

Irish Labour History News

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The FREE Bi-Annual Newsletter of the Irish Labour History Society

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ILHS members and committee members inspecting their copies of *Saothar 42* at the society's 2017 AGM (Photograph: Eddie Soye).

AGM & LAUNCH OF SAOTHAR 42

The 2017 AGM of the Irish Labour History Society took place at Beggars Bush on Saturday, 15th April. The focus of the first half of the meeting was the formal business of reviewing the activities undertaken by the Society over the previous twelve months, along with debating motions relating to ILHS business. A discussion then followed on the future of the Society, with a decision taken by members to appoint a working group of young scholars who will review the role of the ILHS and examine its future direction in the years ahead.

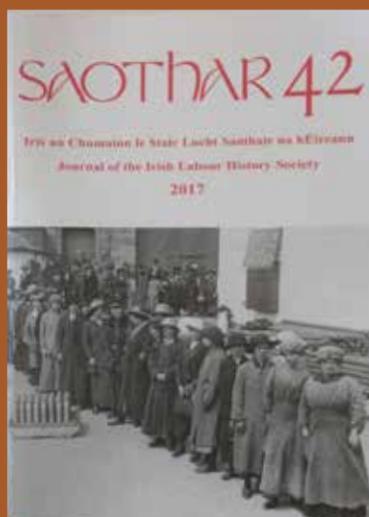
Two afternoon events then took place. The first of these saw the formal launch of *Saothar 42*, co-edited by Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley and Dr Martin Maguire. Complimentary copies for ILHS members were available to collect on the day, with Dr Maguire summarising the content of the journal for those present and acknowledging the role of the contributors and others in the creation of the volume.

In addition to a number of short essays and reviews, *Saothar 42* includes full-length articles on Irish female munitions workers during the First World War, the Cork Harbour Soviet of 1921, Vivian Simpson and the Northern Ireland Labour Party, workers' response to 'Bloody Sunday' and the conflict in Northern Ireland (1969-72), the Irish Drapers' Assistants' Association, and working-class radicalism in Watt's Distilleries Derry (1920-21).

The Society's AGM concluded with a talk by UCC doctoral student and *Saothar* contributor Luke Dineen, who delivered a well-received presentation on the Derry lockout of 1924. It is intended that future ILHS events will include similar 'Emerging Voices of Irish Labour History' talks to promote the valuable research on labour history topics by current third-level students across Ireland.

For information on ILHS events and getting involved see pages 3 and 4.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE



The ILHS online shop includes back issues of *Saothar* and other society publications. You can access it at www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com

Markievicz & Partridge Remembered

A special centenary SIPTU event on Friday 28th and Saturday 29th July, 2017, saw the lives of Countess Markievicz and William P. Partridge, 'Veterans of Dublin Lockout and Easter Rising', remembered in Sligo and nearby Ballaghaderreen and Gurteen.

On Friday evening a sizeable crowd witnessed the laying of a memorial

wreath, piper's lament and oration by SIPTU General President Jack O'Connor at the graveside of William Partridge in Ballaghaderreen. A social evening then took place in Gurteen, where the presentation of 25 and 50 year SIPTU membership



ILHS committee member John Feely (left) with SIPTU General President Jack O'Connor (right) and generations of William P. Partridge's family at the Markievicz-Partridge Centenary Seminar event in Sligo. In the background is the Markievicz-Partridge Banner unveiled at the Sligo Park Hotel by Jack O'Connor.

badges took place.

On Saturday, a Summer School took place at the Sligo Park Hotel. Opened by O'Connor, who unveiled a striking Markievicz-Partridge Banner, the morning session saw talks delivered by Ann Gilmar-

tin on Markievicz and the role of women pioneers in the early labour movement, and Padraig Yeates on William Partridge and the role of the labour movement in laying the foundations of the Irish Revolution.

During the afternoon session, there was another SIPTU presenta-

tion, talks on modern trade union matters by Ethel Buckley, Jack O'Connor and Karan O'Loughlin, before an interesting panel discussion involving the day's speakers and Gerry McCormack concluded proceedings.

Galway Launch of New 1913 Lockout Book

The launch of an important new collection of essays concerning the 1913 Dublin Lockout, Ireland's most famous industrial dispute, took place at the Mechanics Institute in Galway on Thursday, 31st August (the anniversary of 1913's infamous 'Bloody Sunday' police baton charge on Sackville Street).

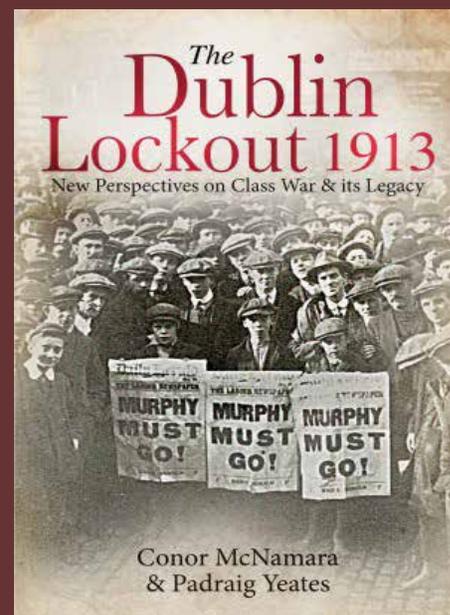
Edited by Conor McNamara and Padraig Yeates, *The Dublin Lockout, 1913. New Perspectives on Class War and Its Legacy* is published by Irish Academic Press and was launched by ILHS committee member John Cunningham.

The book – which grew out of the 2013 Byrne-Perry Summer School in Gorey, Co. Wexford – reveals the immediate impact of the iconic event, as well as its enduring

lessons through the First World War, 1916 Easter Rising, birth of the Irish Free State, and how it governs activism today.

Available in paperback (€24.99), hardback (€44.99) and eBook (£8.99) formats, the volume features a range of essays by established and early career historians on topics such as 1913's chronology of events, views on the Lockout from Belfast and Irish-America, the 2013 'Cinderella Centenary', oral history lessons, Helena Moloney, the Irish Citizen Army, early twentieth century Dublin newsboys, and reflections on 1913, Class and the Memory of the Irish Revolution.

The book is available to purchase at all good bookshops through the usual online outlets.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

7th October 2017: Seminar on Russian Revolution

The ILHS is co-organising a seminar on the Russian Revolution as part of the Dublin Festival of History 2017. Donal Fallon, Conor Kostick, Emmet O'Connor and Kate O'Malley are the speakers who will present papers on topics such as Irish Labour and the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviets in Ireland, and the experiences of Patrick McCartan in Russia. Held in association with Dublin City Council, this event will take place at Pearse Street Library on Saturday, 7th October, from 2 – 4:30 pm, and be chaired by Pat Bolger and Fionnuala Richardson of the ILHS. All are welcome on a first come, first served basis.

21st October 2017: Annual ILHS Autumn Conference

ILHS Vice-President Fionnuala Richardson, who will co-chair the Dublin Festival of History's seminar on the Russian Revolution on 7th October 2017.



The annual autumn conference of the ILHS is taking place at the society's premises in Beggars Bush on Saturday, 21st October. The morning session, taking place from 11 am to 1 pm, will focus on the life of dramatist Sean O'Casey from a labour history perspective, with Christopher Murray and Paul O'Brien among the confirmed speakers. The centenary of the world-changing Russian Revolution will then be marked during the afternoon session of the conference, with Emmet O'Connor and Helena Sheehan among the invited speakers. The final programme and full details on how to register will be circulated to members and made available on the society's official website (www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com) closer to the date.

4th November 2017: Bray & District Trades Council Centenary Event

The ILHS is also delighted to announce that a special event will be taking place in Bray Town Hall, Co. Wicklow, on Saturday, 4th November, to mark the centenary of Bray & District Trades Council. Important historical figures in the history of the Irish trade union and labour movement with connections to the area – including Louie Bennett, Noel Browne, Jim Larkin Junior, and Ross Connolly – will be the focus of talks by several historians on the day. The event will conclude with an evening social event. Further information will be made available closer to the date at www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com.

24th March 2018: Saothar 43 Launch

The launch of the forty-third edition of *Saothar*, the annual journal of the ILHS which is co-edited by Sarah-Anne Buckley and Martin Maguire, will take place at the next AGM of the society on Saturday, 24th March 2018. All members of the society are encouraged to collect their copy of the journal as part of their annual membership.

The editors of the journal may be contacted at sarah-anne.buckley@nuigalway.ie or martin.maguire@dkit.ie.

2017 Hugh Geraghty Memorial Talk at Liberty Hall

The 2017 Hugh Geraghty Memorial Talk was delivered by Peter Rigney, an Industrial Officer with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, at Liberty Hall's Cois Life Bar on Wednesday 15th March.

Peter Rigney delivers the 2017 Hugh Geraghty Memorial Talk at Liberty Hall (Photograph: Eddie Soye).



Entitled 'Railway Workers in Ireland Post World War 1', the talk drew upon some of the material found in Dr Rigney's 2010 book *Trains, Coal and Turf: Transport in Emergency Ireland* (available for purchase in both paperback and hardback). ILHS President Jack McGinley introduced the speaker, with Noel Pocock acting as 'Fear a Tí'.

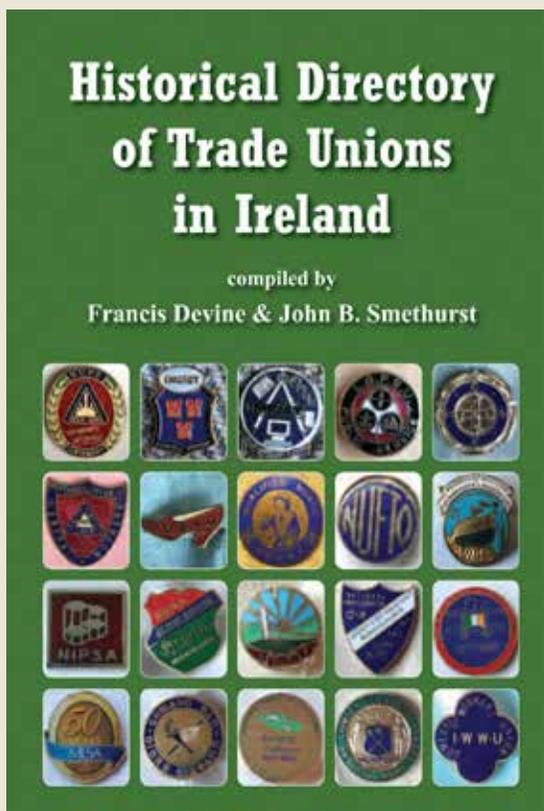
The event was organised by the ILHS in conjunction with the Clé Club, which serves up traditional music and song at Liberty Hall on the third Wednesday of every month (August excluded) from 8-11 pm. Those interested in finding out more should contact Sally Corr at cleclub@gmail.com.

HISTORICAL DIRECTORY OF TRADE UNIONS IN IRELAND

In May 2017, the Irish Labour History Society and Salford-based Working Class Movement Library were delighted to co-publish the *Historical Directory of Trade Unions in Ireland*, an enormous undertaking compiled by ILHS Honorary President Francis Devine and the late John B. Smethurst.

The publication is the fourth in the ILHS's *Saothar Studies* series, and is the result of many years of research. The society would like to acknowledge the generous encouragement and support of IMPACT, Unison and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in helping to bring this important work to publication.

Over 600 pages in length when including the introductory material and Devine's touching appreciation of Smethurst (described as 'a class fighter, loyal comrade, socialist trade unionist and co-operator, Marxist radical and thinker'), the *Directory* is packed with details regarding all trade unions known to have operated in Ireland. Illustrated throughout, its entries provide the foundation and registration dates for the various bodies, along with any changes of title, amalgamations and mergers, main office holders, and membership. Short essays introduce each category of



unions, e.g. general, craft, white collar/professional, civil and public service, yellow, etc.

A valuable companion to Sarah Ward-Perkin's 1996 volume *A Select Guide to Trade Union Records in Dublin*, the *Directory* also complements the six volume *Historical Directory* dedicated to British trade unions which appeared between 1980 to 2009 (three of which featured Smethurst as a co-compiler).

Having sold out all copies in record time the book is now a valuable resource and collector's

item. Whether there will be a short supplemental print run pre-Christmas or not is under consideration.



Philadelphia author and playwright John Kearns (fifth from left) with the Dublin cast of his play *Sons of Molly Maguire*, which recently received its first Irish performances at the Liberty Hall Theatre (during SIPTU Dublin District Council's 2017 MayFest, on 10th & 11th May) and the Seán O'Casey Theatre in East Wall (on 16th & 17th May). Based on the brutal struggle between Irish emigrant workers and local mine owners in the Pennsylvania coalfields of the late 1870s, the play's Dublin performances were directed by Dara Carolan (who also played the role of Gowen), with Fran Laycock (first from left) in charge of production and set design, in addition to playing the role of John Kilbride. (Photograph courtesy of Joe Mooney)

NOTICE TO MEMBERS AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

You can now pay or renew your ILHS membership at www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com