

# A Century of Workers in Struggle 1913-2013

National Commemorative Event  
11.30am - 3.30pm, March 2nd,  
Halla na Saoirse, Baile Átha Cliath

**CENTENARY  
COMMEMORATIONS  
COMMITTEE**  
COISTE CÉAD BLIAIN



Hosted by Sinn Féin  
Spokesperson on Workers' Rights,  
Senator David Cullinane

## Clár an Lae

- 11.00am Registration
- 11.30am Gerry Adams opening address
- 11.40am Video Presentation on Lockout
- 11.45am Contribution from Vita Cortex Worker
- 11.50am Brian Hanley – The history of the Lockout

**12.00noon:** Panel Discussion

**1913-2013  
– the struggle for Workers Rights**

- Conor McCabe - Blogger & Writer
- Brian Forbes MANDATE
- Chris Day INMO
- John Stewart INOU
- Nora O'Reilly SF
- Frank Connolly SIPTU

Chair **Eamon Dunphy**

13.00pm Lunch Break

- 13.30pm Jim Larkin Speech – Jer O'Leary
- 13.45pm Contribution from Lagan Brick Workers

**13.50pm:** Panel Discussion

**Trade Unionism and  
the Fight for Workers Rights**

- Jack O'Connor SIPTU
- John Douglas MANDATE
- Jimmy Kelly UNITE
- Peter Bunting ICTU
- Siobhan Ó Donoghue MRCI
- Máire Devine SF

Chair **Gerry Flynn** former Irish Independent

- 14.50pm Contribution from Visteon Worker  
& Waterford Crystal Worker
- 14.55pm International Speaker Terry O'Sullivan  
LIUNA (North America)
- 15.15pm Mary Lou McDonald Closing address

15.30pm Music, followed by close

# Céad Bliana de Streachait Oibrithe

## 1913-2013

### Dr. Conor McCabe



Research Fellow, Equality Studies, UCD. author of *Sins of the Father: Tracing the Decisions That Shaped the Irish Economy* (2011) and regular contributor to journals such as *Look Left*, *ShopFloor*, and *Irish Left Review*. His main research interests are in banking, money and finance in Ireland and the EU.

### Peter Bunting



Peter Bunting is the Assistant General Secretary for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, with responsibility for co-ordinating and developing the Trade Union Movement in Northern Ireland. A native of Belfast, Peter has been an active trade unionist since 1972. Prior to his appointment to Congress Peter served as General Secretary of the National Bus and Rail Union in the Republic of Ireland. He holds a BA (Hons) from the Faculty of Business, Economic and Social Science, Trinity College, Dublin. Peter has, among other things been involved in Belfast City Council Good Relations Committee; Economic Development Forum; and is a Board member for NI Water.

### Máire Devine



Máire Devine is Sinn Fein's County Councillor for Tallaght Central in the constituency of Dublin South West. She was co-opted to this seat following Seán Crowes election to Leinster House in 2011.

A Dubliner, born and raised in the Liberties, she is a Registered Mental Health Nurse and has many years' experience in acute healthcare and community settings. She has been elected Branch Secretary with the Nursing Union for over a decade with experience in negotiating and campaigning on behalf of nurses.

Máire lives in Dublin with Kevin and their three children Sinead, Aoife and Ruairi.

### Brian Hanley



Brian Hanley lectures in history at University College Dublin. He is the author of several books and articles examining Irish republicanism and socialism, notably *'The IRA, 1926-36'* and (with Scott Millar) *'The Lost Revolution: the story of the Official IRA and the Workers Party'*.

### Gerry Flynn



Gerry Flynn is a former Industrial Correspondent with Independent Newspapers. He served on the executive of his trade union and was a delegate to the Dublin Council of Trades Unions.

More recently he has been an adviser on workplace communications and employment

relations having worked as an adviser to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the professional body for people managers. Generally, he has been critical of Social Partnership 'corporatism', where unions join with employers and government to agree social and economic programmes.

### Jimmy Kelly



Jimmy Kelly is the Irish Regional Secretary of the UNITE trade union. He spent most of his working life at Waterford Crystal as a craftsman and then a workplace representative. He became an active lay member of what was the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union and took on his first full time role in the union movement following the merger of the ATGWU and Amicus in 2008. Jimmy is a passionate advocate of workers' rights, not afraid to speak his mind, and represents the interests of nearly 100,000 union members across the island of Ireland.

He sits on the Executive Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and has instigated court action seeking to force the Irish Government into enacting pension protection legislation which is shamefully lacking here.

### John Douglas



John Douglas is from Bray County Wicklow, and began working for Irish National Union of Vintners', Grocers' & Allied Trades' Assistants, 1979 after leaving Trinity College.. On the formation of Mandate Trade Union in 1994, he became National Official with responsibility for industrial relations before being appointed General Secretary of Mandate Trade Union May 2005.

He is a member of the National Executive Council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and current Vice President of Congress, and was active in the formation of the ICTU Private Sector Committee. He has been responsible for the planning and co-ordination of a number of industrial disputes in major retailers such as Dunnes Stores and Tesco.

### Visteon Workers



The Visteon dispute began after the Ford parts supplier announced it was closing their plant in Andersonstown, west Belfast in March 2009. The workers were effectively dismissed with very little notice.

The company had reneged on guarantees over employment and severance payments from the time that Visteon was established, leading to the sit in dispute.

The Workers, with the support of many Trade Unions, and political parties, campaigned for their entitlements, and better redundancy conditions, and the dispute drew to a successful close for the workers in May 2009.

The package achieved was possible because of the resilience, determination and resoluteness of the Visteon workforce; it



was they, along with widespread support for their cause, which ensured that the corporation was brought to the negotiating table

**Brian Forbes**



Originally from Strabane, Brian Forbes is National Coordinator with Mandate Trade Union, with responsibility for Campaigns & Organising. In this capacity, he has organised a number of high profile campaigns and initiatives, including: Respect for Retail Workers, End Low Pay, Decent Work in Retail and Fair Shop.

A committed union activist for many years, Brian previously held elected positions within the NIPSA trade union and served for two years as the Northern Ireland Trades Council representative to the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

**John Stewart**



John Stewart is the Co-ordinator of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed. John has been with the INOU for over 13 years. He was appointed to his current role in August 2008. Prior to taking up the post of Co-ordinator, John undertook the roles of INOU Assistant General Secretary and Personnel and Development Officer. Before joining the INOU, John worked in a range of positions in local authorities and education establishments in London.

**Nora O'Reilly**

Nora O'Reilly was appointed to the board of Aer Lingus as an elected Director in July 2002. She was a Senior Cabin Crew member in Aer Lingus, and was Chairperson of the Cabin Crew Committee from May 1998 to March 2002. She was also a member of the State and Enterprise Division of IMPACT and the central executive Council. Nora is a member of Sinn Féin

**Vita Cortex Workers**



The Vita Cortex sit-in began on 16 December 2011 after workers were made redundant without pay with immediate effect.

The staff had worked for a total of 847 years for Vita Cortex, with the most senior employee having worked there for 47 years. The employer refused to give the workers the redundancy payments that had previously been agreed, leading to the sit in. The strike has received support from, among others, the Cork senior hurling manager Jimmy Barry Murphy, former President of Ireland Mary Robinson, Noam Chomsky, Paul McGrath, Christy Moore, Cillian Murphy, and Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

The dispute, which attracted national and international attention, ended after 161 days, after the workers secured a just and equitable redundancy deal.

**Mary Lou McDonald TD**



Mary Lou is Sinn Féin's Deputy Leader, and the Sinn Féin TD for Dublin Central since February 2011.

Mary Lou is married to Martin and they have two young children, Iseult and Gerard.

She was an MEP for Dublin from 2004 to 2009 and during her time in the European Parliament Mary Lou was a prominent member of the Employment and Social Affairs committee and Civil Liberties committee. She previously worked as a consultant for the Irish Productivity Centre, and a trainer in the trade union sponsored Partnership Unit of the Educational and Training Services Trust.

**Lagan Brick Workers**



The Lagan Brick dispute began after the firm shut its doors 10 days before Christmas 2011. Employees were informed by phone hours before the formal closure came into effect on 15 December. No redundancy terms were offered by the company, not even the statutory minimum.

The workers undertook an extraordinary round the clock protest which lasted a remarkable 272 days, one of the longest disputes in Irish industrial history, before Management offered an acceptable redundancy package following a protracted negotiation with Sinn Féin representatives. The Lagan Brick workers achieved a successful and honourable outcome to their long dispute with the owners of the company. They also deservedly earned the respect of fellow workers the length and breadth of Ireland.

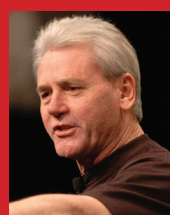
**Christopher Day**



Christopher is a final year General Nursing student at University College Dublin. He has been heavily involved in student politics in Ireland's largest Student's Union in UCD as a Class Representative. He is a former President of UCD's Nursing Society and is the current undergraduate representative on the Nursing and Midwifery Academic Board. In 2012, he was selected for a cross-border initiative, the Washington Ireland Program for Service and Leadership.

Since the proposed Nursing and Midwifery Graduate scheme was announced in December, Christopher has been actively campaigning for its reversal and boycott, while advocating for more sustainable and beneficial cuts.

**Terry O Sullivan**



Terry O'Sullivan has been General President of LIUNA – the Laborers' International Union of North America – since January 1, 2000. From San Francisco originally, he has guided the more than 500,000 collective bargaining members of LIUNA to the forefront of the labour movement, reshaping the Union into one of the



# Céad Bliana de Streachait Oibrithe 1913-2013



fastest-growing, most aggressive and progressive unions in North America. LIUNA has members who work in construction, hazardous waste remediation, state and municipal government, the Postal Service, health care, maintenance and food service. O'Sullivan is a long-time, vocal supporter of the Irish peace process. He is Chairman of D.C. Friends of Ireland and President of New York Friends of Ireland. He is also a member of the Governing Board of Presidents of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, a member of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO and a member of the AFL-CIO Immigration Committee.

## Siobhán O'Donoghue



Siobhán O'Donoghue is Director of the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland since 2002. Siobhán's experience spans social and economic justice work, equality, anti-racism, community work and campaigning at a local, national and global level. She was elected Chairperson of the National Women's Council of Ireland in 2012.

## Waterford Crystal Workers



The Waterford Crystal dispute began after the company's receiver, shutdown manufacturing, on January 30th 2009. The workers were told that more than half of the 670-strong workforce was to be made redundant and operations were to halt until a buyer was found. The workers immediately began a sit in seeking to protect their jobs, their entitlements and their pensions. The campaign gained the full support of the community in Waterford, and is linked in public memory with the Belfast Visteon dispute, which also took place at that time. They were example to all workers in conducting a dispute with dignity, and having standing up for their rights.

## Gerry Adams TD



Gerry Adams has been President of Sinn Féin since 1983. Gerry Adams was born in 1948. He became involved in the civil rights campaign in the 1960s and was active in campaigns around discrimination in housing and equal rights.

He was interned without trial in 1972. He was released in 1976.

Gerry Adams and John Hume initiated the peace process which succeeded in bringing an end to the conflict.

He was one of the architects of the Good Friday Agreement which led to all-Ireland political institutions and a power sharing Executive in the north of Ireland.

In 2011 he resigned his seat in the British Parliament and was subsequently TD for Louth and East Meath, in February 2011.

## Jack O'Connor



Jack O'Connor has been General President of SIPTU since 2003, having been re-elected in 2006 for a second term and in 2011 for a third term.

Born in 1957, O'Connor is a native of North County Dublin. Employed in the agriculture, construction and local authority sectors, he was a trade union activist before becoming a full-time Branch Secretary of the former Federated Workers' Union of Ireland in 1980.

He was elected as SIPTU's Vice President in 2000. Since he became President of SIPTU the Union has been completely restructured along Divisional lines, shifting considerable resources into Organising. Identifying strongly with the Congress "Better Fairer Way Campaign", he opposes the deflationary economic strategy, which he believes is destroying jobs and aggravating economic difficulties. He is a long-time member of the Labour Party.

## Frank Connolly



Frank Connolly, from Dublin, is a long-time investigative journalist. In his work with the Sunday Business Post and other media organisations, he established a reputation as a thorough and principled investigative journalist. His reporting of payments to former government minister Ray Burke contributed to the establishment of the Planning and Payments tribunal in 1997. His investigation into Garda malpractice in Donegal contributed to the setting up of the Morris Tribunal. In 2004, he became Executive Director of the Centre for Public Inquiry, which published original and ground breaking reports into planning matters at Trim Castle and the Corrib Gas Controversy. He is currently Head of Communications with SIPTU.

## Eamon Dunphy



Eamon Dunphy is an Irish media personality, broadcaster, author, sports pundit and former professional footballer.

Eamon grew up in Drumcondra, and as a teenager joined Manchester United as an apprentice. His career took in spells at York City, Millwall, Charlton Athletic and Reading, before returning to Ireland to play for Shamrock Rovers. Since retiring from the sport, he has become a full time journalist, and analyst, in particular known for coverage of the Premier League, UEFA Champions League and international football on RTÉ. He has also presented The Last Word on Today FM, the breakfast programme on Newstalk 106 radio station, and Conversations with Eamon Dunphy on RTÉ radio. He continues to contribute to news and current affairs programmes, as well as having regular sports columns.

If you are attending the event, we would be obliged if you could RSVP to [David.Cullinane@Oireachtas.ie](mailto:David.Cullinane@Oireachtas.ie) or 016184069

Please note that stalls from Trade Unions NGOs and other bodies are welcome, so please feel free to contact us.

