Conference report 2016

Recent labour history events in the North

Launch of two new booklets by Charles Callan

Saothar welcomes new editors

The ILHS in Glasgow

Gralton monument unveiled

You can still purchase copies of Saothar 41 online at www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com. The ILHS online shop also includes back issues of Saothar and other society publications.
A number of notable events of labour history interest took place in the north west recently, including book fairs, book launches and talks and lectures on various themes.

Helga Woggon, author of books on James Connolly and Winifred Carney, delivered a lecture on the latter at an event in Derry on Friday, 16th September 2016. The event was held at the Cultúrlann Ui Chanáin on Great James' Street, where the launch of Emmet O'Connor's latest installment of his labour history of the city was also held on the evening.

Winnie Carney played an important role during the events of Easter Week, 1916, and was a close confidant of Connolly’s at that time. She entered the GPO armed with a typewriter and a revolver. She was given the rank of adjutant, despite her non-combatant status and remained with Connolly until the final retreat. Her political and activist career extended beyond nationalist activities. She was an active trade unionist and was a founder member of the Irish Women Workers’ Union in 1912. She was also involved in the suffrage movement and was later active in Sinn Féin, the Labour Party and the Belfast Socialist Party.

The second volume of Emmet O’Connor’s Derry Labour in the Age of Agitation was launched on the same evening. This installment of the local labour history traces the advent and impact of Larkin and Larkinism on the city’s workers, and highlights the role of labour during a time of great upheaval in the city. The roles of James McCarron and Peadar O'Donnell - two pivotal, but very different figures in the city's history - are traced through the events of the 1910s and early 1920s. The book launch and Helga Woggon's talk were both hosted by the Derry Trades Union Council.

The inaugural Derry Radical Book Fair was held on Saturday 28th January as part of the annual programme of events to mark Bloody Sunday. Stall holders and book buyers from across Derry, Donegal, Tyrone, and beyond attended the fair, which was held at the Pilot’s Row Centre on Rossville Street. A spokesperson for the Radical Bookfair Collective stated:

“The day itself was a brilliant success judging by the numbers it attracted...There really was a fantastic mix of books and independent publications for every type of interest from books relating to political theories such as titles on socialism to republicanism, feminism to anarchism, queer or gender politics right through to a wide range of both local and national social and political history.”

Talks were delivered by local authors Emmet O’Connor and Dave Duggan. The organisers hope to continue the event into the future.

Finally, the Charlie Donnelly Winter School was held in Dungannon over the weekend of 24-25 February. The events of the weekend were focused on and inspired by the life and works of the revolutionary socialist poet and Spanish Civil War veteran, who was born in Dungannon in 1914. An extensive programme of events saw contributions from historians and political activists from Ireland and Spain including Fearghal McCluskey, Brian Hanley, Manus O'Riordan, Bernadette McAliskey, Tommy McKearney, Declan Bree, and George Galloway, amongst many others.

If you have news of labour history events in your area please get in touch with the society by emailing secretary@irishlabourhistorysociety.com. The editors will endeavour to include news of upcoming events and reports of past events where space permits.
NEW LABOUR HISTORY BOOKLETS BY ILHS
MAINSTAY CHARLES CALLAN

The ILHS Archives was happy to recently receive donated copies of privately published labour history booklets written by Charles Callan.

Callan's second booklet, *Labour in Kingstown 1890-1920*, was printed in September 2016, and at 86 pages in length is almost three times the size of the author's other volume. Containing a useful index and some eye-catching photographs and cartoons, the work features a series of essays by Callan on 'the general position of workers and their organisations in Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire) before labour entered electoral politics on an organised basis in 1920'.

As well as donating copies to the ILHS Archives, the author has privately circulated his two works to local libraries, as well as 'labour movement and fraternal organisations and interested individuals'. Callan is a former committee member (1977-79, 1983, 2001, 2008-09), Vice-President (1980), President (1981-2), Secretary (1987-2000) and Treasurer (2001-02) of the ILHS.

SAOTHAR WELCOMES NEW EDITORS

Dr Martin Maguire (DKIT) and Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley (NUIG) are the editors of *Saothar* 42.

The Irish Labour History Society is pleased to announce that this year's issue of *Saothar*, its annual journal, will be co-edited by Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley of NUI Galway and Dr Martin Maguire of Dundalk Institute of Technology. *Saothar* 42 will be launched at the society's AGM on 8th April 2017, and will be available to collect from Beggars Bush or posted to all current members of the society.

This year's issue contains the usual blend of articles, document studies, essays, correspondence and reviews. Articles include Brian Hanley's look at popular responses to Bloody Sunday and the conflict in Northern Ireland between 1969-72, Mary Jones' examination of labour and childhood in pre-Famine Ireland, Ruairi Gallager's case study of inter-union rivalry in Watt's Distilleries Derry in 1920-21, Elaine Sugrue's analysis of gender and the Irish Drapers' Assistants' Union, and Kieran McNulty's piece on working-class radicalism in Kerry during the era of the Irish Revolution. Also included in *Saothar* 42 is an essay by Emmet O'Connor on Ireland and the Russian Revolution, a biographical entry on Irish-Scottish labour organiser Edward McHugh by Andrew G. Newby, and a report by Francis Devine on the Military Archives of Ireland's 'Medal Series (1916-21)' currently being made available online via www.militaryarchives.ie.

Back issues of *Saothar*, including last year's landmark *Saothar* 41 Easter Rising special co-edited by Sarah-Anne Buckley, Brian Hanley and Francis Devine, can be purchased at the Irish Labour History Society Archives in Beggars Bush, or online by clicking on the 'Publications' link on irishlabourhistorysociety.com.
Recent Labour History Events

The Irish Labour History Society was delighted to stage a Glasgow launch of Saothar 41, its bumper journal issue dedicated to the 1916 Easter Rising, at the Scottish Trades Union Congress headquarters of 333 Woodlands Road on Saturday 5th November 2016. Coming on the back of successful Dublin and Belfast launches of the journal, this saw ILHS President Jack McGinley and Francis Devine, one of its three guest editors, speak about the society and issue contents respectively. The event was organised by the 1916 Rising Centenary Committee – Scotland, with their secretary Stevie Coyle and chair Maggie Chetty joining the panel.

Many discounted copies of Saothar 41 and other ILHS publications were purchased on the night, which also included a multimedia presentation about James Connolly and 1916 featuring songs, spoken word and images by Jimmy Ross and Finlay Allison. Additionally, there was the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to James Fearon (1874-1924), an unsung hero of the modern Irish and Scottish labour movements, by Phelim Jennings of SIPTU’s Newry Branch and Jennifer McCarey of Glasgow Trades Council. This plaque unveiling was a joint initiative between the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, SIPTU and the STUC.

GLASGOW LAUNCH OF SAOTHAR AND JAMES FEARON PLAQUE UNVEILING

Above: Jack McGinley, Maggie Chetty, Francis Devine, and Stevie Coyle (Photograph: Phelim Jennings)

UNVEILING OF GRALTON MONUMENT

President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina with members of the Gralton Commemorative Committee (including, third from left, ILHS committee member John Feely) at the unveiling of the Jimmy Gralton Monument in the Leitrim town of Effrinagh, near Carrick-on-Shannon, on Saturday 3rd September 2016. In a moving ceremony held at the site of Gralton’s ‘Pearse Connolly Hall,’ made famous by Ken Loach’s 2014 film Jimmy’s Hall, President Higgins acknowledged ‘the wrongful intimidation and ultimate deportation by an abuse of the law, of Jimmy Gralton, to whose memory, and whose family, an apology is due.’ The ILHS was among those to make a financial donation towards the building of the monument.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

You can now buy or renew your ILHS membership for 2017 at www.irishlabourhistorysociety.com