amazon chief Jeff Bezos decides to open up warehouse outlets in Ireland.

Currently all Amazon workers in Ireland, which number approximately 3,000, are in web services/call centres located in Dublin (Burlington Road and Tallaght) and Cork.

The latest Amazon facility in Tallaght is literally a nameless, windowless edifice – with no branding visible on the outside. Guarded by G4S – no photos are even supposed to be taken of the building.

And it is rumoured that the old Jacobs factory in Tallaght has been bought up by Amazon too, as there is strong 5G network coverage in the area.

It's understood Cork may have a distribution warehouse but precise information about Amazon's workings is very hard to come by.

But what is sure is this is a company that thinks BIG. For example, it has been claimed that Amazon has bought up ALL of the wind energy in County Donegal.

Amazon presently runs its Irish operations off the national grid, using up untold amounts of energy and is no doubt preparing for market domination by using wind energy to run their web service centres around the country.

The online giant retailer received



Picture: I-Ta Tasai (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)

the red carpet treatment when it opened its Burlington Road operation. No doubt the Irish government was happy to be seen to deliver on investment and development obligations by attracting jobs to these shores without any questions being asked about the working conditions of those who filled the positions.

There are reports of Amazon warehouses where computers monitor employees. If a worker is not fulfilling his or her duties efficiently enough, then the employee can be effectively fired by computer! No human inter-

“ With Ireland's weak labour laws teamed with the secrecy with which this corporate giant does business, how are unions to ensure Amazon web services workers get the representation they need? ”

action, no second chances.

Horrific stories of the abuse of workers at such outlets have made headlines. It was recently revealed, for instance, that there were 600 ambulance call-outs over three years at one particular warehouse in the UK.

And health and safety concerns have been raised over the use of dangerous chemicals in the postal labels that workers handle, inhale or ingest each working day.

Blatant abuses include the exploitation of workers, unrealistic daily targets, unsafe working condi-

tions as well as employees being unable to take basic toilet breaks due to the distance from their work station and the time allocated for a break.

Of course, robots don't need to go to the toilet, and warehouse operatives are having to compete with them – a worker takes 90 minutes to pick, pack and process an order, while a robot takes just 13 minutes.

Workers' terms and conditions are regularly and routinely flouted and, unfortunately, in some countries this is going unchallenged.

Added to this, there have been claims that workers have been directly targeted for trying to organise in their workplaces.

The fact is we have to arm ourselves with all the information available in order to prepare to stop the extinction of retail jobs and of Mandate as a union that represents such workers.

With Ireland's weak labour laws teamed with the secrecy with which this corporate giant does business, how are unions going to ensure that Amazon web services workers get the representation they need? And, just as important, how are unions going to convince them they need protection?

## Industrial action

The template has been set elsewhere for us. Amazon workers across the world have been taking various types of industrial action for years. Unbelievably the company WILL sit down and talk in countries where they have to – the question is will they do this in Ireland if Amazon workers decided to get organised?

First off, it's vital that unions should have on common strategy in dealing with Amazon.

We should campaign against a system that allows one company to build up that much financial power in Ireland. We need to question what exactly they were offered as incentives. Who benefits? The company – not the workers – will usually be the answer.

There was fight-back recently when Amazon expressed its wish to open up a huge facility in New York. Communities, local politicians and unions all made a case as to why Amazon was in effect being paid to build its facility in the Big Apple. It seems the company was being gifted \$3 million towards the project from the powers that be in New York.

In the end, the campaign was so successful that rather than negotiate or compromise Amazon pulled out of the deal.

The truth is, in other jurisdictions where labour laws are stronger than in Ireland, Amazon executives will meet with local workplace leaders or unions. However, no doubt these same executives will have done their homework about the set-up in Ireland, realised the voluntarist nature of our Labour Court system, and will duly exploit it.



Members of German union ver.di staged a two-day strike at five of the mail order giant's shipment warehouses last October Picture: UNI Global



# Don't let them trash the working class



FINE Gael Minister for Social Protection Regina Doherty has indicated that she intends to review and, if possible, restructure universal welfare entitlements. Speaking at a pre-budget forum in early July, the minister said she wants a more targeted approach.

Minister Doherty is arguing that some people receive more than a 'minimum essential living standard' (MELS) from the state but that there are many who are not. She also indicated her desire to end equal-across-the-board payments in different parts of Ireland.

The case being made by Ms Doherty is not to increase all incomes to an equitable level but for a gradual redistribution of the budgetary allocation so that all recipients get this 'minimum essential living standard'.

It should be kept in mind that this line of argument does not stop at social welfare income but inevitably is bound to include a recalibration (or more precisely privatisation) of all public services.

Moreover, it takes little imagination to see how this concept of 'minimum essential' would be used as a spur-



ous rationale for maintaining a low-wage benchmark in the labour market.

The attraction for our neoliberal ruling class is that this strategy provides what for them appears to be an answer to a problem without having to increase taxes on the wealthy or large corporations.

## Alternative

The alternative to their proposal – that is providing a universal system unconditionally accessible to all regardless of income – would have to be paid for through the imposition of progressive taxation.

The Fine Gael cabinet minister and her colleagues are promoting their proposal through a seductive and disingenuously simple argument. Why, they ask, should some receive

more than their basic requirement when others do not?

Does a Michael O'Leary or a Denis O'Brien need the same state pension as someone who has only managed to earn the minimum wage throughout his or her working life and therefore has little savings?

Why would a person earning a high income not pay for medical treatment when they can afford to do so?

While at first glance this appears to be reasonable, it is laying the groundwork for another debilitating attack on the working class.

In essence, it is a right-wing initiative aimed at replacing citizens' entitlements with regulated charity and ultimately paving the way towards diminishing the social wage.

By creating a system where the wealthy would pay only for services directly obtained, they are thereafter freed from making their proper contribution to society.

The simple fact is that any unessential social welfare benefit gained by the wealthy could easily be recovered through a proper taxation system.

The Doherty proposal is in keeping with her party's overall position. Her



Regina Doherty: 'a more targeted response'

leader spoke two years ago of wanting to lead a party for people who get up early in the morning – a sentiment closely echoing that of the British Tories with their talk of hard-working 'strivers' and stay-at-home 'shirkers'.

By the same token, Ms Doherty is advocating an intensification of the drive towards creating a perfectly

neoliberal economy. In other words, they seek to create a new Victorian age. Theirs is a view that sees private wealth and privilege, not only as a right to be guarded jealously but something to be maintained even at the cost of keeping an entire class down.

It is a view which insists that an individual's high income is not only a necessary incentive but comes about purely as a result of that person's inherent merits, diligence and hard work. Thinking that echoes the words of former British Prime Minister Thatcher who once said, "... there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families..."

Not only does this attitude fly in the face of any reasonable understanding of social justice and fairness but it is also a deeply-flawed analysis. Society is a complex and interwoven entity nicely summed up in the African proverb that, it takes a village to raise a child. In other words, we are all dependent on the contributions of each other.

How, for example, would the professor be able deliver her lectures





'No such thing as society': Margaret Thatcher may be dead but her worldview lives on...  
Picture: Duncan (CC BY-SA 2.0)

“ Every reduction to the welfare safety net, or to the state pension or to public services is effectively a transfer of society's wealth from the many to the few ”

without having a home built by numerous tradesmen who, in turn, depend on a plethora of people to supply them with tools and materials?

How would the doctor carry out his work if he wasn't able to get his groceries from the supermarket with all those people delivering supplies, stacking shelves, manning the check-outs etc? And the chain is endless.

It is important that working people come to understand this definition of an interdependent society and that social welfare payments and public services are seen as ours by right and not a privilege to be donated by the wealthy. Rather than curtail the income of the less well off, it must be increased.

### Sources of income

A worker has two sources of income: one is the weekly pay packet, the other is what is known as the social wage (i.e. our citizenship entitlements to items such as water or education).

In many ways this latter source is maybe the more important. With guaranteed access to shelter, health-care, education, unemployment compensation and security in old age, a worker has the confidence to challenge an employer.

Without these assurances, workers are forced to accept what terms and

conditions the boss chooses to offer.

This is a vitally important concept and an issue that the trade union movement really must take on and win. Every reduction to the welfare safety net, or to the state pension or to public services is effectively a transfer of society's wealth from the many to the few. It is therefore a threat to the working class in general and organised labour in particular.

In the broad sense, adopting the minimum essential living standard as a benchmark – and that is what is intended – inevitably demoralises working class communities and opens the door to a raft of socially undesirable practices.

In the more specific arena of the workplace, it weakens our ability to bargain with management. Without the security of universal public services and the social wage, workers are forced to depend on the generosity of their employer.

And we know that the more precarious the position of a workforce, the more certain that management will exploit the weakness.

As with the anti-water tax campaign, organised labour has the power to influence the outcome of this struggle. However, just as then, the labour movement needs to have the vision and resolution to take action.

Fortunately there are trade unionists with the credentials to see this task through. At a recent fringe event organised in tandem with the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference in Dublin, a large audience heard from Mandate's John Douglas and Gareth Murphy of the FSU.

Both spoke of the need for trade unionists to respond pro-actively to issues impacting on their members and on their class.

These are the sentiments and this is the spirit that has won through for us in the past and can do so again.

# Employment Law

This one day Progression Course in **Employment Law** is for Trade Union Activists who have a desire to improve their knowledge and understanding of employment law. Participants will gain an understanding of the legislative environment within which the employment relationship operates.

### Course Content:

#### 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, H&S 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
- Terms of employment and Information Act
- Organisation of Working Time
- Payment of Wages/Remuneration
- Equality and Discrimination
- Unfair Dismissal and Redundancy
- Redress for breaches of Employment Law

### Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate Certificate.

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email **mandateotc@mandate.ie** to secure your place.



# Negotiation Skills

This one day Progression Course in **Negotiation Skills** is for trade union activists 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:

- Intermediate
- Building Skills & Knowledge
- Negotiations in Practice

### Course Content:

- The Psychology of the Negotiating Environment
- Strategic Approach to Negotiations
- Collective Decision Making
- Identifying Goals to be Achieved
- Prioritising Issues
- Develop Tactical Plans.
- Tactics in Negotiations – Both Sides – \*Key Learning
- Stone Walling
- Cooling off Periods
- 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

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WINNING FOR ITS MEMBERS...

# For Pete's sake! Here's why it pays **BIG** to be in the union

RECENTLY, meat cutter Clarence 'Pete' Dickerson, a member of US retail workers union UFCW, brought home the bacon literally when he pocketed almost \$32,000 in back pay after noticing something was amiss with this pension contributions.

Eight years ago, the UFCW Local 400 member moved from a Kroger Stores in Richmond, Virginia to another Kroger outlet in Appomattox, to help care for his sick brother and to be closer to his family.

On arrival in Appomattox, he was assigned a temporary job as a grocery clerk, the only position then available, but within a few weeks was back using his meat-cutting skills full time at the meat department in his new employment.

However, it seems Pete's move from the grocery department was mishandled by management at the store and he was wrongly classified as a meat clerk rather than cutter.

As Pete explained to *UFCW400.org*: "My pension seemed awfully low, so I started checking into it. They had me listed as a clerk according to paperwork. But I'm a meat cutter. I was hired as a meat cutter from the get-



Kroger meat cutter Clarence 'Pete' Dickerson, 71, receives notification of his \$31,855 payout

go." When Pete raised concerns, the store manager said, "We'll look into it." But months passed by with no action.

But when his Local 400 representative, Phil Frisina, visited the store and learned of Pete's issues, he filed a grievance.

"It was a battle," Frisina admitted. "Management claimed he should have known better. Come on - Pete's 71 years old, an easy-going guy who didn't want to rock the boat. I told Kroger he fulfilled his obligation to you by working as a meat cutter. Your obligation is to pay him as a meat cutter."

After more than five months, Kroger finally did the right thing and agreed to a settlement reimbursing Pete for the pay he had rightfully earned as a meat cutter.

### Thrilled

"I was thrilled to know that it has been done and handled the right way," Pete said. "Anyone can make a mistake, but not to admit to the error is a problem."

"It wouldn't have happened if I hadn't had my union there to help me," he added. "Everyone should join our union. That's why Local 400 is here—to catch errors that would otherwise never be caught."

"Local 400 repaired Pete's past and fixed his future," Frisina said. "I'm about to retire myself and this is the biggest back pay award I've ever won. It feels really good to have helped someone - especially a good person like Pete."

Picture: UFCW400.org

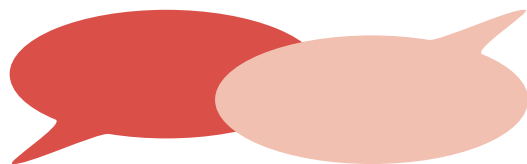
## NEWS

### 2% rise for staff at J McKenna Ltd

MANDATE members in J McKenna Ltd, Listowel, have accepted a set of proposals following negotiations between management and the union. The 18-month agreement, which runs from April 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, will see pay increase by 2% from July 1, 2019.

Also included in the deal is an extra day's leave a year for full-time staff, which will be calculated on a pro rata basis for those who work on a part-time basis.

**EMPOWERED!**  
**GET INVOLVED**  
**IN YOUR UNION**



MANDATE  
ORGANISING &  
TRAINING CENTRE

## Learn English with Mandate for free!

Mandate, your trade union, is offering English speaking classes for members. The course is for members who while speaking some English have never had the opportunity for formal training. In the course you will learn the basic grammar and improve your vocabulary.

You will have the chance to correct those mistakes that your workmates are too polite to tell you about! Improved language skills can add to your confidence and improve your quality of life.

Training is **FREE** to Mandate members.

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

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

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



## Free collective bargaining must be fundamental right for all workers

THE fundamental issue that "unites and binds all workers" is access to free collective bargaining, ICTU Assistant General Secretary Owen Reidy has told a gathering of European trade unionists.

Addressing delegates to the ETUC Congress in Vienna on May 22, he said: "It doesn't matter if we come from the north, south, east or west of Europe. Regardless of the political cultures of the countries, we come from, that one thing is the universal right for working woman and men to have the right to free collective bargaining in their work."

Pointing out that you could not have decent work without this right, he said that many Irish workers laboured under what he called "a so-called voluntary model of industrial relations".

"Voluntary for whom?" he asked, adding, "For whom did this model serve?"

Mr Reidy told delegates that ICTU had achieved some improvements in sectoral bargaining in industries such as security and

contract cleaning but that the majority of employers in other sectors - especially hospitality and retail - had refused to engage.

"There is no sanction from the authorities," he underlined. "It's voluntary! Therein lies the weakness of our model."

He said that ICTU was seeking to address what he called the "collective bargaining deficit" with one proposal being to promote the idea of an EU Directive on Collective Bargaining.

### Decent

"But in so doing we want to ensure that our colleagues in other jurisdictions that already enjoy decent forms of collective bargaining today, do not lose in any way in the future what they now enjoy," he continued.

"Surely it is in all our interests that workers right across our continent enjoy decent work, decent pay. Without a right to collective bargaining, this cannot be achieved. The essence of our movement is internationalism. We cannot leave anybody behind."

## King blasts 'hard' hearted bosses who exploit low paid workers

ICTU General Secretary Patricia King has claimed some employers in parts of the economy - including in the retail, food and hospitality sectors - are seeking to work low paid employees as hard as they can and for as little as they can and for as little as possible.

She made the comments in an address to a Unite policy conference in Dublin on May 13.

Ms King pointed out that as someone who sits on the Low Pay Commission, she heard all the submissions over whether the National Minimum Wage should be increased or remain unchanged.

In certain sectors, she told delegates, there were those who put forward the view that there should be no hikes in the minimum wage, and who claimed there was no such thing as a low pay economy.

In fact, she claimed their long-term policy seemed to be to work people "as hard as you can, for as long as you can, for as little as possible".

However, Ms King said that improving access to collective bargaining would play a key role in making it more difficult for employers to drive down pay as a means of boosting their own competitiveness.



By Jimmy Doran  
Trade Union Left Campaign

ANTI-union legislation and how it affects workers' rights was the subject of a fringe meeting organised by the Trade Union Left Forum (TULF) at the ICTU biennial delegate conference in Dublin in early July.

Mandate General Secretary John Douglas and Gareth Murphy, who is the acting general secretary of the Financial Services Union, addressed the meeting, which was chaired by Therese Moloney of Unite.

A total of seven fringe meetings were held during the conference, six of them official and advertised widely at the event; the TULF meeting was the only unofficial one – and it was by far the largest and best attended.

This is a measure of the anger and demand out there among workers and trade union activists to see a return of union power back to where it once was.

The balance of power has now tipped very much in favour of capital and against workers. This needs to change to enable workers to fight back against the unending cuts and the attacks on the quality of life enjoyed by ordinary working people.

This was made very clear during the follow-up debate that followed the speeches. The feeling among those attending the meeting was the need to build a workers' rights campaign centred around the abolishing of the notorious 1990 Industrial Relations Act, and replacing it with a set of rights for workers – namely, the right to union access, the right to union recognition as well as full collective bargaining rights.

The TULF held a workshop on July 18 to initiate and plan a strategy for the workers' rights campaign.

Workers are well aware that they have been savaged by austerity over the last 10 years and that they had little option but to take it on the chin, going into defensive mode to hold on to as much as could be done during these attacks on pay and conditions.

Austerity worked very well for those who designed it and for those whose benefit it was designed for (which most certainly was not the working class).

During the 10 years of austerity there was a direct transfer of wealth from workers to those that caused

# Unions must get radical ... or become redundant



Mandate General Secretary John Douglas speaks at the packed TULF fringe meeting at the recent ICTU BDC in Dublin

the financial crash: the bankers, developers and the owners of capital.

Cuts to pay and conditions, led to increased profits for employers. The cuts to the funding of public services – such as health, housing, and social welfare – was redirected to pay interest on government loans borrowed to bail out the Irish banks, and to stop

the collapse of the European banks.

These same banks had made reckless loans to Irish banks who, in turn, made reckless loans to property speculators who as a consequence created the property bubble that led to the financial crash. Income tax increased on workers while corporation tax was left unchanged at 12.5%,

with many of the largest corporations – such as Google and Apple – paying only a fraction of this.

The decline of the public and local authority house building programme transferred the provision of homes to private landlords and led to a boom in private rented accommodation.

With 50% of workers earning less

“ For 40 years employers with the aid of government and anti-worker legislation have been withering away union power ”

than €30,000 a year, the day of owning a home is gone for the vast majority of workers. Private rented accommodation is now the main form of tenure in our cities and towns, according to census 2016.

Massive profits are being made by an elite property class which resulted in 53% of all property sold in Ireland last year being paid for with cash. This is at the same time that in excess of 10,000 people in Ireland are homeless, 4,000 of them children.

We are told that the recession is over and we are back to full employment. However, the vast majority of these jobs are low paid and precarious in nature with short-term contracts, minimum hour contracts, the gig economy and bogus self-employment etc. These have replaced the permanent pensionable jobs that were the norm when unions were strong.

For 40 years employers with the aid of government and anti-worker legislation have been withering away union power. Workers and unions must fight back against poverty wages, precarious work and the collapse in living standards, regain union power, build the campaign for workers' rights and turn the tide back in our favour. *Unions must get radical or become redundant.*

## COMMUNICATIONS

**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.



## Training & Development (QQI Level 6)

The **Training & Development** course is designed to enable learners attain skills, knowledge and confidence to organise and deliver training and development in a range of organisational contexts.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Learners should be able to recognise best practice in adult learning and development.
- Appraise different learning styles
- Conduct training needs analysis
- Design training to meet identified needs
- Prepare training programmes
- Develop lesson plans
- Identify learning outcomes and put in place relevant methods to access learning
- Develop and use a range of teaching materials
- Evaluate training and development interventions.

*This course will be delivered in two parts.  
Each part is of three days duration.*

### Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this course will obtain a QQI Level 6 Award.

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email **mandateotc@mandate.ie** to secure your place.



## Political and Social Studies

This two day **Political and Social Studies** course is for trade union activists who have a keen interest in the Political & Social Economy and who have questions regarding the wider social

### Course Content

- The politics of economics
- Understanding the Irish economy
- The Global Financial Crash and what it means
- The Great Recession and permanent austerity
- Democratizing economics
- The power of trade unions
- Connecting with communities
- Reflecting community diversity

### Certification and Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate Certificate.

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email **mandateotc@mandate.ie** to secure your place.

## GOOD CAUSES

Here's where funds generated from 2018 BDC in Wexford went to...

# It's the joy of giving



**BACK ROW:** Shane Murphy (SuperValu Pettitt's, St Aidans Wexford) with Annette Beckett, Neil Murray, Orlagh Ryan, and George Lawlor; **FRONT ROW:** Philomena Lawlor, George Lacey, and Cathy O'Connor



**ABOVE LEFT:** Neil Murray (Tesco, Wexford) presents cheque to Philomena Lawlor, of the Tracie Lawlor Trust for Cystic Fibrosis. **ABOVE CENTRE:** Orlagh Ryan (SuperValu Pettitt's, The Quay, Wexford) and Cathy O'Connor (Penneys, Wexford) present cheque to George Lawlor, of Wexford Marine Watch. **ABOVE RIGHT:** George Lacey (Chair, Wexford Local Council) presents cheque to Annette Beckett, of Wexford St Vincent de Paul

# and why it matters...

## CHARITY IN FOCUS...

## The Tracie Lawlor Fund for Cystic Fibrosis

THE Tracie Lawlor Trust for Cystic Fibrosis was set up in Wexford at the start of 2008 after the death of Tracie Lawlor, aged 24, after a life-long battle with Cystic Fibrosis (CF).

It is the brainchild of Tracie's mam and brothers Joseph and Brian. Since then it has grown immensely across Wexford, the South East and across Ireland.

A spokesperson told *Shopfloor*: "With the support of many people the Tracie Lawlor Trust for Cystic Fibrosis has been able to grow and provide for CF's. We are here to help

all people with CF in Ireland as much as we can, so please don't hesitate to contact us.

"The Tracie Lawlor Trust for Cystic Fibrosis does not take a wage or salary from any donation received."

### About Cystic Fibrosis

Cystic Fibrosis is a hereditary disease which (mainly) affects the glands, lungs, pancreas and digestive tract. One in 19 people are carriers and if both parents are carriers there is a one in four chance that they will have a child with Cystic Fibrosis.

Ireland has the highest rate of Cystic Fibrosis in Europe. People with CF undergo a daily routine of medication and physical therapy.

The Tracie Lawlor Trust for Cystic Fibrosis was set up to empower, inform, and help maintain Cystic Fibrosis health and quality of life. For more information check out **tracielawlortrust.com**

Its motto is – "Live Life Laughing" and its philosophy is – "Hope wisdom and effort"

My Charity **tracielawlortrust.com** Please support this worthy cause...



# Capitalism is in crisis... and more dangerous as a result

"CAPITALISM is not just vicious, brutal and unjust, it is now a threat to the survival of humanity."

Tommy McKearney, made the comment as he delivered the oration at the annual CPI James Connolly commemoration on May 12.

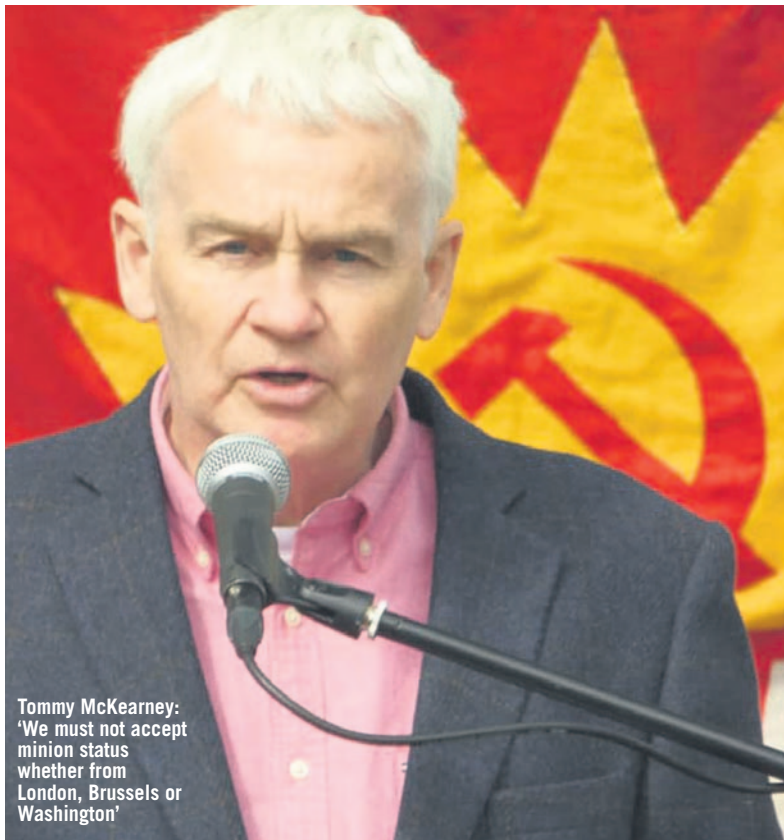
He told those gathered in Arbour Hill, Dublin, that whenever a social system had outlived its useful and productive phase, it must give way to a more progressive entity.

"Capitalism has clearly now reached this stage and phase," he added, and warned, "...as a consequence [capitalism] is perhaps more dangerously lethal than ever."

He paid tribute to James Connolly, as a man with the ability to understand what was happening and to take the correct decision at the right time. "Connolly was a patriot, an Irish republican but above all he was a Marxist, a scientific socialist and an internationalist.

"The greatest tribute we pay him is not to mourn him or to lament for him or indeed to recount his feats – great though they were – but to apply his methodology and his teaching to our analysis of the present and from that to ensure that this acts as a guide, to enlighten and inspire our practice and action."

McKearney pointed out that



Tommy McKearney: 'We must not accept minion status whether from London, Brussels or Washington'

neoliberalism was not an aberration in the capitalist order but was "capitalism's default position" and flagged up how 40 million people in the US – "the epicentre of free market capitalism" – were now subsisting on food stamps.

Capitalism through its relentless, insane, never-ending drive for growth was also accelerating the decline of the earth's natural life-support system. "Only in a planned, managed and people-centred economy will this lemming-like rush to extension be stopped," he claimed.

### Imperative

"There is an imperative that capitalism be definitively overthrown because socialism alone can and will provide the communalisation of society to deliver us from disaster and in the not-distant future."

McKearney claimed the "matrix" within which contemporary capitalism operated within was global imperialism, disguised through the "blatant falsehood" of promoting democracy or bringing freedom to the

oppressed. In fact, he defined imperialism as the "brutal use of military power to protect and defend the elite practitioners of free marketism", which ensured that superpowers had uninterrupted access to the earth's natural resources and the ability to attack those who challenged its power. Capitalism was using the "well practiced routine" of sewing division within the working class, he said, by focusing discontent on "hapless minorities".

But such promotion of the far right was, he suggested, evidence of a "nervous, crisis-ridden capitalism".

"While we must not ignore the threat or underestimate the danger, we should also recognise that our enemy is in difficulty. We must continue to build our own strength, not only to counteract the right but to take definitive advantage from his predicament."

In an Irish context, against the backdrop of a homeless crisis, a two-tier health system and widespread precarious employment, he insisted there was a "crying need" for state in-

tervention. Despite this, the government in the South persisted in a ruthless policy of privatisation.

"Housing, healthcare, provision for the elderly and the young, hospital building, broadband provision, motorway tolling ... all handed over to the private sector so that wealthy individuals may become richer while delivering poor and flawed services where quality and scale of provision is guided by a bottom line."

In the North, he claimed the "six-county statelet" had become "an obsolete aberration" and "surplus to requirements for the British ruling class". "They now view the North as little more than an occasional embarrassment to be transferred some day into the keeping of the Republic on condition that the new state falls obediently into line with the dictates of finance-driven imperialism."

McKearney continued: "James Connolly once wrote that partition would lead to a carnival of reaction. The removal of partition under capitalist conditions would simply maintain that unlovely carnival ad infinitum."

### 'One step along'

It was now clear that a united Ireland is "but one step along the road", he added and warned that "the process must not stop at that stage".

"Bear in mind what Connolly once said that 'ruling by fooling, is a great British art with great Irish fools to practice on'. It would be a travesty and a tragedy if we were to fall into the trap of settling again for what would in effect amount to dominion status regardless of whether it would be governed from London, Brussels or Washington."

McKearney cautioned that socialists should never accept the word defeat but know that ultimately the future lies with those who create the wealth.

"The Irish working class remains as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland and as we stand at the graveside of the man who first spoke those words, we commit ourselves to continue always until victory."



Picture: ETUC

New role: Esther Lynch

## Leading ETUC role for Irish trade unionist

FORMER Congress official Esther Lynch has been elected deputy general secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

She previously worked as legislation and social affairs officer at ICTU between 1993-2015, before moving to ETUC to take up the role of confederal secretary in 2015.

Ms Lynch was elected to the top job by delegates from 90 national trade union organisations at the ETUC Congress in Vienna in May.

Welcoming the move, ICTU General Secretary Patricia King said: "The level of support that Esther's candidacy received reflects the very high regard in which she is held across Europe."

"Now more than ever, we need strong voices speaking on behalf of and protecting the rights of European workers in EU decision-making. Esther was a superb choice with long experience of what the job involves."

"This is a great result for the 45 million workers who are members of ETUC-affiliated trade unions."

# Workplace Leadership Training

● Are you an experienced trade union activist? ● Are you also interested in learning and developing leadership & and enhancing your confidence and competence as a trade union activist?

Mandate is delighted to offer a new (part-time) one-year certificate programme in **Workplace Leadership**. This innovative programme is aimed at experienced trade union activists. The overall aims of the programme are to develop the key competencies, skills and attributes essential for activists to succeed in their roles as workplace leaders.

### Course Content:

- Unlocking your leadership potential
- Personal Development
- Media Skills
- Understanding the changing context of retail
- How effective change happens or doesn't!
- Developing others
- Handling conflict

### Programme delivery:

This part-time programme starts in September 2019 and will be delivered as a blended learning model involving attendance on approximately six days (one per session), with self-directed learning, together with practical and project work taking place between attendances. Application forms will be available in March 2019.

### Certification and Progression:

Participants who successfully complete this programme of learning will receive a Mandate Diploma in Workplace Leadership.

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email [mandateotc@mandate.ie](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie) to secure your place.





# Health care and pension plans protected after 11 day strike

By John Logan  
US-based labour studies academic

LATE on Sunday, April 21, in what it called a “powerful victory,” the United Food & Commercial workers union (UFCW) reached a tentative agreement with Stop & Shop management to end a strike by 31,000 workers in over 240 grocery stores in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

In hindsight, the 11-day strike which began on April 11, is the largest retail strike in the US since 2003. It could also turn out to be one of the most important work stoppages of the past few decades.

The workers struck to resist demands from the company – which is owned by Dutch giant, Royal Ahold Delhaize – for sweeping reductions in healthcare and pension benefits and reduced pay for Sunday work.

But, according to the union, under Sunday’s three-year settlement, existing health care and pension plans and time-and-a-half for Sunday work are maintained.

Stop & Shop demands for health care and pension concessions from some of its lowest paid workers were not borne out of financial necessity.

Ahold Delhaize is highly profitable in the United States. In 2018, it generated sales of \$44 billion from all its US food businesses (the company also owns the Food Lion, Giant, and Hannaford supermarket chains, and the Peapod grocery delivery service), with Stop & Shop supermarkets contributing about \$8 billion of that total.

The US accounts for approximately two-thirds of the Dutch multinational’s overall revenues. Rather, the company was seeking to claw back hard-won worker benefits in order to be more like its non-union, low-road rivals.

## Community support

The strike enjoyed strong support among Stop & Shop workers, other unions, state and national lawmakers, and the New England public.

According to the UFCW, virtually no Stop & Shop workers returned to work, while members of the Teamsters and Retail Wholesale Department Store Union (who deliver for Coke, Pepsi and other brands) refused to cross picket lines and make deliveries.

Several presidential candidates expressed support for the strikers. Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont have joined workers on the picket line.

Alongside Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, former Vice President Joe Biden addressed a large rally in Dorchester, Mass., telling the crowd that the company’s efforts to undermine workers’ health and retirement



Stop & Shop workers took part in an 11-day strike against plans to slash health care and pensions benefits as well as cutting Sunday pay



security were “morally wrong.”

Senators Cory Booker of New Jersey and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, former HUD Secretary Julian Castro and Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., also sent strong messages of support.

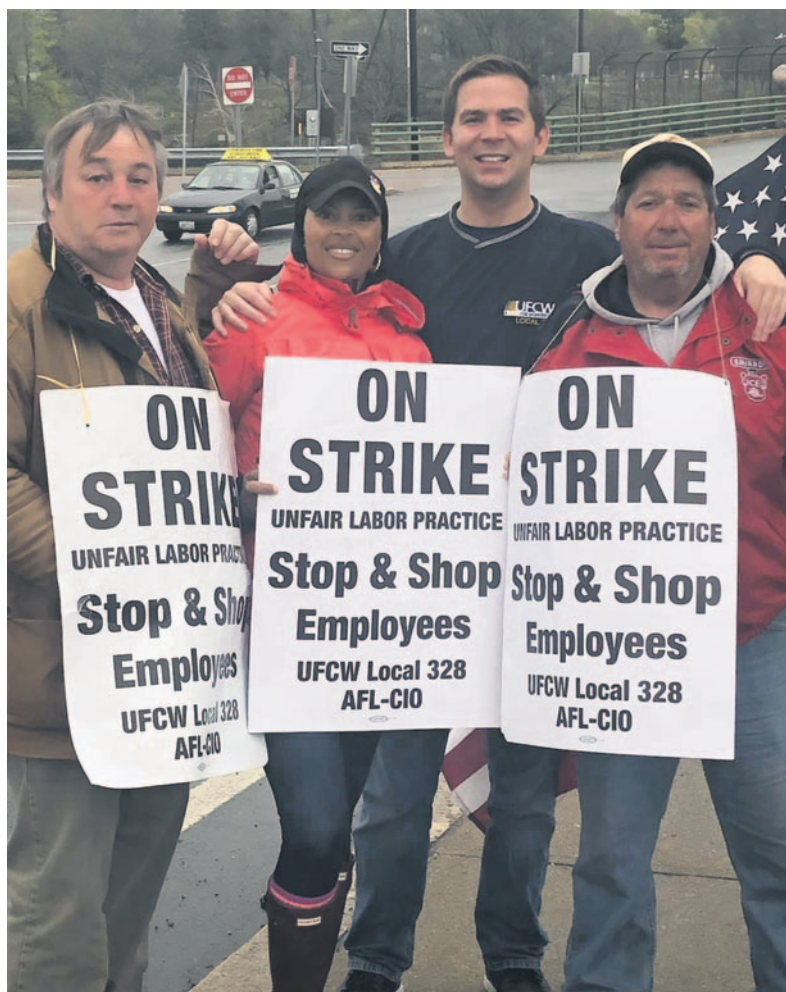
Even two Connecticut Republican politicians, Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton and Rep. Dave Yaccarino, came out in support of the strikers.

During the strike, formerly loyal Stop & Shop customers deserted the grocery chain in droves – visits were down by an astonishing 75% – thereby driving up business at its closest competitors, Shaws and Star Market.

Some New England rabbis stated it “wasn’t kosher” to patronize Stop & Shop while the strike continued. During the busy Easter retail period, these developments could have signaled financial peril for the company.

Realizing the depth of community support for the strikers, Stop & Shop management repeatedly attempted to reassure the public that it sup-





Pictures: UFCW local 328

“For many working-class and middle-class Americans, unions offer the best, and sometimes only, hope for decent health care and reliable retirement security”

ported its “valuable associates” – workers who have often given decades of service to the company – even as it moved to weaken their health and pension benefits.

### National implications

The Stop & Shop strike joins a growing list of successful work stoppages throughout the nation. In recent months, teachers in both Republican red and Democrat blue states, Marriott hotel workers and several others have won strikes, in most cases with the benefit of strong community support.

The stakes were extremely high for the Stop & Shop strikers, and community support, no matter how deep, did not by itself guarantee victory.

The company initially appeared resolutely determined to cut costs, claiming it needed the sweeping concessions because of intense competition in the grocery sector. But if Stop & Shop management had succeeded in gutting the health care and pension benefits of its unionized workforce in New England, it would likely have adopted these tactics in other states, and could have encouraged other unionized grocery chains to pursue similar “morally wrong” bargaining tactics.

Ahold Delhaize US also owns almost 200 unionized Stop & Shop stores in New York state and hundreds more Food Giant stores in

Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

In recent months, several unionized retailers have sought to emulate the competitive strategies of large non-union retailers like Walmart, Target and Dollar General, which mostly provide workers with low pay and lousy benefits.

Kroger, the country’s largest unionized grocery chain, has taken a tough line with its unionized workers, claiming that the arrival of Amazon (which purchased the Whole Foods grocery chain for almost \$14 billion in 2017) is a “game changer”, even though it currently faces little direct competition from the e-commerce behemoth.

Unionized grocery chains have adopted these hardball tactics before. Fifteen years ago, unionized grocery chains in California told workers that competition from Walmart required sweeping concessions in pay and benefits.

For many working-class and middle-class Americans, unions offer the best, and sometimes only, hope for decent health care and reliable retirement security. Millions of Americans are now working long into their retirement years because they lack adequate savings, decent pensions and affordable health care benefits. Since 1985, the number of working pensioners has almost doubled.

It was vital that the UFCW did not allow Stop & Shop to undermine its workers’ retirement and health security. Even in a strong economy, a management victory may well have sparked a faster “race to the bottom” in wages and benefits for grocery workers. Striking Stop & Shop struck for a fair settlement. We should welcome their success in protecting decent health care and pension benefits.

John Logan is Director and Professor of Labor and Employment Studies at San Francisco State University.

This article originally appeared in US politics newspaper and website The Hill

# €3.1m in unpaid wages ‘tip of the iceberg’

ICTU General Secretary Patricia King has insisted that society needs to send a “clear message” through the “ramping up” of inspections that the mistreatment of workers by bosses is unacceptable.

She made the comments after it was revealed in the Workplace Relations Commission’s fourth annual report that some €3.1m in unpaid wages was recovered by inspectors last year, describing this figure as “just the tip of the iceberg”.

In 2018, 5,753 workplaces were inspected, covering 133,462 workers. This is a year-on-year increase in inspections of 20% and a 35% increase in workers covered. The €3.1m recouped in unpaid wages is 75% more than in 2017, up from €1.77m, and twice that recovered in 2016.

Ms King told *Shopfloor*: “The significant increase in the amount of unpaid wages recovered as a result of a modest increase in the number of workplace inspections last year unequivocally demonstrates the case for additional resources to be urgently made available to WRC inspection and enforcement service.

### Rogue employers

“As the economy and numbers at work continue to grow, rogue employers need to be left in no doubt that the odds of them receiving a knock on the door from a compliance inspector are too great to risk underpaying their staff or breaching employment rights. This is far from the current situation.”

Almost half of all employers inspected (45%) were found to be in breach of employment legislation. The sectors with the highest breach rates (60+%) included fisheries, food and drink, hair and beauty, transport, wholesale and retail.

Ms King continued: “Sectors with the highest incidents of breaches of employment rights are the largest employers of some of our most vulnerable workers. As a society, we need to send a clear message that such mistreatment of workers by bosses is unacceptable in this day and age, and the pushback must begin with a ramping up of inspections.

“Worryingly in 2018 the sector with the highest breach rate was the equine sector at 84%. In December of that same year, Minister Doherty signed new regulations that allow employers in the horse racing industry derogations from some working time rules. The WRC report should give cause for reflection on the wisdom of this decision,” she added.



## 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**

Picture: European Parliament



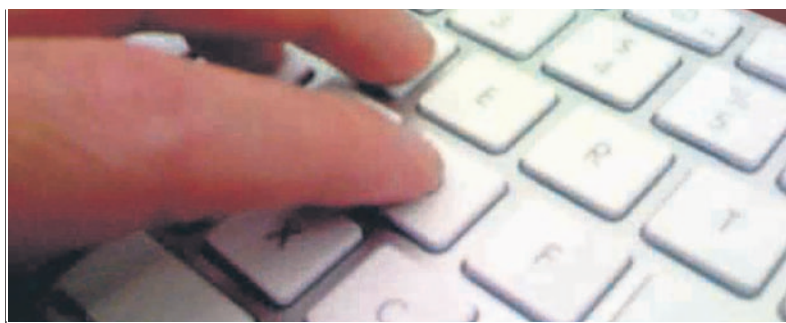
# THERE'S A NEW WAY TO JOIN OR PAY YOUR DUES

[www.joinmandate.ie](http://www.joinmandate.ie)

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Illustration: Daniel Huntley (CC BY-SA 2.0)



## 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](mailto: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](http://www.mandate.ie)**

## OBITUARY DAVID CAMPBELL



Mandate activist David Campbell, third from left and below, never wavered in his passion and commitment to achieving justice for workers



## Dave proved the doubters wrong ... a stalwart activist who led from the front

MANDATE would like to extend the sincere condolences of all in the union to the family and friends of David Campbell who passed away on Wednesday, April 24, after a short illness.

David was a stalwart of Mandate, and a key activist within Dunnes Stores (Northside Shopping Centre, Dublin) where he courageously led from the front in a series of campaigns over recent years.

During the *Decency for Dunnes Workers* campaign, David took part in every possible action, from delivering a Christmas card to Dunnes head office in December 2014, participating in the strike in April 2015 and leading the national demonstration in support of the Dunnes workers' demands in June of that same year.

When it became clear that Dunnes would not offer their workers secure hour contracts, David again led the way in the campaign for secure hour legislation. He lobbied politicians

across his constituency and offered support for other workers in other areas. Mandate General Secretary John Douglas paid tribute to David Campbell and said he will be a massive loss to Mandate and its members: "David Campbell had all the attributes that make an effective trade union member and activist - a strong sense of social justice; passion for his union; selflessness; and a belief that as a united collective we can achieve anything."

He told *Shopfloor*: "David turned up to everything, whether it was a Dunnes event, a May Day rally or a march in support of other workers in dispute. Earlier this year, David joined the Mandate Trade Union delegation marching in support of the nurses."

And on December 19 last year - the night the new secure hour legislation passed the final stage in the Dail - an emotional David Campbell was close to tears when he said: "I'm so happy.

I can go into work tomorrow and tell all the doubters who said we'd never win that we did it. We won."

Mr Douglas said: "While politicians, political parties and even trade unions will claim responsibility for the new *Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018*, if it hadn't been for the commitment, perseverance and dedication of activists such as David Campbell, workers in Ireland would still not have access to the right to a secure hour contract."

Almost 2,000 workers in the retail sector alone have lodged claims for secure hour contracts in the first month of the law's existence - and that is a legacy of David Campbell and his activism.

Mandate Trade Union would like to thank David Campbell for his commitment and dedication over many years and again we express our sincere condolences to his family, friends and colleagues. Rest In Power, Brother!



# SHOP STEWARDS TRAINING PROGRAMME 2019

	Course Title	Course Dates	Duration	Location	Closing date
<b>3rd Quarter</b>	Political & Social Studies	Sep 2/3	2 days	Sligo	31 May 2019
	Employment Law Part 1	Sep 9	1 day	Galway	31 May 2019
	Recruitment & Organising	Sep 16/17/18	3 days	Waterford	31 May 2019
	Workplace Union Representative Training	Sep 23/24/25	3 days	Dublin	31 May 2019
	Training & Development Part 1	Sep 30/Oct 1/2	3 days	Dublin	31 May 2019
	Recruitment & Organising	Sep 30/Oct 1/2	3 days	Dublin	31 May 2019
<b>4th Quarter</b>	Communications Part 1	Oct 2	1 day	Cork	30 Aug 2019
	Employment Law Part 2	Oct 7	1 day	Galway	30 Aug 2019
	Recruitment & Organising	Oct 7/8/9	3 days	Limerick	30 Aug 2019
	Health & Safety	Oct 14/15/16/17/18	5 days	Dublin	30 Aug 2019
	Workplace Union Representative Training	Oct 21/22/23	3 days	Dublin	30 Aug 2019
	Employment Law Part 3	Nov 4	1 day	Galway	30 Aug 2019
	Training & Development Part 2	Nov 4/5/6	3 days	Dublin	30 Aug 2019
	Communications Part 2	Nov 6	1 day	Cork	30 Aug 2019
	Presentation & Speech Design and Delivery Part 1	Nov 11	1 day	Dublin	30 Aug 2019
	Presentation & Speech Design and Delivery Part 2	Nov 18	1 day	Dublin	30 Aug 2019
	Communications Part 3	Dec 4	1 day	Cork	30 Aug 2019

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](mailto: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



## NEW! Communication Skills

This one day Progression Course in **Communication Skills** is for trade union activists who have a desire and need to improve their knowledge and understanding in effective communication

### Course Content:

- Communications skills: Public Speaking Skills, Better Writing Skills
- Finding the right information that will steer you in the right direction.
- Further understanding of the environment in which we live and work.
- The social, political and economic landscape of trade unions.
- Media ownership – who is telling you what and why?
- Social Media – What it is all about.
- How to write a good CV or application form.

### Course Objective:

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.

### Certification & Progression:

Members who successfully complete this training course will obtain a Mandate certificate.

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure you contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email [mandateotc@mandate.ie](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie) to secure your place.



## 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](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie)



# Where we need to start if we are to win this war...

By Paul Doran  
Trade union activist

IT IS only recently that I came across the German term *nur Gewerkschaftler* ("pure trade unionists"). It is all too apt for describing the present struggle going on within the trade union movement and the political activists that come out of that movement and how they perceive the battles that are being fought daily.

Recently I took a very small part in the Lloyds dispute, showing some sort of solidarity with the people working there and their conditions of employment.

## Solidarity

I went to three different pickets, along with comrades with differing political points of view but, most importantly, all showing solidarity with the Lloyds workers.

The first thing that I noticed was the sheer lack of solidarity among fellow trade unionists. Why were they not with us supporting our fellow workers?

I raised this issue at a meeting of supporters and some trade unionists and asked if it was possible to find out the names and addresses of local trade union members so that I could personally

ally contact them and ask for their support? The answer was not forthcoming – someone may have quoted some law or other reason at me.

But my answer to that is quite simple. The laws are in place to maintain the dominance of the capitalist system – and because of that, they should be broken. History has shown us that that if we want something, then laws are to be broken. Do people think we got any workers' rights by staying within the law?

We are fighting a battle that is more than about securing pay rises – 'a cent on the euro' – for defined groups of trade union members, we are struggling for humanity in general and for future generations to come.

The language of the *nur Gewerkschaftler* (pure trade unionists) is widely used by trade union leaders who hail from a social democrat lineage.

It is very important to remember that some of the trade union leadership in the 32 counties have very little class-consciousness. They have become cushioned by social partnership, and struggle has become difficult for them.

It is often said that the working class



Picture: Mandate

should spontaneously gravitate towards socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory reveals the causes of their misery to the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory.

For that reason workers are able to assimilate socialist theory so easily – provided, however, this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity, provided it subordinates spontaneity to itself.

Usually this would be taken for granted, but it is precisely this which we forgot in our teachings.

The working class should gravitate towards socialism; nevertheless (most widespread and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree.

## Fake news

This is more the case than ever before, due to the effects of fake news and social media and how we get our news.

Within the trade union movement it is necessary that workers are taught and shown how the system we live in is flawed and in doing this activists should lead the way.

There is much work to be done, and I hope that the forum set up some years ago – the Trade Union Left Forum – can be used to lead the way, spread the theory and raise class-consciousness.

The capitalists are winning and we need to fight them everywhere. There is no better place to start than among our comrades in the workers' movement, the trade union movement, of which I am a proud member.



## 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](mailto:mandateotc@mandate.ie)



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# Employment Law

**MANDATE**  
ORGANISING &  
TRAINING CENTRE

PROGRAMME



## COURSE CONTENT:

### 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, H&S 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
- Terms of employment and Information Act
- Organisation of Working Time
- Payment of Wages/Remuneration
- Equality and Discrimination, Unfair Dismissal and Redundancy
- Redress for breaches of Employment Law

Places are limited. As there is a high demand for this course please ensure to contact your Mandate Union Official or the Mandate Training Centre on **01-8369699** or email [ablake@mandate.ie](mailto:ablake@mandate.ie) to secure your place.



## Three day law course returns in 2020

**AFTER** a successful launch of our new three day Employment Law Programme in 2019, it has been decided that this three day programme which is delivered by Mary Mulhall will be rolled out for 2020 (details left).

Mary, above, is a tutor with a passion for adult learning, obtaining her Masters in Industrial Relations, HR, Business and LLB (Honours Degree in Irish Law, Griffith College, Dublin, and Nottingham Trent University). An experienced trade unionist, Mary continued her post graduate studies in IT and Industrial Relations. She has lectured on the off-campus Supervisory Management in

Industrial Relations and Employment Law for NCI for a number of years.

The programme will be offered nationwide to members within the various Divisions. Because of scheduling of these course programmes, places are limited and applications will be accepted on a first-to-apply basis.

As well as the course being offered free to Mandate members only, the programme can be tailored by the tutor to suit your Local Council meetings over a period of weeks. Currently, however, it's presented over 3 days.

**Have you a Mandate-related story or picture you'd like to share with us? Email [news@mandate.ie](mailto:news@mandate.ie)**

## Why we're always **app** your service!

Mandate has also launched our **UNIONLINK** courses on <https://unionlink.org> where you can register online for bitesize course programmes, such as Industrial Relations, Recruitment and Organising, Stress Management courses etc.

In addition to the free training and development courses, we are pleased to launch our new online training platform (Academy on the App Store and Google Play Store), in partnership with Olive Media.

This app will allow members the option to purchase online professional and development

courses such as Interview Skills, Basic First Aid and GDPR, at discounted rates of up to 60%.

The Mandate Training Academy will also host links to Mandate's **LOOKUP App** and our Mandate Induction video, all presented now on our new online Training Academy.

In time our course offering will grow, allowing you - the member - improved access to a wider range professional course modules.

The cost of purchasing Mandate online courses also qualify for grant support through our Education Grant Scheme every November.



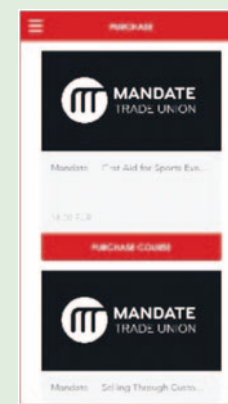
### How to register...

- Click on the registration link here - **REGISTRATION LINK**
- Fill out details leaving the 'Member ID' and 'Team' field blank.
- This should be done from PC/laptop using a Google Chrome web browser (where possible)
- If you already have an existing AcademyHQ account please contact our support team at [support@olivemedia.com](mailto:support@olivemedia.com)
- Following registration above, members can download the 'Academy HQ' app from the Google Play store or App Store if you wish to login from your smartphone. Alternatively use the following link to login on your PC: <https://mandatemembers.academyhq.com/en/auth/login>



### How to purchase training...

- Click on Purchase Course on the bottom left hand of your page
- Here you will see a list of courses and their prices
- Choose your course and click 'Add to Cart'
- Proceed to check-out
- Make payment
- Return to the dashboard tab and you will see your course





## 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.*

*Gain a National Qualification with a QQI Level 5 Course and develop your own skills and learn more about your rights and your society.*

- Communications skills: public speaking skills, better writing skills
- Finding the right information that will steer you in the right direction
- The environment in which we live and work
- Social, political and economic landscape of unions
- Media ownership – who is telling you what and why
- 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***



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\* If you are over 70, 50% benefit is payable and double benefits do not apply

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US-backed Juan Guaidó

Picture: Public Domain



Billionaire Richard Branson

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# Feeding the world with hot air



Brian Forbes

DO YOU remember all that craic recently when our subservient gombeen Government followed their US puppet masters by, de facto, backing an abortive undemocratic coup in Venezuela?

At the time, our Tánaiste Simon Coveney declared: “I join other EU Member States in acknowledging and supporting Mr Juan Guaidó, President of the democratically-elected National Assembly, as President interim of Venezuela, in order for him to call for free, fair and democratic presidential elections.”

In other words, we did precisely what Trump’s Rottweiler-in-Chief and leading hawk, John Bolton, wanted us to do.

Bolton, the US National Security Advisor, had the Irish government at his beck and call – and like a wee lapdog, we stuck loyally by as the US administration stuck its pig-ignorant snout into the business of a sovereign nation.

I believe our government undermined a democratically-elected administration in Venezuela by helping to support an aggressive US foreign policy initiative that seeks regime change for its own insidious and extremely selfish means.

Is our small nation now guilty of acquiescing and facilitating US world domination as well as the resulting loss of human life?

When the history books are written, wars and regime changes often



Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro

Picture: Public Domain

turn out to have been started by what turns out to be ‘honest’ miscalculations and misunderstandings – but which are in fact deliberately-manufactured distortions.

These factual inaccuracies are then publicly mis-sold to the public through vile media propaganda channels. All this is an established part of the warmongers’ playbook.

And gung-ho types like John Bolton and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo – a former Director of the CIA – seem to be writing the script for regime change in Venezuela. And don’t get me started on Syria and Iran or we’ll be here all day...

Added to this we had Virgin billionaire Richard “Pickle” Branson organising a ‘Live Aid’-type benefit concert in the Colombian city of Cúcuta, all to help the ‘poor people’ of Venezuela who we were told were being starved to death by the evil Maduro regime.

The event was held on February

22nd with the goal of raising \$100 million to buy food and medicine for Venezuelans teetering on the brink of a mass famine.

The cry of ‘Feed the World’ rang out loud once more. However, this media fairytale proved to be short-lived.

## Self-styled saviour

It turned out that people working for Juan Guaidó, the self-styled saviour of Venezuela, had a better use for the money.

Though it must be added associates of Washington’s own hand-picked ‘interim president’ and Ireland’s poster boy for freedom and democracy didn’t altogether squander the cash.

No, according to reports, they spent it wisely on lavish hotels, designer retail shopping and decadent nights of heavy partying in posh Colombian nightclubs.

I can almost hear the collective

voices of some of our political representatives: “Ah, Jaysus, lads – fair play to them. Sure wouldn’t ye do the same yourself if ye were in their shoes?” The truth is Ireland under successive right-wing governments has helped provide cover for American aggression and imperialism.

Whether it’s allowing American troops to fly in and out of Shannon on their way to murder poor people on the other side of the world or facilitating regime change in countries such as Venezuela, it is clear that we are as culpable as the murdering Yankee war machine.

Ireland engages in direct and indirect collaboration through our unstinting support for the US while turning a blind eye to unconscionable war crimes committed by our friends in Washington.

It is truly something we all should be utterly ashamed of. An Irish nation, partly established at this stage –



Protestors at Shannon

Picture: Karen Elliot (CC BY-SA 2.0)

only six more to go! – through revolutionary action against the war machine of the British Empire has become the pet poodle of the murdering Yankee Empire!

Oh, and let’s not forget Guaidó’s good-time buddies: it turns out the lads ran a cash embezzlement scheme and stole many millions of dollars raised by poor auld Branson for a non-existent ‘famine’ in a country he had no business interfering with. This yellow pack Live Aid initiative fell victim to a real-life Venezuelan version of the online ‘Nigerian Prince’ scam.

It seems the true moral of this sorry tale is: never let the facts get in the way of a fake humanitarian crisis.

It’s just over 20 years since high-flyer Branson tried to travel around the world in a hot air balloon – but the events of the last few months have no doubt left him feeling quite deflated indeed.



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