

THE DELEGATE

Newsletter of the Bray & District Council of Trade Unions

August 2021

Issue 6/21

OBITUARY - DEREK CASSELY

The sudden death of Derek Casserly at 55 on the 30th July brought a feeling of great sadness to his many colleagues and friends in the Trade Union Movement, including this Council of Trade Unions which he served with distinction.

Whilst our own sadness is great we must particularly remember his family; his wife Sharon and sons, Ross, Adam and Sam; his mother Ann; brothers Colm (a former delegate) and Terry and sister Louise, and his wider family and friends.

Indeed, the large attendance at his funeral, which included; trade union colleagues, shop stewards and local reps, employer representatives, political colleagues, boyhood friends, and his many friends and neighbours, bears testament to the love, respect and esteem that people held for him.

A native of Casement Park, (Palermo), Little Bray, Derek attended Ravenswell, St. Peter's and St. Brendan's College before becoming an apprentice barman in Lenihan's Bar on the Main Street. He served for 20 years in the trade, including periods in the La Touche Hotel (Greystones), The Boomerang, The Noggin Inn and The Brewmaster.

With a young family, a change of career followed and Derek worked in both A.O. Smith Electrical Motors manufacturing plant on the Boghall Road until it closed in 2005, followed by the Schering Plough veterinary products manufacturing operation, also on the Boghall Road.

Whilst he always had a strong interest in trade union matters, it was in A.O. Smith (where his brother Colm was chief shop steward) and particularly Schering Plough where his leadership qualities came to the fore. He became chief shop steward in Schering Plough and it is fair to say that he was instrumental in turning around what would have been considered an uneasy relationship between management and union representatives over a long period. His pragmatic approach to matters was in stark contrast to the situation that had prevailed and he clearly earned the respect of both his colleagues and management.

Wishing to further pursue his trade union involvement Derek attained the UCD Bachelor of Business Studies degree and became more active within his union SIPTU at local and national level. He was appointed as a full-time Industrial Organiser by SIPTU in 2014 and worked in the Services Division dealing with members in the Wholesale, Retail and Distribution Sector. He was held in high regard by all who worked with him.

Derek became a SIPTU delegate to the Council of Trade Unions in November 2005 and took on the position of assistant secretary in 2012. His overall contribution to the Council has been enormous, most notably his always incisive input into discussions and debates on wide ranging issues at meetings. He always had a clear understanding of the issues at hand and a natural tendency to speak out against injustices, social and otherwise, without fear or favour.

The Starry Plough, which he marched behind and carried so proudly on many occasions in the past, must surely have lain proudly over him on his journey to his last resting place.



(Derek, third from left, at the unveiling of the Council plaque at Bray Rail Station, March 2018, with from left; honorary delegates John Byrne and John O'Brien, and Jack O'Connor, General President SIPTU)

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OBITUARY - GEORGE SHEEHAN



The death of our dear friend and comrade George Sheehan, at 74, on Thursday 19th August 2021 was yet another devastating blow to the Council, coming just a few short weeks after the passing of his SIPTU colleague Derek Casserly.

Our thought are with his grieving family; his wife Carmel and sons David, Raymond and Ciarán; his brothers and sisters; daughters-in-law Josie and Elaine; and his beloved grandchildren, Cathal, Jessica, Paddy, Jake, Luke and Carley; and his wider family.

A native of Arklow where his family lived at St. Aidan's on the Dublin Road, he attended Templeraíne N.S. and CBS Arklow.

George was a former full-time official of the ITGWU/SIPTU, commencing in the original No. 1 branch ITGWU with responsibility for Dublin dock workers. During his 33 years as an official he was branch secretary of a number of branches; Rail, Dublin Airport, Women Workers', Contract Services and the Wicklow/Wexford area. He retired in 2007.

George was involved with the Council since 1988 when he was appointed as a delegate from the ITGWU (now SIPTU). He was elected as Treasurer in 1990 and served in that position until 1996. He was elected as an ordinary member of the Executive Committee in 2003 and was elected as Vice-President for three terms from 2005 to 2008. He then served as Trustee from 2008 to 2015 which included two full 3 year terms. He was unanimously elected as President of the Council in 2015 and on each of the following four years, which included the Centenary celebrations in 2017. George also served on the Board of Management of the Wicklow Trade Union Centre and was chairperson for some years.

A deeply committed Trade Unionist and Labour man he was widely respected for his work on behalf of workers' and their families, and the wider community. One of Nature's true gentlemen, similar to his colleague Derek, the Starry Plough lay proudly over him on his journey to his last resting place.

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TRADE UNIONS SOUGHT GREATER PROTECTION FOR WORKERS' IN HOSPITALITY SECTOR

As we mark the recent reopening of the hospitality sector it is important to point out that Mandate Trade Union and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) alternated as the worker representatives on the Government established Hospitality Group since it was established a number of weeks ago.

The role of the trade unions, unlike that of the business representatives who made up the overwhelming majority of the group, was not to rubber stamp the government's plan as it evolved, rather it was to ensure that when the sector reopened it did so in the safest way possible from a workers' perspective.

The trade unions constantly held the view that the planned reopening was somewhat premature and it would have been better if the vaccination programme had been further advanced. Having said that, if the government was intent on opening up the sector, it was important that the voice of workers was heard. As such, the trade unions laid out our priorities in a number of core areas:

- **Vaccination:** It is extremely dangerous not to provide immediate access to a vaccine for young hospitality workers in particular. The Trade Union movement foresaw this when the government moved to an age-based vaccination programme rather than occupation and health based programme, which left front-line workers who cannot avoid interactions with the public to wait for the protections a vaccine provides. It was on this basis that ICTU proposed the immediate roll out of vaccines to the younger age cohorts in line with other European countries.
- **Ventilation:** The trade unions called for the sectors involved and the individual businesses to ensure they provide the highest standards of ventilation within the working environment. This also entailed the installation of CO2 monitors without exception. These efforts were recognised in this area through the Health & Safety Authority issuing new guidelines which place a greater focus and importance on the need for adequate ventilation.
- **Antigen Testing:** The trade unions called for a similar approach in hospitality as has been adopted in the meat processing industry.
- **Existing Work Safely Protocol:** The trade unions demanded that the existing Work Safely Protocols and Public Health Guidelines should be strictly applied. Where appropriate they should be strengthened having regard to the uniqueness of the sector we are dealing with and the involvement of the Lead Worker representative is crucial to this process.
- **Verification:** The trade unions demanded that verification of vaccination or Covid recovery should be done at the point of entry to a premises. It should not be presumed that this task will

automatically fall to any staff member in the course of their normal daily duties rather a specifically designated person should be appointed by the business owner and they should be properly trained and supported in the performance of this task. In this regard additional emphasis was placed on the role of the Workplace Covid representative.

- **Service:** The trade unions insisted that all service should be conducted on a waiter only basis and in a pub nobody should be allowed approach the bar to place an order.
- **Enforcement:** The trade unions called for the strictest and best resourced measures to be put in place. This should entail the use of various state agencies to ensure the availability of sufficient numbers of inspectors and inspections.
- **Restrictions:** The trade unions also raised matters such as time limits and maximum numbers of customers. They specifically referenced previous time limits, maximum number of customers per square foot and social distancing rules for customers.

While much of the genuine concerns of the workers representatives on the Hospitality Group were acknowledged and adopted, other were not. Congress believe that this will be to the detriment of workers, particularly young workers, who will now be potentially exposed to Covid and may face serious health implications such as Long Covid.

No worker should have to go to work and risk their health unnecessarily and we are all entitled to the greatest possible protections from workplace hazards. Congress consider that more could have been done to protect workers in this regard, but they know they were the minority voice on what was an advisory group that was heavily loaded with business representatives.

(Source: Congress -26th July)

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WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER BOYCOTT MOTION

Labour Party councillors, Anne Ferris and Paul O'Brien, have put down a notice of motion for the next meeting of the Council similar to the one adopted by Dun Laoighaire - Rathdown Council in June, as follows;

"It is the policy of this council not to purchase goods or services produced or provided, in whole or part (as practicable), from illegally occupied territories by illegal settlers, and that any such contracts should cease as soon as allowed."

It is hoped that this will be supported by fellow councillors and adopted as County Council policy. Such a decision would be a firm gesture of international solidarity with the people of Palestine and in support of a just cause against the internationally recognised apartheid state of Israel.

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COUNTY COUNCIL SUPPORTS PUBLIC OWNERSHIP/CONTROL OF MATERNITY HOSPITAL

A motion calling for the public ownership and secular governance of the proposed National Maternity Hospital was adopted by Wicklow County Council at their last meeting. The motion was tabled by a cross party group of councillors in response to the concerns expressed by the Council of Trade Unions and North Wicklow for Choice and Equality.

Welcoming the decision, Council President Mary Diskin, called on the Government to recognise the deep concerns and widespread opposition to the current proposal to essentially build and fit the hospital at a cost to the State of about €800 milion and then hand it over to a private entity St. Vincents Holdings who will then also run it. "It is time for Minister Donnelly to, once and for all, give proper certainty to our demands for State ownership and control of this vital service" she said.

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NORTHERN IRELAND PROTOCOL - CONGRESS STATEMENT

Speaking after the Irish Congress of Trade Unions all-island Executive meeting on the 21st July, Patricia King, General Secretary of ICTU, stated, *"It seems the UK government are intent on heightening tension*

around the implementation of the NI/Ireland Protocol. The protocol was an agreement freely negotiated and entered into by the parties. As such, agreements must be honoured unless the parties agree otherwise. There are of course issues with the protocol and they must be dealt with, but this can only happen by negotiation, good faith and international diplomacy. It seems as if the UK government wishes to be in a constant state of conflict with the EU for narrow party political purposes. Space can and must be created whereby the parties can respect the fact that Brexit has occurred while also respecting the integrity of the EU Single Market."

Owen Reidy, Assistant General Secretary with responsibility for Northern Ireland, stated, "We have long argued that there must not be a border east/west and north/south as the three strands of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement must be respected. The situation we find ourselves in, is a direct consequence of the Brexit the UK government insisted on. We want to work proactively and creatively to address the many legitimate concerns some within civic and political unionism have made. Their concerns must be considered, respected, and addressed. However, the result cannot and must not lead to any hard border on the island of Ireland. We have long argued that the NI political parties, trade unions, employers, and the community and voluntary sector should be brought together to address these issues collectively, so issues are addressed with those in Northern Ireland and not done to us."

(Congress)

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COALITION 2030 JUST RECOVERY CONFERENCE - KEY LESSONS

On the 14th of July, Coalition 2030 hosted a conference on 'A Just Recovery from Covid-19. How the Sustainable Development Goals can Guide Ireland's Recovery' The Conference included contributions from; Eamon Ryan TD, (Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications), Dr. Mike Ryan (Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme), Paola Simonetti (Deputy Director, International Trade Union Confederation), and Asad Rehman (Executive Director, War on Want).

We outline below the key takeaway messages from the presentation, first from Mayoman Dr. Mike Ryan of the World Health Organization;

1) The current recovery from Covid-19 is marked by both a return to a previous stage of injustice and by a loss of cohesion, solidarity and connectedness.

... I was looking at the definitions of what recovery means. As a medic, we look at recovery and how our patients are, and that's seen as a return to normal state of health, mind or strength...But that's assuming that it was normal to start with. Unfortunately, what are we recovering to? - to a previous stage of injustice.

But I also looked at another definition of recovery...And that is 'the action or process of regaining possession or control of something that has been stolen or lost', which is another way of looking at the idea of recovery...And I think we have lost something: not just recovering from the insult of a pandemic (both to our health, to our mental health and well-being, to our social health or economic health too and everything else) but [also] in a sense, something that we need to recover that has been lost too which is our sense of cohesion and solidarity and connectedness...we've really failed to do to show even the smallest modicum of solidarity in the face of tremendous inequity that has really been the hallmark of this pandemic.

2) The pandemic has exposed existing fragilities in our health systems and highlighted a lack of investment in resilience and solidarity.

This microbe has exploded all of those existing frailties in our system: economic, social and health injustices that have existed for years...this virus is not what's actually killing people...what's killing them are the underlying conditions that lead them to not be able to tolerate or be able to survive the infection.

And that's, diabetes, hypertension, existing lung disease, lack of management, lack of access to healthcare for years, lack of health protection, lack of health promotion...

We're losing so many people, because the health and well-being of our population has not been strong enough...we have not built resilience, mental health, and we're suffering for that now...so we've lacked resilience across all parts of our society, because we haven't invested in that resilience, we haven't invested in solidarity. We haven't invested in caring or giving a damn about each other. We've isolated our societies into nice units of production - the individual on a treadmill, producing for fear of losing. And that is the society we've created, and not one that does well in a pandemic, not one that can come together quickly to find solutions.

And we have the money, the means and the science, but we lack the will to share them to save the lives we need to save...it's almost a greater tragedy...the very fact that we have the technology to develop it and save those lives, and we don't share is to me almost a greater insult, to my mind it's a greater insult to my sense of humanity.

3) However, it is not all negative: so many people have stood out and made sacrifices to keep services running.

And yet we've seen the most wonderful behaviours in our communities...our frontline health workers, the people who work in the shops, the post offices, the people who kept going to work to keep our services running...there are so many other workers who've gone out there, we have the issues of health, and they deserve our huge gratitude.

4) The health and social justice challenges associated with the pandemic are fundamentally connected with the climate emergency and climate action.

...what are we promising our children?...we have the issues of health justice, social justice, climate justice. They're coming together...converging, they're becoming the same thing, because one is affecting the other: social equity is affecting how we do in pandemics, it's affecting how we're doing dealing with climate; climate is affecting social equity; climate is affecting the potential for health crises; they're wrapped around each other...They've become intertwined at threats. And we can't deal with them separately anymore...

...the reality is that climate stress and climate change is driving epidemic and pandemic risk, directly and indirectly: drought stress, changes the rainfall temperature patterns, humidity patterns - they're driving direct changes in our biome...But not only that, the indirect impact is that it's driving migration, it's driving urbanisation and it's driving all those other things that are increasing the risk of epidemic because we don't have the services in place.

...pandemics and epidemics will become an ever present feature of a biome that's out of balance. We're on a planet out of balance, and we're within the stressed biologic system. What do we expect?...This is not unpredicted, this thing didn't walk up and take us all by surprise. We've been talking about pandemic threats for 30 years, more.

...so it's not just the urgent response to this pandemic and that's very important...we need an emergency response to climate, but we also need an urgent response to the factors that are driving the biologic risk, not just for this pandemic...building strong and resilient health systems, giving people basic social justice, building systems that allow us to detect and prevent the risk of future pandemics will give us more stability.

5) In order for a people-centred recovery to become a reality, communities and children in particular, must mobilise and direct these demands at Governments.

It's really about learning the lessons from this pandemic in terms of public services... people, communities, inclusive and participatory approaches, fast and fair action - that's what just recovery is

but that has to turn into something real. But they're not the words I'm hearing...governments and others are not necessarily wanting to hear about empowering communities, solidarity, people-centred approaches, focus on public and common services, fast and fair action...more transparency, better trust...These are things that will build solutions to the big three threats that I see. I'm not so sure we have the governance systems in place to pay adequate respect to those sort of approaches, and I think it's important that communities and societies activate.

...We need to mobilize right now, because it's [the children's] planet. It's their future. They're the ones who will either inherit a planet, and a biome, and civilization that's worth living in, or tolerable to live.

I heard Asad [Rehman] say three times a very important word...and I think it is a word that young people should really consider...and that is the word "dignity". I think we forget this word, we forget the right to dignity, the dignity of work, the dignity of home, the dignity of access to health care without risking your financial future. How many people do you know in your life experience, who have to live without that basic dignity? I think young people need to consider that. Do you want to inherit a world which basic human dignity is not guaranteed? And I think that's a conversation young people need to get involved with, and we need to mobilize you to the greatest extent possible.

6) It has become essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as they are now crucial for our survival.

...the SDGs are becoming much less about development and more about survival...maybe we should call them Sustainable 'Survival' Goals...this isn't just about development anymore this is really about survival of our civilization.

7) Without radical change in our approach to vaccinations, we are entering into a two-tier pandemic where lower-income countries will suffer most.

What people aren't recognising is more than half the world is still on the edge of the next precipice, the next cliff, in this pandemic, and we are about to experience another wave of disease without the protection of vaccines. There are I think about 85 doses of vaccine per hundred people in developed, high income countries...probably translated to about an average of 40% vaccine coverage. In low income countries that's 1.3 per hundred. That's less than half of 1% vaccination coverage or two doses in low income countries. We wanted to take the death and the suffering out of this pandemic. We have the means and had the means to do that, to protect the vulnerable, older persons and frontline workers. They're the people who have died in this pandemic, they're the people who really have died in huge numbers. And we had enough and have enough vaccines to protect each and every single one of those on this planet today, it exists.

But now we're talking about booster vaccines in the developed world...I'm sitting here getting these questions all day today [about] what's my opinion on booster doses. No one's asking me, what's my damned opinion on the fact that there are people dying all over the world that don't need to die. No one's asking me about health workers who are going to work today in isolation wards all over the world in the developing world without being vaccinated risking their lives today. [Instead] I am being asked what do I think about booster doses for people in developed countries. I'm sorry to be angry and emotional but you know what, sometimes it gets very hard to take it really hits, very hard to take

Paola Simonetti, Deputy Director of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC);

1) COVID-19 has triggered an extraordinary wave of destruction across the world of work.

The International Labour Organisation estimates that over 250 million jobs have been destroyed and more than 1.6 billion informal workers are facing deprivation. The number of workers living in moderate

or extreme poverty increased by 108 million in 2020, reversing five years of continuous progress.

And while only wealthier countries seem to do better concerning the labour rights, the economic crisis brought along restrictions on freedoms and labour rights violations worldwide.

2) Women have been disproportionately affected.

...pre-existing labour market deficiencies resulted in making those who are most vulnerable even more exposed to the impact of the crises: low skilled workers, migrant workers, informal workers, women and youth. It's really scary because women [have been] disproportionately affected. Globally, employment losses for women stand at 5% versus 3.9% for men. Additionally, 90% of women who lost their jobs in 2020 exited the labour force. So this means that it will be extraordinarily difficult for them to come back in the labour market, so they really face long lasting exclusion in that sense.

3) We need a human-centred recovery focused on the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is now imperative to focus on a human-centred recovery from the unprecedented crisis that is affecting the world...the Sustainable Development Goals...are helping in this respect, showing the path towards resilient economies and just societies.

Through its targets on decent work, social protection and sustainable growth, SDG 8 plays a fundamental role in providing policy responses to the crisis...it is crucial that policymakers prioritise both urgent and long-term recovery measures in line with the SDGs and SDG 8 in particular:

1) Stepping up Investments in decent and climate-friendly jobs creation with just transition measures...

2) Scaling up universal social protection systems...

3) Upholding equality and fighting vulnerability: Investments in quality public care services and infrastructure, the promotion of equal pay for work of equal value, and the introduction of minimum living wages with stronger collective bargaining remain the preconditions to gender equality...

4) Financing recovery and resilience: universal access to vaccines and treatment, increased levels of Official Development Assistance...and concessional finance will need to do the heavy lifting for the recovery and resilience needs ahead...

5) Supporting inclusive governance and social dialogue...

Note: COVAX, the vaccine-sharing alliance was founded in April to promote vaccine equity and give poorer countries better access to jabs to help end the pandemic.

The COVAX programme aims to secure enough Covid-19 vaccines this year for the most vulnerable 20% in every country, rich or poor. COVAX has already delivered over 209 million doses to 138 countries since March this year. Earlier this month, the World Health Organisation (WHO) called for a moratorium on Covid-19 vaccine boosters until at least the end of September. The move was to enable that at least 10% of the population of every country was vaccinated. Many countries, including Germany, France and Israel, still plan to go ahead with plans to administer vaccine boosters, disregarding the WHO appeal.

The aim of COVAX, as it was called, was to produce and make available two billion vaccines by the end of 2021. 'No one is safe until everyone is safe' became the mantra of collaboration (see *The Delegate* - November 2020).

COVAX was heralded as the 'only truly global solution' but it was a mix of ambition and acknowledgement of the limited commitment of the big powers to collaborate to vaccinate the world. Even when fully rolled out, it will still only account for 20% of global need, what it called "the priority fifth". Still, something was better than nothing.

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LOOKING BACK

REMEMBERING ROSS CONNOLLY

The death of Ross Connolly eleven years ago, on the 28th August 2010, brought the curtain down on a remarkable life of active dedication and service to the Trade Union and Labour Movement for over 60 years.

Ross was born in Dublin on the 20th August 1927, the second child of Jessica (nee: Maidment - an English born Socialist activist and chartered accountant) and Roddy Connolly (the only son of James and Lillie Connolly).

His involvement with this Council stretched back to December 1951 when he was first appointed as a delegate - a remarkable unbroken service of 59 years. He held every officer position on the Council.

We reproduce below an article by Kieron Connolly, Council Secretary, first published in *The Delegate* in April 2011 in a special commemorative edition in tribute to Ross.

ROSS EMBROILED IN CONTROVERSY

Ross Connolly wrote the following editorial in the Council's newsletter '*The Delegate*' in July 1970 which caused quite a controversy within the Council.

The Essence of Democracy

The unfortunate thing about democracy is that it tends to be valued only when it has been lost. Democracy has been the keystone of the trade union movement since its inception. Its decisions are made by its members; its structures are decided by the members; its officials and committee are elected by the members; the views of the majority are those that count and minority opinion, while respected, is not allowed to dominate. It explains why the unofficial strike is not tolerated; it explains why we oppose dictatorship and oppression in all its forms and why we champion the underprivileged.

For these very reasons, however, there are those who seek to use the standing and strength of the Movement for their own ends. They have tried to influence and subvert our Movement to their political objectives. The strategy is simple. Select a Cause - preferably one to which Labour is sympathetic; set up ad hoc organisations and committees (in no sense democratic) on which a firm political grip is held on key officer and committee positions (this is called giving leadership); invite the Trade Union Movement (preferably a Trades Council as the most vulnerable) to either support or become associated with the organisation. Snap decisions by the officers to suit their political requirements are 'approved' by the organisation, which rarely has any other choice. Through its association with the organisation, the Trade Union Movement becomes identified with what subsequently takes place, even though it amounts to undemocratic action or a repudiation of the democratically decided policies and elected leadership of our Movement. While demanding more democracy on Public bodies, such organisations cynically flout the very conception of democracy in their own actions.

The tactics of these alliances of the "Left", fascist "national" movements, liberation fronts, etc. - the discreet meeting, the 'loaded' motion or 'innocent' amendment, intrigue and manipulation - these tactics are not ours.

Our policies are decided in the light of day. They are subjected to scrutiny, democratic vote and acceptance. Our officers are elected by fair ballot and are responsible to elected committees which in turn are responsible to the general body.

Acting democratically imposes rules and procedures and obligations on us which do not worry the autocrat. This is our weakness, but it can also be our strength. If we subject every proposal from such

people to the same scrutiny as we would subject a wage offer, a strike proposal or policy decision in our unions; if we examine the structure and constitution of every organisation which invites our participation and reject those which do not meet the strict requirement of trade unionism; if we exercise eternal vigilance over our democratic traditions, then we will not go far astray or find the good name of trade unionism dragged down by autocrats, masquerading behind a facade of socialism or nationalism.

The editorial caused a storm within the Council and was the subject of a motion from the ITGWU (now SIPTU) at its meeting in September 1970. The following report was carried in the next issue of *The Delegate* in September 1970;

The Council in Session

COUNCIL REPUDIATES "THE DELEGATE" EDITORIAL

By a one-vote majority of 11 to 10, the Council at its September meeting passed a motion from the ITGWU declaring that the Trades Council wished it to be known that the editorial in the (July) "Delegate" is not an indication of the position in the Council's area. The Editor of "The Delegate", Mr. Ross Connolly, has since offered his resignation as Editor to the Council. At the outset, the President explained as he was personally involved in the motion as Editor of "The Delegate", he would vacate the Chair for the debate. The Vice-President, Mr. Tom Sutton, then took the Chair.

Moving the motion, Mr. Bernard Connolly, ITGWU, said that his union was disturbed by the references in the editorial to the Council being used by organisations which employed undemocratic methods. They were not criticising the Editor but were simply looking for information - was this the situation in the Trades Council?

D. H. Wright, ATGWU, criticised the motion which he said quite clearly was not asking a question but stating as a fact that such a situation did not exist in the Council's area. It was not stating it did not exist in the Council itself, but in the Council's area which was a different matter. He praised the editorial for its restatement of the traditions and democratic practices of the Trade Union Movement. He trusted the motion was not an attempt, on the lines of the 7 Days Tribunal, to muzzle the editor in writing on a problem about which he felt strongly. Enough was being done in Government circles to restrict journalistic freedom without the Trade Unions joining the band.

'Attack on the Left': Liam O'Mara, ASW, and S. Doyle, WUI, supported. Mr. S. Doyle said he regarded it as an attack on the Left-wing of the Trade Union Movement by the Executive and referred to the use by the Editor of "we" throughout the article. C. Brien Snr, WUI, opposed the motion. In his view these ad hoc organisations were operating in the area in the way described and it was high time the whole matter was brought into the open. S. Costello, ITGWU, said: "Point of order - can you name them?". Mr. Brien said 'no' and at the chairman's request withdrew his remark. He continued that the Council had an unbroken tradition of democratic struggle for the workers for 50 years and he did not want to see it harmed.

S. Costello, ITGWU, said the editorial was cleverly written in a vague sort of way, naming no-one, but making charges by innuendo. He described it also as an attack on the Left and denied it represented a true picture.

Editor Replies: Ross Connolly, Editor, in a lengthy reply said he had been concerned at developments in the Council over the last few years and had decided to write the editorial as a warning. As Editor he set out to be controversial, but he was not prepared to operate a dual standard. "The Delegate" had been praised when it attacked the Springboks or Wicklow County Council, or criticised the Labour Party - legitimate targets for the so-called "Left". He stressed that he had used the term "The Left" in inverted commas in the editorial.

These people, however, did not like it when the beam in their own eye was pointed out. At no time had he attacked the policies of socialism; what he had attacked were the tactics employed by the people who professed to hold these policies, but behaved like autocrats. In his view, democracy and democratic principles could not be prostituted to serve any political objective.

The charges in the "Delegate" could be substantiated. He gave instances of motions favouring other bodies' policies which had been cleverly worded to commit the Council to unlimited action on their behalf; the committing of the Council to support the National Commemoration Committee Parades at Easter, when speakers in whose choosing the Council had no part, attacked policies of the Trade Union Movement and advocated the use of armed force in the North, again contrary to T.U. policy. Leaflets issued by the Council giving names of Trade Union firms in the area which had been given to delegates for distribution had been delivered tucked inside copies of "The United Irishman" - an attempt to identify the Council with Sinn Fein. This, he charged, was intrigue and manipulation.

He listed five organisations which had a common chairman (S. Costello) and three which had a common secretary (D. Kelleher), both of whom were officers of Sinn Fein. Was this not political control of these bodies? The chairman of Citizens for Civil Liberties - Wicklow, took decisions without consulting the bodies associated with it, such as the Trades Council. It had admitted political parties such as Sinn Fein and the Communist Party, but obstructed the admission of the Labour Party. Its chairman was Mr. Seamus Costello. Anyone else who took exception to the editor's opinions had no difficulty in writing to the "Delegate" and getting their views published in full. It was curious that these people had resorted to the use of a motion before the Council. In other publications, the board of directors did not tell the editor what to write.

(Here Ross explained the use of the word "we" was common in all editorials and did not refer to the Executive who did not see the editorial until it was published. If the board did not like the editor's approach they sacked him.)

The Council was his "board of directors" and the motion before it put his credibility as Editor in doubt. If the Council decided what he said was untrue, which was what the motion said in effect, then it would be almost impossible for him to continue.

No Political Content: When S. Costello asked to reply to R. Connolly's statement, there were objections to his speaking twice. He claimed he had been attacked and was entitled to reply. A delegate responded: "You asked for names didn't you?"

After further exchanges the chairman gave him permission. Mr. Costello said one of the 'loaded' motions complained of had been framed by Mr. Connolly's own union and he was obviously peeved because he hadn't been able to influence the wording. The National Commemoration Parades had no political content whatsoever and their speakers had the same privilege of attacking policies they disliked as Mr. Connolly had as editor. The leaflets had been distributed by Sinn Fein because the Council couldn't provide enough people to do it. It was true he and Mr. Kelleher were connected with the organisations named, but Mr. Connolly had his own political connections too. He denied anyone had been kept out of the Citizens for Civil Liberties and claimed the Labour Party was now affiliated. The decisions he had taken for the C.C.L. had been subsequently approved by the committee, and this was democratic in his view.

Did It Apply in Bray?: Winding up for the motion, Mr. Bernard Connolly said no criticism of the editor was intended. He himself had been an outspoken critic of various factions, Maoists, Communists or Sinn Fein too. What concerned his union was that the editorial appeared to give the Trades Council a bad image and all they wanted in the motion was to ask the question, did it apply to Bray and to get an assurance that it did not. The motion was passed.

Ross Connolly's editorial in the same issue was as follows;

"IF THE CAP FITS"

There is little to add to the debate of the July Editorial, except to clear up some misconceptions. The Trade Union Movement by its very nature as an instrument of struggle of the working people is a Left-wing Movement. Therefore its basic sympathies must be with the policies of Left-wing and socialists groups. To this proposition we are firmly committed. These groups, however, are not entitled to assume that because they write "socialist" across their banners, that this automatically entitles them to behave like fascists. The Nazis in Germany in the 'Thirties wrote the words "National Socialist Party" on their banners, but the trade unions were the first democratic organisations to disappear under the jackboots of the autocrats. So far, this is a remote situation for us, but our Left-wing groups could do worse than look to see if anyone in their ranks might be trying jackboots on for size.

As for this Editor, our 'employer', the Trades Council has rejected has rejected our description of anti-democratic developments which we consider threaten its role as a trade unions' organisation. Perhaps it is a matter of interpretation but the annoyance of those who obviously felt the pinch leads us to wonder, "if the cap fits that wel . . .?"

We are not prepared to apply double standards of democracy - one tailored for reactionaries and a hand-me-down standard for socialists - who should be setting the example. If this is what the Trades Council wants, however - and that seems to be implied in its decision - then it needs a different sort of Editor.

THE EDITOR

Naturally, the Council refused to accept Ross' resignation as Editor and he continued in the position for another thirty years or so.

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