

# THE DELEGATE

## Newsletter of the Bray & District Council of Trade Unions

APRIL 2021

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### OPPOSITION TO EXTENSION OF SUSPENDED PROVISIONS OF ACT

**The Executive Committee has endorsed a motion opposing any attempt by the Government to extend the suspension of the provisions of the Redundancy Payments, 1967, in relation to the right of workers to seek redundancy following more than a four week lay-off. The motion also called for the time spent on lay-off to be included as reckonable service for the purpose of redundancy.**

The motion, submitted by Mandate, was considered by the Executive Committee at its recent meeting and as the suspension applied to the 31st March 2021 it was decided to endorse it and notify the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

In March 2020, the Government introduced an emergency amendment to the Redundancy Payments Act, 1967, which effectively suspended an employee's entitlement to claim redundancy from their employer following certain periods of lay-off or short-time work due to COVID-19. The suspension of these redundancy provisions initially applied to the end of November 2020 but the Government extended this to the 31st March 2021.

Mandate has campaigned on this as many workers, particularly in the bar trade do not have prospects of returning to their previous jobs. The Minister has acknowledged the Council resolution and we await developments.

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### COUNCIL WEBINAR : '*SICK PAY - A WORKERS' RIGHT?*

**WEDNESDAY 28th APRIL - 7 pm**

The Council will host the webinar which is part of a series of such events organised by the Trades Councils Network (TCN) with the co-operation of Congress.

The topic; '*Sick Pay - A Workers' Right?*' will explore the issue of the Trade Union demand for a statutory minimum sick pay entitlement for all workers.

Guest speakers are Laura Bambrick (ICTU Social Policy & Legislative Officer) and our own Council delegates; John Douglas (former General Secretary of Mandate) and Derek Casserly (Industrial Organiser, SIPTU, Services Division).

We hope to get a good turnout from our own delegates, local activists, and from other trades councils around the country.

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### PAY INCREASE FOR NEW HEALTH CHIEF

A reply on behalf of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to the Council resolution deploring the decision to approve an €81,000 salary increase for the incoming Secretary-General of the Dept. of Health has been received, and it adds nothing new to the debate but simply seeks to somehow justify this outrageous situation.

The Minister, who has statutory responsibility for the remuneration advises that the following was

taken into account:

- That in recent years increased salaries have been agreed for certain senior roles of strategic importance, including the posts of Garda Commissioner, and the CEO of the HSE. These were agreed in recognition of increased responsibilities and challenges associated with the roles and the need to attract candidates of a necessary calibre to deliver on Government priorities.
- That the post of Secretary General in the Dep. of Health is a highly complex one with a very challenging brief, particularly so in the midst of a global pandemic.
- The role will require an individual with the ability, ambition and experience to take on this large portfolio with a Department of almost 600 staff and 19 non-commercial state bodies under its aegis, including the HSE and a sector employing over 125,000 people.
- The very significant responsibilities attached to this role including; the ongoing management of the response to the COVID public health emergency; the COVID vaccine rollout programme in the immediate term: implementing the Government's ambition for the rollout of Sláintecare; and the management of the greatly increased budget of €22 billion for Health in 2021.
- That a salary of €292,000 is commensurate with the scale of these responsibilities and the unique challenges attached to this role, not least at the current time.

The Council will give consideration to the above response on behalf of the Minister, Michael McGrath, TD.

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**THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM HAS ESCAPED**  
**(By Catherine De Vries)**

The recent Dutch elections kicked off a series of national parliamentary elections on the European continent: German elections are scheduled for September this year, followed by the French elections in May 2022.

Given that these all come soon after the UK left the EU, they give us an opportunity to think about how 'EU politics' is represented at the national level, and what this tells us about the state of democracy within the EU itself.

While the Dutch election campaign was rather dull, one Twitter campaign - which focused on the 'EU elephant' ('#EUolifant') - stood out. A series of academics and pundits urged Dutch politicians to define and debate their views about the future of the EU.

The 10-year old reign of Dutch PM Mark Rutte (whose position is now in doubt after he narrowly survived a vote of no confidence over his conduct during talks to form a governing coalition) was characterised by a depoliticisation of everything European: it was pointed out that he refuses to provide any 'vision' about how the EU should evolve, mocking European leaders who do.

Meanwhile, though, he has engaged in a two-level game - playing the Eurosceptic at home while agreeing to further integrative steps in Brussels. Rutte's depoliticisation has had detrimental effects. Ordinary citizens know that big decisions are made in Brussels but find it hard to figure out how and why this is happening.

The roaring of the EU elephant in the campaign coincided with gains for both EU enthusiasts (D66 and newcomer Volt - both social, liberal Euro-federalist parties) as well as EU pessimists (Forum for Democracy and JA21, both right wing populists).

Now the challenge will be to move the content of the Dutch debate towards defining different options for shaping the EU's future, and discussing their merits. This lack of debate about the EU in national politics isn't just a Dutch phenomenon. While key policies are decided at the EU level, many national leaders fail to clearly acknowledge this in domestic political debates. What is more, recently the EU became a favourite topic for national leaders wanting to divert attention away from slow domestic vaccine roll-outs.

This is not to say that the Commission didn't make mistakes in its procurement of vaccines early on, or that the spat with the UK in early 2021 may have been misguided, but the roll-outs are the responsibility of national governments and the EU has virtually no policy authority on health.

Debates in most member states often don't reflect the fact that national governments together with EU institutions shape key issues that voters care about, from monetary to migration policy. The EU is the elephant in the room, and this is hugely problematic for three reasons.

First, it leads to a hollowing out of domestic political debate. Through EU membership, countries have shaped a specific set of social and economic policies, which have become increasingly relevant to EU citizens (think of the single market and currency, climate change or migration). Yet, many national politicians often discuss challenges like climate change or migration largely as if the EU didn't exist.

Second, silence about Europe weakens democratic representation. National elections provide an important channel through which European voters can express their opinion about political decisions made in Brussels. National governments, emerging from national elections, designate the national representatives that participate in the Council of Ministers - which approves all EU laws. It is national leaders who set the long-term agenda for the EU in the European Council. Consequently, national elections may be more important than European parliamentary elections for voters when trying to signal their support for or opposition towards EU policies.

Third, failing to address the EU's role in policy making leads to a weakening of democratic accountability. It allows national politicians to claim responsibility for good outcomes and dodge responsibility for bad ones. Sorting out the pros and cons of joint decision making in Europe is difficult.

While costs of integration, such as payments into the EU budget, for example, are easy to quantify, the gains of joint policy making and membership in the long term are much more diffuse.

My research suggests European voters attribute these more intangible benefits, such as growth due to frictionless trade or cross-border cooperation on the environment, almost exclusively to actions of their own governments. This problem of misattribution is exacerbated by the fact that national leaders have little incentive to credit Brussels for certain outcomes as it makes them look less relevant.

To develop stable political cooperation at the European level, national leaders should engage in the hard work of allowing democratic politics to unfold. This means informing citizens about the compromises struck in Brussels and why they are necessary. In a world where member states are interdependent and problems don't stop at the border, leaders need to be honest about ways in which they can address citizens' needs.

This requires cross-border coordination. National sovereignty is a country's ability to shape this interdependence and coordination. The discussion about how to shape European interdependence should be part-and-parcel of the domestic public debate. When hammering out deals in Brussels, citizens should be presented with real choices about which they can decide in national elections.

Leaders need to be honest about the degree to which the EU infringes on a nation's laws, policy capacity and identity, but also highlight the benefits and broader geopolitical security this brings. The EU's so-called democratic deficit is rooted more in Europe's capitals than in Brussels.

(Catherine De Vries is a professor of political science at Bocconi University in Milan. This article was written for the UK in a Changing Europe organisation).

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## ANTÓIN MAC ROIBÍN AR SCOR ÓN OBAIR

After over 42 years with Bray Town Council, for 41 of which he was a local Trade Union representative, Antóin Mac Roibín (or Tony Robinson to you west Brits!) has finally called it a day having retired at the end of last month.

Antóin, as he prefers to be known, is a native of the Palermo (Beech Road, Little Bray) area and he started with Bray Urban District Council in January 1979. He has been the Council caretaker at Springfield Cemetery since 1994.

Soon after he started with the UDC he became an assistant shop steward for the ITGWU (now SIPTU) working closely with then shop stewards, Simon Meaney and John McCormack - both former delegates to this Council - and he took over as shop steward towards the end of the 1980's.

Although he has been involved in many an issue or dispute over the years on behalf of the members in Bray, Antóin would probably agree that the most significant was the six week strike in January 1983 in a dispute over payment of eating-on-site allowance and travel allowance for the 86 outdoor staff in Bray UDC. The ITGWU claimed parity for the UDC members with those employed in the Dublin Local Authorities. An important argument made by the union was the comparison with Heiton's (a large employer in the town at the time) and the fact that their Bray staff received the allowances similar to their colleagues in Dublin. The dispute was eventually settled on the basis of a Labour Court recommendation in favour of the union on the basis of 'the unique affinity with Dublin Local Authorities'. That relationship with Dublin has been very beneficial to the Bray members in the intervening years.

Antóin has been a delegate to the Council of Trade Unions since December 1986 and has played a very active role over the years. He has also been a stalwart in terms of his involvement in the numerous protest marches organised or supported by the Council and has proudly marched/carried our banner whenever and wherever necessary. Indeed, in March 2017 he was part of a Council delegation, with Kieron Connolly and Derek Casserly, that travelled to Westport, Co. Mayo, to support a protest march for SIPTU workers on strike at Hastings Garage in the town on a Saturday afternoon. However, this then included a detour to Tourmakeady, the Gaeltacht rural community in the south of the county about 30 km from Westport, where Antóin spends some time every year. "We arrived at the pub (cum shop/post office) on the crossroad in the late evening and it was empty as the local football team were playing a match in another part of the county, recalls Kieron Connolly. "In fairness to Antóin he got them to rustle up some sandwiches for us as we were starving and then he headed off to meet a friend whose husband had passed away some time previous. Derek was the designated driver so it was left to me to sample a pint (or three or four) of the Guinness and I think I was the only fully contented member of the delegation on the long journey home." he concluded.

One thing is certain though and that is that Antóin will not be spending his time twiddling his thumbs. Aside from whatever jobs at home his other half has for him, he will have even more time, particularly when we hopefully return to 'normal', to devote to his other main interests - Irish culture and language.

His interest in the area of Irish music and language mainly grew from his participation in the 1990's in the Congress sponsored courses in The People's College in Parnell Square, Dublin. This has developed musically with his involvement with the band 'Seoidín' (who provided the music at the Council's events to mark our centenary celebration in 2017) where he plays the whistle, the box and whatever. They can be heard regularly in the Hibernia Inn and Harbour Bar in Bray, again when hopefully things improve enough. Antóin has also been teaching music voluntarily for the past twenty years or so every week at St. Fergal's Community Centre, with participants from south Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and all over the county. He is also involved in promoting the Irish language locally and this group meet weekly in Molloy's coffee shop in the town (again, when we are allowed to).

Importantly, Antóin will be continuing to be active as a SIPTU delegate to this Council.

'Bain taitneamh as an saol maith anois'

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*Left to right: Antóin with Kieron Connolly and Derek Casserly Westport 2017*

### **CONGRESS SEEKS 30 CENT PER HOUR INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE**

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions believe that the Low Pay Commission (LPC) should recommend to Government that the hourly rate of the Minimum Wage be increased by at least 30 cent an hour to €10.50 on the 1st January 2022, an increase of 2.9%

In its submission to the LPC last month Congress set out the reasons for the increase, as follows;

- pointing to the most unusual circumstances in which the LPC is conducting its review;
- recalling the commitment in the Programme for Government to move progress to a living wage over the coming years;
- emphasising the role of the LPC in ensuring that workers in low paid employment are valued;
- reminding the LPC that the outcome of their review will not be implemented until 2022 and any recommendation should reflect the prevailing conditions at that time;
- demonstrating that the prospects for the Irish economy in 2022 and beyond are good;
- highlighting the importance of protecting the living standards of low paid workers in our society; and
- showing that increasing the hourly rate of the minimum wage does not result in increased unemployment.

The Commission has commenced its annual review of the hourly rate of the Minimum Wage. The annual review by LPC normally results in a recommendation to Government which is considered in the context of the framing of the budget for the following year. It is anticipated that if the Government accept the recommendation of the LPC it will be implemented from January 2022.

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(To mark International Workers' Day we reproduce this article by Terry Egan, first published in May 1984 in *Obair* an Irish Labour History Society magazine which he edited.)

## THE HAYMARKET SQUARE MASSACRE

**In 1889, the International Socialist Congress decided to declare the 1st of May International Labour Day. The decision was prompted by the events which took place in Chicago in 1886.**

For two years the intensive campaign for the eight-hour workday had gripped the labour movement throughout America. May 1, 1886 was fixed as the day for the implementation of the demand and as it approached the already increasing tension was highlighted by the possibility of violent conflict.

Nowhere in America were the virtues of capitalism so sacred, and the rights of labour so resolutely denied as in Chicago. Its large immigrant population, predominantly German in origin, and its vast hordes of unemployed workers were easily exploited with wage-cuts and dismissals commonplace. Politically, Chicago was in step with almost all other cities in the United States where money bought votes, politicians and police departments and everything could be 'arranged'. The conservative press denounced the whole campaign as "foreign", "un-American" and "anarchistic" and all those who participated in it were "not only dirty, low-down foreign scum, but enemies of the United States and everything that was decent and holy."

Notwithstanding the denunciations from press and pulpit the eight-hour campaign continued throughout 1885 and into the spring of 1886. As 1 May approached the employers made it known that there would be no concessions on the demand. In February the McCormack Reaper Works locked out union employees and replaced them with scabs and three hundred Pinkerton 'detectives'. On 3 May, a meeting of union members from McCormack's was held adjacent to the factory. The men, who had been locked out for three months, were being addressed by August Spies when the scabs poured forth from the factory. A pitched battle ensued and the police, who were quickly on the scene, opened fire on the striking workers, killing six and injuring many more. Enraged by what had happened Spies rushed to the office of *Die Arbeiter Zeitung* and published his famous 'Revenge' circular.

Next day a large crowd gathered in Haymarket Square to protest at what had happened. All was calm until the entire police force of 176 men was ordered out to disperse the meeting. A dynamite bomb was hurled, by a person or persons whose identity was never established, and seven policemen died.

A round up of all labour activists immediately took place with socialist offices raided and hundreds arrested. The prevailing mood, created by wild and exaggerated tales of worker's bomb factories and arsenals, was for swift retribution against labour agitators. A grand jury indicted August Spies, Albert Parsons and Michael Schwab of *Die Arbeiter Zeitung*; Samuel Fielden, an ex-Methodist minister; Louis Lingg, organiser of the Carpenters' Union; Adolph Fischer, a printer; George Engel, a toy-maker; Oscar Neebe, organiser of the Beer-Wagon Drivers; William Seliger, Lingg's landlord and Rudolph Schnaubelt.

Schnaubelt escaped to Europe and the case against Seliger was dismissed but all of the others, with the exception of Neebe who got fifteen years imprisonment, were sentenced to be hanged. The case aroused world-wide publicity but nevertheless, on the morning of 11 November 1887, Engel, Fischer, Spies and Parsons went to the gallows. It was never proven that they were in any way connected with the incident. Fielden and Schwab had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment and Louis Lingg committed suicide on the day before the executions. August Spies had said, "If you think that by hanging us you can stamp out the labour movement, then call your hangman . . . you cannot understand it".

Today, there is scarcely a country in the world in which May Day is not celebrated as International Labour Day.

**INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY - WEDNESDAY 28th APRIL**

Congress has taken the lead for many years in marking International Workers' Memorial Day which is on the 28th April. The day aims to:

- Commemorate all those who have been killed, injured, or made ill at work
- Recommit to safer workplaces

Congress has adopted the European Trade Union Confederation slogan for this Workers' Memorial Day: *'Workplace health and safety - it's your right'*.

With Covid-19 restrictions continuing, the Congress Health & Safety Committee has organised a number of online elements to occur on the lead-up to the day, and for an online broadcast at noon on Wednesday next, 28th April. This broadcast, via the Congress website and social media, will include a wreath-laying at the Garden of Remembrance, an emotional poem about loss recited by front-line healthcare workers, and a message from Dr. Mike Ryan of the World Health Organisation.

The Trade Union Movement has provided strong leadership in the last year in doing everything possible to protect workers throughout this pandemic. Health and safety has never been more important for us. Workers' Memorial Day represents an opportunity to remember those we have lost, and to celebrate the contribution of those who continue to work to make us all safer.

Everybody is encouraged to view the Congress events at noon next Wednesday 28th April and to hold a Minutes Silence to remember those who have died or become ill.

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**COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR REGENERATION OF MOORE STREET PLANS**

The Council is supporting plans for the regeneration of the Moore Street area which have been commissioned by the Campaign to Save Moore Street and the 1916 Relatives Group (now the Moore Street Preservation Trust).

Over a period of 50 years Moore Street has suffered from dereliction, neglect and poor planning decisions. As you are aware the area is famed for its street market traditions and its connection to the 1916 Rising. The proposed regeneration scheme combines a mixed use of housing, retail, and heritage elements. The plans show apartments and small business incubator units which will sit alongside specifically designated cultural venues and the 1916 revolution trail. All of the existing period buildings within the site will be refurbished and repurposed including those within the 1916 terrace (no.'s 16 & 17 to be a national monument with an interpretative centre at the rear). The plans fully meet the recommendations of the Housing Ministers Advisory Group and the Moore Street Battlefield as a historic cultural quarter.

Moore Street Preservation Trust has called on the Trade Union Movement to lend its support to ensure this regeneration receives State intervention and is not left in the hands of private developers.

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## **'His Memory Still Lives with Us'. Two Bray Girls and Others Remember James Connolly**

**(This is an excerpt of the above article by Francis Devine (Labour Historian) first published in *Saother* 41, the 2016 edition of the journal of the Irish Labour History Society).**

There is a long tradition within trade union newspapers of poetry, songs, short stories, even one and two act plays being published in support of their cause. The Irish Transport & General Workers' Union's (ITGWU) *Irish Worker*, first published in 1911 and edited by Jim Larkin, set high standards for such work, not only by enthusiastic members but by literary figures including, among many others, G.K. Chesterton, Pádraic Colum, Jim Connell, Seán O'Casey, James Oppenheimer, George Bernard Shaw, Walt Whitman, and A.P. [Andrew Patrick Wilson], some with and some clearly without the author's permission. Much was re-published from the international labour press, particularly syndicalist sources in Australia, Canada, South Africa and United States. Most probably under Wilson's encouragement, the *Irish Worker* ran short story competitions to further encourage members interested in creative writing.

In 1923, the ITGWU weekly was the *Voice of Labour*, edited by Archie Heron. Heron had married Connolly's daughter Ina and was to become General Secretary of the Civil Service Clerical Association and Irish Local Government Officials' Union [now Fórsa], a Labour TD, and, in his last position, a member of the Factory Inspectorate charged with developing Safety Committees under the Factories Act, 1955. On 5 May 1923, the *Voice* published ten-year-old Maura O'Connor's anthem 'Labour Day'. She was from Bray and the daughter of a local activist Martin O'Connor. O'Connor's simple verse reflected the hope and belief in the coming Socialist State. The poem's language does, however, seem advanced for a ten year old.

*One by one the men are coming,  
Coming to answer the Labour Call;  
One by one the lords are falling,  
Soon we'll be equal, one and all.*

*The powerful engine will cease to throb,  
Profiteers will cease to rob,  
Lords and bosses all will say,  
I'm beginning to fear this Labour Day'.*

*Thousands of men today will be seen  
In city so dirty and country so green,  
The workers will march and bands will play,  
To celebrate our Labour Day.*

*And when in the evening we're marching home,  
Having shown the bosses we've some back bone,  
We'll chant James Connolly's rousing lay  
To finish up our Labour Day.*

By 1930, the ITGWU's dramatic membership collapse after 1923 meant that it no longer maintained its own paper. The *Voice* had transmogrified into *The Irishman*, officially the newspaper of the Irish Labour Party & Trade Union Congress, edited by Cathal O'Shannon, long an ITGWU Official. The paper was serious in content with lengthy articles by Thomas Johnson, R.J.P. Mortished, William McMullen, Hugh Gemmell and other leading labour theorists and commentators. Subject matter included unemployment, economic development, international finance, housing, health, education and social welfare. Literary pieces were scarcer than in earlier ITGWU publications but a young John Harold Hewitt contributed regular poems.

On 17 May 1930, *The Irishman* published 'Up Labour!' with the following explanation: 'These lines have been written by 'the mascot of Bray Labour Party' Miss Gretta Connor who is only ten years of age. They show the right spirit, and we print them to encourag boys and girls like Gretta to honour the memory of Labour's heroes and to use their pens for the service of the working class'. Connor's poem - which reads a lot more like the work of a ten year old than the previous work by Maura O'Connor - reflected the fact that, by 1930, there had been a retreat from internationalism and socialist millenarianism. The commemoration of Connolly was by then more pronounced than May Day itself by Dublin Trades Council.



*James Connolly was an Irishman,  
Who fought for Labour bold;  
His body lies for fifteen years  
In the clay so cold.*

*He fought for Ireland's freedom,  
He fought for peace and rest,  
And for his own dear native land,  
For Labour did his best.*

*His memory still lives with us,  
And will for ever more,  
While Labour proudly sweeps onward  
To drive tyrants from our shore.*

In 2007, when the two girls' poems were presented to an ICTU Trades Council Seminar, held in Bray to celebrate Bray & District Council of Trade Unions' (BTC) ninetieth anniversary, there was speculation as to whether either of the two girls might still be alive and, if they were, could they be reunited with their compositions?. In the audience, Ross M. Connolly, son of James Connolly's son Roddy and an honorary life member of the BTC, indicated that Gretta Connor - daughter of Martin Connor, National Union of Railwaymen and a founding member of BTC - was his first wife. Gretta Connor's poem assumed a new significance with this Connolly family connection. Martin Connor and Martin O'Connor were the same man and Maura and Gretta were sisters. O'Connor joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers in 1892, seeing action in Burma, India and at Ladysmith in the Boer War. He was discharged in 1899 but re-joined in 1914 serving in the Middle East, Balkans and the Dardanelles. He survived but was discharged with head wounds in August 1916, injuries that cost him his sense of smell. He was a porter at Bray Station before becoming a Postman and being active in the Post Office Workers' Union.

Maura was his eldest child. She trained as a teacher and worked as a governess to a family in France. She contracted TB and died in Newcastle Sanatorium (Co. Wicklow) in her thirties. Much younger, Gretta was born in January 1918 so was twelve rather than ten in 1930. Her son, James Connolly remembers her recalling being 'taken at an early age to meetings' of the BTC or Labour Party, where apparently she would stand on a table and sing 'The Red Flag' and 'The Internationale'. As he observed, 'this seems to fit with her status as the mascot of the local party'.

### **John Hewitt & Connolly**

John Hewitt was strongly influenced by his father, Robert Telford Hewitt, an activist of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and admirer of James Keir Hardie and Larkin. Hewitt had material published in the Revolutionary Workers' Group's *Irish Workers' Voice* (from 1933, Communist Party of Ireland), 1930-1936, as well as *The Irishman* where his 'To the Memory of James Connolly' appeared the week before Connor's work. His poem, in contrast to Connor's, heralded Connolly as martyr, the imagery biblical. Hewitt was twenty-two years of age and finding his poetic feet. His sentiments, given the times, may well have found greater resonance among readers of *The Irishman* than those of the two ten year olds.

A dozen years have pass'd since then,  
The memory has died away  
Of Connolly and the martyr'd men  
Who rose on Easter Day.

When I was six years old I heard  
Connolly addressed a labour crowd-  
I cannot recall a word  
Yet I am very proud-

As one who stood upon an edge  
Of Galilee to watch a ship  
The waders pushed beyond the sedge  
While bright oars flash and dip;

But not indeed as one who stood  
Among the crowd on Calvary  
To see Christ die for Brotherhod  
As Connolly died for me.

The two girls' and Hewitt's works remain largely unknown. They form an interesting literary reflection on Connolly, himself a poet, among a surprisingly small number of commemorative pieces. Even Connolly-related material in the 'hero ballad' tradition is uncommon. For most labour activists, the most frequently sung tribute is Patrick Galvin's 'James Connolly' or 'Where, Oh Where Is Our James Connolly' made popular as rendered by Liam Weldon.

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**Note:** John Harold Hewitt, who was born in Belfast in 1907, was the most significant Northern poet to emerge before the 1960s generation of Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon and Michael Longley. Describing himself as 'a man of the left', Hewitt had an active political life and was involved in the British Labour Party, the Fabian Society and the Belfast Peace League.

An avid supporter of equality, opportunity and justice for all, he officially opened The Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre on Mayday 1985. A social enterprise business was established in Belfast to raise funds towards the running of the centre - this was to become The John Hewitt Bar, which is situated on Donegall Street and opened in 1999, named in tribute to the ethos and beliefs of the poet.



Note: James Connolly, as mentioned above, is one of three children of Ross Connolly and Greta O'Connor. His other siblings being Roisin and Robert.

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*The Delegate* is the newsletter of The Bray and District Council of Trade Unions, first published in 1964

Comments and contributions are welcome to the editors.

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