

Manus O'Riordan

The death has been announced of the retired staff member of the ITGWU and SIPTU veteran Manus O'Riordan. An economist for both unions he was the son of the late Michael O'Riordan former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI). Manus was a long time member of the Irish Labour History Society and had spoken at several ILHS events over the years. He was a regular singer at SIPTU's Cle Club and the Howth Singing Circle and at one of the last times I heard him sing he did so in three languages, including Yiddish.

He had travelled to Spain on a number of occasions to remember the work of the International Brigade fighting Franco's fascism, of which his late father was a member and he shared platforms with his father, Jack Larkin Jones and many other veterans of that period including Peter O'Connor.

He had also travelled on three occasions with the SIPTU Solidarity with Cuba Forum (SSWCF) and on one occasion with his son Luke and was always a member of the cadre delegation to meet senior Communist Party Officials, ICAP and the Cuban Trades Union Confederation (CTC). He had been a member of the SSWCF from its inception. He had of course been to Cuba earlier before the coming in to being of the SSWCF.

I had spoken to Manus in person twice this year the first on the occasion of the SSWCF event on the Rosie Hackett Bridge on the eve of the UN General Assembly vote on the US Blockade of Cuba, when he told me he intended to return again to Cuba with his son and grandchildren in 2022 when Covid was in the past.

The second and last time I saw him was in Hedigans pub, near Cross Guns Bridge along with Ed Penrose, treasurer ILHS, after Rayner Lysaghts funeral ceremony, when he was in great form, talking about past events and looking forward to seeing Bohemians in the flesh shortly.

Manus was also a great writer and among some of the pieces that I have read and enjoyed by him have been:

The Voice of a Thinking Intelligent Movement: James Larkin Junior and the Ideological Modernisation of Irish Trade Unionism- Studies in Irish Labour History 2 ,2001

James Connolly, Liberty Hall & The 1916 Rising, - Studies in Irish Labour History 11,2006

Irish Solidarity with Cuba Libre A Fenian Account of the First Cuban War of Independence, SIPTU

Sons of Ireland, Citizens of the World, Max and Maurice Levitas, in *Left Lives in 20th Century Ireland Volume 3, Communist Lives,* Umiskin Press, April 2020

I enjoyed Manus's company immensely and one of the fondest memories I will treasure was on the eve of our departure from Havana in May 2019 when he asked me to accompany him to the Floradita Bar to hear the music just a few hundred yards from our Hotel, The Telegrafo. We stayed late but still made it up for 3.30 am for our homeward trip via Canada.

To his family, friends, CPI members & associates, and his continuing & retired colleagues in SIPTU our deepest condolence.

A Life well lived, farewell comrade Manus, you will always be in our thoughts.

Dr Kieran Jack McGinley
Chair SSWCF/Immediate Past President ILHS/Principal Umiskin Press