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on the march

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Congress targets bogus self-employment

A call by the TEEU for a clamp down on bogus self-employment was unanimously backed by unions from across Ireland at the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) biennial delegate conference in July.

The hard-hitting motion to the ICTU Conference was proposed by TEEU General Secretary Paddy Kavanagh. It demands that companies involved in the practice should be fined, banned from public sector projects and their directors barred.

Presenting the motion at the conference in Belfast, Kavanagh, called on “ICTU to work with all trade unions, compliant employers and any other like-minded bodies to stamp out the scourge of bogus self-employment and all other forms of precarious employment”.

He added: “These practices are not only a threat to the livelihood of workers but also to compliant employers.”

The other forms of precarious employment highlighted in the TEEU motion included unpaid hours, zero hour contracts and agency work.

Bogus self-employment is however seen as the biggest current threat to

the conditions of employment of TEEU members. Bogus self-employment describes a situation where an individual worker is employed by a contractor under the guise of being a sub-contractor for payment purposes only.

This individual worker must portray himself as a standalone company for the purpose of deducting tax at a

lesser rate when in fact they carry out the same work under the same instructions as a directly employed worker.

The practice severely undermines national collective employment agreements. It also results in workers being forced to accept worse conditions of employment which include lower pay, employers not

contributing to pension and sick pay schemes and no protection against dismissal.

The economic think-tank TASC has criticised the Irish tax system for facilitating bogus self-employment by allowing “employers” to designate the recipients of contracts to the Revenue as self-employed without consultation.

An ICTU report issued in December 2015 estimated that the State had lost out on up to €600 million in lost taxation revenue over the previous eight years as a result of a huge growth in bogus self-employment. The report suggests every bogus

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The problem of bogus self-employment is particularly acute in the construction industry.



Dear Colleague,

Welcome to the second edition of Fusion in 2017. This edition is designed to provide an opportunity for Regions, Branches and National Consultative Committees to highlight issues of interest to our wider membership and record achievements of the union.

As we go to press a number of important changes are being put into effect to improve communication, opportunities for participation and the democracy of our union.

From July 2017 a number of industry divisions have been created and

approved by your EMC these are the Private Sector, Construction (Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Contracting) and Public Sector and Semi States. A new National Consultative Committee will be established for ESB members providing them with a forum to address issues affecting our members in this sector. Derek Beegan has been reassigned to Region 2.

As many of you are aware Arthur Hall has been appointed to the Labour Court a significant personal achievement and the first former official from the TEEU to serve at the Court. I am sure you all will join me in wishing Arthur well and every success in his new and challenging role.

As result of Arthur moving to the Labour Court there will be a special NEC in September to fill the two positions made vacant by his departure and Derek Beegan moving to Dublin (Assistant General Secretary and Region 3 Secretary). In addition there will be a competition for Regional Secretary in Region 4 (Cork/ Kerry)

due to the upcoming retirement of Pat Guilfoyle. Pat has served the TEEU for many years and we wish him well in his retirement (more in Fusion 2018).

To assist with the continuing development of the union we are currently recruiting two new Recruitment and Organising Officers who will focus their efforts on supporting our Civil and Mechanical / Electrical Construction officials in organising and servicing our members in these sectors.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and record our appreciation to all our lay shop floor and branch representatives who everyday work hard in the interest of our members and the union.

PADDY KAVANAGH
TEEU - UCATT

Continued from page 1

self-employed worker equated to a loss of €2,886 in PRSI payments to the exchequer each year. It also found that there were over 27,600 sole traders operating in the construction sector.

The TEEU is already running a major campaign against the practice in which members are called upon to notify the union when they become aware of cases of bogus self-employment.

TEEU Regional Secretary, Sean Heading, said: "The TEEU are coming after those contractors who use bogus-self-employment to undermine our agreements. If you have been unfortunate enough to get sucked into one of these jobs or you decided to take a job so that you can tackle the problem, then you need to contact the union's confidential hotline on 01 8719 903."

He added: "Remember, if your employer has agency workers or bogus self-employed on site it's only a matter of time before your job is under threat."

Contractor/Construction Site Awareness Campaign

A Contractor/Construction Site Awareness Campaign has been launched so that no matter where you work you can become involved in the important task of ensuring that all our union members enjoy proper terms and conditions.

TEEU National Construction Official (Mechanical and Electrical Contracting Sector), Brian Nolan, said: "At the beginning of the year we welcomed our brothers and sisters from UCATT by launching an awareness campaign which highlighted the fact that we are now one large union. The campaign saw Officials and Organisers take to construction sites all over the country. This had a huge impact, not only in spreading the word to workers but also in the amount of new members that sought to be part of Ireland's largest craft union.

"We are now launching a wider campaign to assist the organisation of workers, in a joint venture

between TEEU/UCATT and SIPTU under the auspices of the TUF.

"Currently, membership is growing. However, our strength is undoubtedly undermined by the presence of 'non-union' labour whether it be our colleagues or contractors who walk in the door.

"It is now our intention to reach out to all employments to assist in targeting contractors, facility management companies and any outfit which should be unionised and its workers in receipt of terms and conditions relative to their industry.

"Members are being asked to write a quick e-mail or simply fill in the form on the TEEU website when they see a new build or when contractors are undertaking work at your facility. This simple step will assist the union in more efficiently allocating our resources. Members relaying this information will not be identified in any way by the union."

The Contractor/Construction Site Awareness Campaign is interested in:

- New builds, shut-downs or extensions on government and publicly funded sites such as schools, hospitals etc.
- Contractors and construction firms engaged on pharma, chemical, transport, energy or sites in any other sector.

Brian Nolan added: "However, effectively organising our workplaces also necessitates members, especially shop stewards, asking their employer and contractors; does every worker (including apprentices) have an up to date union card? Is every worker in receipt of the nationally agreed terms and conditions of employment (this can be verified by the National Construction Official if required)?

"We must direct our efforts to protecting union jobs across Ireland. These efforts will deliver and this can be seen already in the Mechanical and Electrical Contracting Industry where membership has increased and pay increases have been won. These efforts have also allowed for applications for Sectoral Employment Orders to be put before the Labour Court because the TEEU is substantially representative of workers in specific sectors."

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TEEU: 25 years on the march

By Frank Keoghan

Union mergers or transfers of engagements can be times of apprehension for members and staff as fears of dilution of the ethos, craft or traditions of their union come to the surface. These apprehensions were present twenty-five years ago on 30th June 1992, when NEETU (National Engineering & Electrical Trade Union) and ETU (Electrical Trades Union) merged to form TEEU.

Nevertheless, the unified union was quickly viewed as a success largely due to a consciousness of the sensitivities surrounding the merger. It eventually led to the emergence of the largest craft union in Ireland, organising not only twenty-three of the twenty-five designated trades but also numerous other categories of workers.

The NEETU and ETU had harboured a deep suspicion of each other and competition for members had been intense – particularly for electricians. The merger took place against a background of alleged assaults in one of the unions, difficulties in conducting the merger ballot, High Court actions accompanied by bench warrants, complaints to the Registrar of Friendly Societies and finally, a stand-off at 6 Gardiner Row involving Gardaí on the day of the merger. Many of these problems arose from inadequate legislation governing the merger of trade unions.

Both the ETU and NEETU had evolved directly from the IES&FTU (Irish Engineering, Shipbuilding and Foundry Trades Union) which was formed in May 1920. This union was headquartered at 6 Gardiner Row, which in 1920 was also the headquarters of the Dublin Brigade of the IRA and its Active Service Unit. The ETU (I) was formed when electricians broke from this union in 1923.

Another split from IES&FTU – led to the formation of the IEI&ETU (Irish Engineering Industrial & Electrical Trades Union) in 1924. In 1966, the National Engineering and Electrical Trade Union (NEETU) was formed from this and another smaller union but the merger was not formally finalised until 1973 due to protracted court actions.

The lessons learned from the merger were valuable for both the new union and for the legislature and in the latter instance, led to the 1975 Trade Union Act governing trade union mergers.

In 1989, NEETU initially approached a number of British-based unions with a view to merging with them, in particular, the then new MSF union. However, following an approach from the ETU, the union's leadership decided to exhaust that possibility before pursuing the British option.

One might have predicted a disastrous future for the TEEU but, for the first year, under the guidance of two Joint General Presidents – Gary Browne and Joe Carter - and the General Secretary, Frank O'Reilly and with the full support of the merged NEC, the new union quickly got down to work.

Now in this anniversary year as we welcome our colleagues from UCATT



we enter a new era and plan a change of name for our union at our forthcoming National Executive Council meeting in September. Our members may remain assured that the union, having learned the lessons of a

difficult (some said impossible) merger a quarter of a century ago, resolutely continues to fight to improve all its members' terms and conditions of employment and is determined to continue to grow.

Guarded welcome for proposed construction SEO

A Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) for the construction industry, which is expected to come into force this autumn, was given a “guarded welcome” by TEEU representatives.

TEEU General Secretary, Paddy Kavanagh, said: “The TEEU welcomes the prospect of the potential pay increase that may arise for our members across all construction grades as part of this new SEO.

“However, it is too early for members to start celebrating just yet. There are outstanding issues to be addressed relating to remuneration, travel time, pension/sick pay and mortality benefit schemes. We will be examining the details of the SEO very carefully to ensure members benefit fully from the resurgence of activity within the construction sector.”

He added: “Nevertheless, the SEO is proof of just what can be achieved by unions working together as the TEEU and UCATT demonstrated earlier this year. This strategic initiative was a development that has clearly shown construction unions are on the offensive, combining their resources to pursue joint common objectives.”

The new SEO derives from a claim for a pay increase which was heard by the Labour Court on 26th June. The claim was pursued at the Labour Court by all the unions in the ICTU Construction Industry Committee (CIC).

The SEO will set legally binding minimum rates and improved working conditions which must be provided by all employers in the industry. It will protect unionised employments from under cutting by non-union labour.

The Labour Court has recommended that the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation establish a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) for construction workers to include the following rates of pay:

Craft Rate €18.93 (+10% on existing rate)

Grade A/Cat 2 (Technical Operative) €18.36 (+10%)

Grade B & C/Cat 1 (Skilled & Semi-Skilled Operative) €17.04 (+ 9 - 10%)

New Entrant Worker €13.77 (No change)

A bright spark joins the Labour Court

After nearly four decades successfully organising workers, first as a union activist then official, former TEEU Assistant General Secretary, Arthur Hall, took up a position with the Labour Court in June. The appointment was not only a great honour for Arthur but also the TEEU, as he became the first former official of the union to serve in such a role.

Speaking to *Fusion*, Arthur outlined his career of union activism which began as an apprentice electrician with the ESB. “I first got involved in the trade union movement in the 1970s as an apprentice,” he said, “I organised the apprentices in the ESB into the union. In those days you were told not to join the union until you came out of your time [completed an apprenticeship].”

Arthur added: “I didn’t agree with that so I organised my colleagues. It was a matter of persuading people to join and getting the more senior people in the union to accept apprentices should be organised. There was then a very old fashioned attitude to apprentices that they should be seen and not heard.”

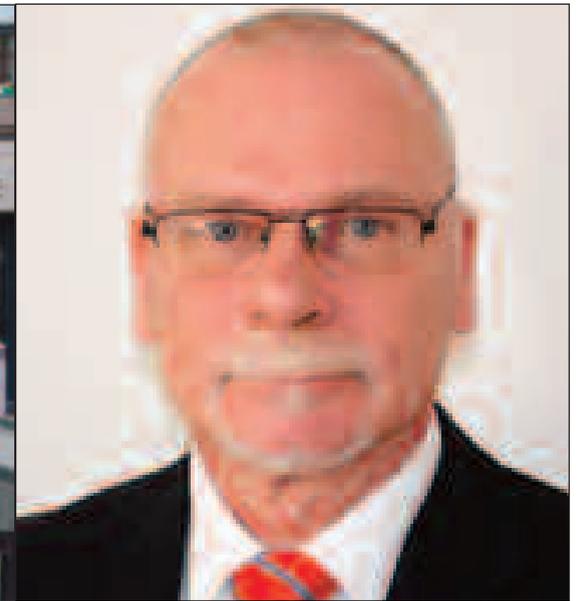
After working in the ESB for six years, Arthur joined Philips Electronics. However, his commitment to trade unionism soon saw him taking up a position as an official for the Electrical Trades Union (ETU), one of the forerunners of the TEEU. In 2002, he was appointed a Regional Secretary in the TEEU with national responsibility for the alarms and lifts and escalator industries.

Arthur highlights two successes that he was particularly pleased to secure during his time with the TEEU.

“In the early noughties I negotiated a national lift and escalators agreement with all the multinational companies in that sector. It was quite lucrative at the time when we secured it. It is a very comprehensive and good agreement which is still in place today.



The Workplace Relations Commission and Labour Court in Dublin



Arthur Hall

“It was also very good to be involved in resolving the ESB dispute in 2013 over the pensions issue. We managed to resolve that in a manner that

“There was then a very old fashioned attitude to apprentices that they should be seen and not heard”

was effective for the employees without having to effect the general public.”

Prior to taking up his new role in the Labour Court, Arthur sat on the Board of the Tallaght Institute of Technology for 12 years making him its longest serving member. He has also served on the Private Security Authority (PSA) Board for the last four years. Arthur sees the licensing system brought in by the PSA as another success. “It has been very good for the industry. It is regularising it and ensuring that people are properly qualified. It also made it possible for the unions and what was then FAS to create a brand new apprenticeship for the electronics security industry.”

Arthur believes the future for the TEEU is bright. “The downturn in the economy

affected our membership numbers. Thankfully, over the last couple of years, it is getting back to where it was due to the upturn in the construction industry.

“Things are looking very good and the level of organisation in the construction sector is also up. I think this is because when people have been out of work for a period of time, when they get back to work they realise the benefits of actually thinking collectively, it makes it easier for everybody.”

He believes serving on the Labour Court will entail just as much commitment as union organising. He said: “The responsibilities of the Labour Court have really been

expanded in recent years. Before, the Labour Court was just about trying to prevent strikes and get pay increases. Now it is dealing with more unfair dismissals because the duties of the Employment Appeals Tribunal have been absorbed into it, we also have a lot of equality cases, protective disclosures cases and others. The remit of the court is greatly expanded and fulfilling my role does entail a steep learning curve.”

Commenting on his Labour Court role, he said: “I do have to be objective but I was nominated as a worker representative and you should never forget where you come from.”

TEEU members back Public Service Agreement

TEEU members in the public service voted to accept the Public Service Stability Agreement, 2018-2020, in a ballot that was counted on 20th July.

Acknowledging the outcome of the ballot, TEEU General Secretary, Paddy Kavanagh, said: “We will work tirelessly to ensure that the important commitments contained in the agreement are fully implemented.”

Approximately, 1,000 TEEU members employed in the health service, local authorities and education sector will be directly impacted by the new agreement.

The key elements of the Public Service Stability Agreement, 2018-2020 are:

- 1 Pay restoration
- 2 Increased apprenticeships
- 3 Protection of new entrants to the sector
- 4 Direct labour being accepted as the preferred method of providing top quality public service employment
- 5 Best practice on labour law compliance, and strict adherence to health and safety standards on public service projects
- 6 Protections against outsourcing
- 7 The continued unwinding of FEMPI

Strength through co-operation



The Trade Union Federation (TUF), a strategic alliance between the TEEU and SIPTU, continues to develop, reports TUF co-ordinator Frank Keoghan.

The scale and nature of the continued development of the strategic alliance between Ireland's biggest craft and general unions was outlined at a meeting on 4th May of the TUF Council, comprised of the General Officers of both TEEU and SIPTU and fifteen members of the respective National Executives. The meeting was opened by SIPTU General President, Jack O'Connor, who welcomed the delegates and gave an assessment of the general economic situation facing workers.

The Council was then provided with a detailed report of the alliance's activities over the previous 12 months. These included the establishment of four Sectoral Committees - Training and Education; Manufacturing; Public Sector and Construction - which meet every two months to progress the TUF agenda in their respective areas. These meetings are followed by a meeting of the TUF Officer Board to review progress. The TUF Council meeting reviewed the main areas of activity in each of these sectors. A basic outline of these reports is presented below.

In his closing address to the meeting TEEU General Secretary, Paddy Kavanagh, emphasised the importance of intensified cooperation within the structure of the Federation. He added that a number of possible union amalgamations are currently under consideration and that growth in union membership is at its highest since the financial crisis.

The progress during the last year demonstrates the potential for positive cooperation between the two unions on issues of common interest. The TUF concept has been generally well received by



TEEU and SIPTU officials attending a TUF meeting.

members, who see the advantages of presenting a common agenda and of sharing information. All TEEU members are requested to cooperate with this initiative, which is entirely voluntary, and is not intended to compromise the ethos nor identity of the union.

Public Sector

An initial meeting for Public Sector representatives from both unions was held in Portlaoise. This was followed by seminars for Health and Local Authority representatives in Cork, Navan, Sligo, Galway, Kilkenny and Dublin. Arising from these seminars, TUF Workplace Committees have been established in Local Authorities in Galway, Meath, Dublin City and Mayo. Workplace Committees have also been formed in Tallaght, St Vincent's Hospital (Dublin) and Beaumont Hospitals.

Seminars on direct labour and on structured interaction with management have been conducted for Galway, Mayo, Dublin City, Kilkenny, Meath and Louth County Councils.

A leaflet on direct labour has been distributed and an information portal for the TUF Public Service Committee is being established, this will provide details of agreements, shift work etc. It will also highlight successes on issues

such as recruitment and insourcing.

The Council heard an overview of how the provisions of the Lansdowne Road Agreement might be used to combat outsourcing and attrition, laying particular emphasis on the commitment to the use of direct labour contained in Article 3.3.5.

Manufacturing

Seminars have been held in Dublin and Cork for union representatives in the PharmaChem industries. It is now planned to establish a TUF PharmaChem National Consultative Committee.

A seminar was also held for TUF Safety Reps in order to promote increased and active participation in safety committees. A number of Health and Safety seminars are being planned in order to establish an effective network. A TUF training day for Officials/Organisers on the Freshways Labour Court recommendation and its impact on collective bargaining was also held.

The TUF Council also heard a presentation on the challenges facing the manufacturing sector, with an emphasis on the possible effects of Brexit and the taxation measures proposed by the Trump administration. A booklet, *TUF Pensions Guidelines for Officials*, has

been published and provides policy guidelines for officials in the event of pension closure and other related issues.

Construction

The importance of keeping the Construction Sectors in both unions informed of new builds was emphasised. The establishment of a dedicated Construction Sector space on both union's websites followed by a poster/email campaign has been approved by the TUF Officer Board.

The construction sector is experiencing a significant revival and generic TUF site report forms were produced for use where only one of the unions is involved in a site visit. During 2016, a TUF contact poster for construction sites with a joint message and contact details, was distributed.

Joint activities in construction, which are ongoing, included site visits in the Dublin area with a minimum of three from each union in the field at any one time. There was also a two-week long countrywide campaign in January to highlight the unions' spheres of influence. TUF site visits were also arranged in Waterford, Cork and Limerick/Clare, including to the Moneypoint Power Plant site, and these were extended to the west of the country as opportunities arose.

"TUF sites" will now be identified, such as the new Children's Hospital in Dublin, where SIPTU and TEEU have the capacity to represent the majority or all workers. A targeted organising effort will be mounted in each case. Simultaneously, where both unions have "specific targets" or a shared agenda, the possibility of joint actions will be explored

Education and Training

Some difficulties were encountered in developing deeper cooperation as resources in the sector in both unions were depleted during the financial crisis. However, recent developments that have expanded capabilities should give rise to enhanced opportunities.

In the course of the year, a TUF Workplace Representatives Introductory Course was held in Hollister Medical Devices in Ballina, County Mayo, while a similar TUF introductory course was conducted at Rusal in Askeaton, County Limerick.

A TUF Negotiating Skills Course (four days) at QQI Accreditation Level 5 is planned for 12th to 15th September 2017. A TUF Trade Union Studies course, using the resources of both unions, will be promoted with a September start date.

The Council received an update on the progress of the revision of the very popular *TUF Guide to Labour Law*. The new edition is expected to contain approximately 45 chapters, including ones on new legislation. The *Guide* will be produced in a loose leaf binder for ease of amendment and to facilitate its use as a training tool. It is planned to have an electronic version on both unions' websites.

Transport workers lead the way

The history of transport workers leading the fight for better pay and conditions goes back to the 1913 Lockout. TEEU convenor in Dublin Bus, Jimmy Doran, reports that workers in this sector are again to fore in the fight against austerity and privatisation.

In February 2016, the staff of the LUAS light rail network in Dublin began the current push by transport workers against the austerity agenda, when they commenced a four-month dispute which would include twelve days of strike action.

During this dispute the workers faced many obstacles. Not least were the attacks of a hostile media which portrayed them as being extremely well paid for doing a job which was largely unskilled and

of worker. Strike notice was served by all five unions on the company in late August and over the next three weeks the workers conducted three 48-hour strike actions.

The Dublin Bus workers and their unions had learned lessons from the LUAS dispute and were adamant they were not going to lose the propaganda battle. In the days leading up to the strikes, information leaflets were given to passengers explaining the reasons for the dispute in order to effectively counteract the negative spin in the media.

Eventually after three full days and one marathon thirty-hour continuous negotiation session at the Labour Court, the five trade unions representing all seven grades of workers managed to secure an offer of a 11.25% pay

the financial problems at the company are a direct result of policy decisions to starve it of the funding needed to provide a decent public transport in rural Ireland.

At the same time, it has been government policy to remove restrictions on the issuing of licences to private operators to operate on the lucrative inter-city motorway routes. These licences allow private bus operators to run routes mostly direct from city to city, with few if any stops, while Bus Éireann has to provide a service connecting the many towns and villages in-between.

A high proportion of the people who travel on these services are pensioners, students, and the sick. This is what public services are all about and why they need financial support for the huge social value

between private operators never leads to a better service. Quite the opposite is what happens, very quickly multiple small operators are bought up by one or two large operators, creating a private monopoly or duopoly. Their only aim is maximum profit for the least amount of investment.

Once the field is cleared, the “inefficient” routes are quickly axed. Next the workers come under attack with staffing levels reduced as well as pay and conditions slashed. Low wages paid by private operators are subsidised by the state through family income support payments so in actual fact the taxpayer is subsidising the massive profits of private operators. Safety standards are also reduced to the bare minimum and the environment suffers as the cheapest vehicles are used.

If this privatisation agenda, to which the current Government is ideologically committed, is allowed to succeed large areas of rural Ireland would be left without a public transport service, and of course fares would rise.

However, Bus Éireann workers were not about to just give in. As in the case of Dublin Bus all five unions, including the TEEU, fought a united campaign to save the company from privatisation and to protect workers’ terms and conditions. After three weeks of all out strike, between 24th March and 14th April, an agreement was reached and accepted by all sides.

Unfortunately, a number of rural bus routes were discontinued but as part of the settlement it was agreed to establish a forum of all

“In reality competition between private operators never leads to a better service”

stake holders, i.e. management, the unions, the Department of Transport, the National Transport Authority and the Minister for Transport, to discuss and agree the future of transport in Ireland.

The first job of the forum will be to secure a Sectoral Employment Order for bus workers, particularly



Jimmy Doran

the driving grade, which will help to provide a level playing field between Bus Éireann and the private operators. It will also improve the pay and conditions of most private bus workers. The forum also provides an opportunity to put forward the case for the retention of the existing transport system in public ownership and for it to be extended and improved to the level required in twenty first century Ireland. This will require massive investment but more importantly a change in the mindset of politicians away from privatisation.

The scale of the attack on public transport is evident in the degree that State subvention to the entire system has been cut over the last decade.

A survey by Deloitte in 2009 (the most up-to-date available) indicated that already Dublin Bus had the lowest subvention as a percentage of revenue of six European cities surveyed;

City	SUBVENTION
Lyon	79%
Brussels	68%
Amsterdam	62%
Zurich	57%
London	39%
Dublin	29%

Bus Éireann saw a reduction of 35% in State subvention from €50 million in 2009 to €33.7 million in 2015. In contrast during the same period the subvention to Horse Racing Ireland rose from €45 million to €65 million.

As we go to print another battle is set to begin, this time in Irish Rail, a company that has also suffered under investment and demonisation in the media. As in 1913 it is only organised labour which can lead the struggle against austerity and the fight for better services, jobs and quality of life. As transport workers prepare for their next battle we should recall the words of James Larkin - “an injury to one is an injury to all.”



Transport workers march in Dublin in support of the Bus Éireann strike, 29th March.

condemned them for seeking an outrageous pay increase which it was claimed would damage the economic recovery. When the LUAS workers called a strike for Easter Sunday the company even threatened to replace the service with scab labour in the form of private buses.

Despite all this the workers and their union stood firm and achieved a deal which included pay increases of between 15.6% and 18.3% over four years.

The victory of the LUAS workers was followed later in 2016 by Dublin Bus workers launching a campaign of industrial action to secure their first pay rise in almost ten years. For the first time in the history of a dispute at Dublin Bus the five unions involved including the TEEU, entered it together as one group representing all grades

increase over 15 months. This was a significant victory for the workers and their unions, who had battled the management and, more importantly, their political paymasters in the Department of Transport for every penny gained.

Transport workers had won two substantial victories back to back, one in the private sector one in the public. These victories gave confidence to workers in other sectors who started to demand their rights. However, the government decided to fight back and it chose the next battle ground well. In 2017 it moved the fight to Bus Éireann and the rural public transport system.

Over recent years the media has demonised Bus Éireann as a hopeless case and a huge financial burden on the taxpayer. In doing this it has failed to point out that

they add to the community. However, Bus Éireann receives only 40% of the cost of carrying people with social welfare travel passes from the exchequer. If the company was to receive the full amount it would add another €4.5 million to its subvention annually, putting it on a much better financial footing.

The policy decision to starve public services of the necessary funding, along with free-for-all deregulated licence-issuing, and the demonising of services and workers in the media, is the method that is used to prepare the ground for privatisation. The media spin is that the public system is not working and competition needs to be brought in to improve the service and reduce the costs to the taxpayer.

However, in reality competition

Further job losses at Bord na Móna



By Darren Erangey,
TEEU Regional Secretary

Decisions by senior management in Bord na Móna (BNM) to close its peat briquette factory in Littleton, County Tipperary, and move some horticulture production from its plant in Kilberry, County Kildare, to the UK, will result in significant job losses at the company.

The Littleton decision was made by senior management in early May without any advance engagement with the BNM Group of Unions.

Workers at the Littleton briquette factory were informed on the 4th May that from April 2018 production will cease permanently, a move management claimed would result in the loss of 69 jobs.

An emergency meeting of the Craft Group was held later that night in Tullamore to discuss the shock announcement. It was at this meeting it emerged that the statement given by management was incorrect. The truth is that the Littleton closure will result in 125 job losses and

could commence as early as September 2017.

On 17th May, the BNM Group of Unions consisting of TEEU, SIPTU and UNITE members, attended a general meeting in Littleton Community Centre. At this meeting, union representatives received a mandate from members to begin negotiations with management concerning the threatened closure.

The mandate covers a wide range of issues concerning the future of the plant and its workers that must be adequately addressed in any wind down agreement. These include securing a substantial redundancy package, possible redeployment and up-skilling options.

Following the emergency meeting, the BNM Group of Unions requested a meeting with management on the 18th May to commence negotiations. BNM management agreed, and the negotiations have been ongoing since.

Prior to the announcement of the Littleton closure, BNM senior management announced on the 23rd December 2016,

just hours before the Christmas Holidays, that it had expanded its horticulture business with the acquisition of a UK company, White Moss Horticulture. This enterprise is one of the most successful horticulture companies in the UK.

As a result of this acquisition, the production of some products by BNM at its plant in Kilberry will cease and be moved to the UK. This will lead to the loss of jobs within the Kilberry plant.

The BNM Group of Unions has engaged with management on this issue. However, there has been very few joint BNM Group of Unions and management meetings. Also, information requested by union representatives from management at these meetings has not been forthcoming.

The information requested includes what is the actual total cost to BNM of purchasing the UK plant, a figure which it is estimated could be up to €25 million. Engagement between the BNM Group of Unions and management on this issue is ongoing.

VACANCY: RECRUITMENT & COMPLIANCE OFFICER (X2)

JOB TITLE: Recruitment & Compliance officer
REPORTING TO: General Secretary, National Construction Official(s)
WORK LOCATION: Principally Dublin, with some Regional Assignments

JOB DESCRIPTION:

- To recruit and organise Technical, Engineering, Mechanical, Civil & Electrical workers into the TEEU.
- To contribute to the overall recruitment and organising activities of the union.
- Engage in campaigns to include construction and the many other relevant sectors of the economy.
- To be responsible for delivery on agreed targets both nationally, regionally and locally in accordance with the TEEU's strategic plan and organising strategy.
- Recording the information by whatever means is in place at that time in the union (e.g. electronic or manual report sheets, geotagging etc.)

CANDIDATE SPECIFICATION:

EXPERIENCE:

- A knowledge of the construction industry (Civil, Mechanical & Electrical)
- A trade union background and experience in fighting for working people
- A working knowledge of Microsoft office, share-point etc. an advantage
- A knowledge of employment legislation and relevant national agreements
- Must hold a full clean driving licence

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

- While self-motivated has the ability to be a team player
- Ability to handle conflict, pressure and competing priorities
- Excellent communication and inter-personal skills
- Ability to be flexible in approach to issues and hours of work

Interested members should forward their CV for the attention of the General Secretary to Tamara Harte at tamara_h@teeu.ie by close of business Friday 8th September 2017

TEEU structure changes in the ESB



The union is undertaking a major restructuring of how it operates within the ESB in order to ensure fair sectoral representation for all members.

A new ESB National Negotiating Team (ESBNNT) is being created. It will consist of the TEEU National Official for Semi States/Public Sector (Sean Heading), TEEU ESB Industrial Officer (Derek Kelleher), the Chairperson of the ESB National Consultative Committee (ESBNCC) and three members of the ESB NCC. The ESBNNT will co-opt members for category specific issues and answer to the TEEU Executive Management.

The ESBNCC is to consist of representatives of each of the Groups/Sections the TEEU represents in the company. The NT Consultative Committee will remain in place, while a new Power Generation Consultative Committee will be set up with other grades that wish to establish a similar committee able to the EMC for sanction.

TEEU ESB Industrial Officer, Derek Kelleher, said: "As part of the restructuring a special TEEU training committee is also being established. It will seek to access the training needs of all shop stewards, committee members and safety reps. The aim will be to ensure that all TEEU members in the ESB can achieve the best outcomes in all their roles."

WARNING

RECRUITMENT AGENCIES BLACKLISTING OF WORKERS

By **Brian Nolan**

It has come to the attention of the union that at least one Recruitment Agency (operating nationwide) is actively blocking workers from taking employment with Mechanical and Electrical Contractors for whom they have previously worked.

On more than one occasion TEEU members have been told that they would not be employed by a Contractor because they had previously been employed with an agency and that the agency would sue the contractor if they ever employed this worker.

The "right to earn a living" is a constitutional right that the TEEU will fight to protect in the name of every TEEU member.

Remember;

- 1 The National Collective Employment Agreements for the Mechanical, Electrical and Construction Industries apply to all workers whether employed directly or indirectly through a sub-contractor or recruitment agency.
- 2 Any Recruitment Agency that offers a lesser rate of pay and then suggests making the difference up by paying "tax-free" amounts is not complying with the terms of the collective agreements. Furthermore, Revenue may come knocking on your door too.
- 3 Recruitment agencies are not in a position to provide the Statutory Apprenticeships to apprentices. Any apprentice looking to complete an apprenticeship should contact SOLAS and the

union before considering taking employment with an agency.

- 4 Recruitment Agencies must pay all entitlements including holiday pay, public holidays, notice and even redundancy payments.

If you are working for a Recruitment Agency report it immediately to the Unions Confidential Hotline by calling 01 8719 903 or email construction@teeu.ie

Also, discuss this with all your colleagues and tell them to join the union today as we are preparing to take on all non-compliant Recruitment Agencies.

Some of these agencies have polluted these industries with bad practices so let's do something about it. This is your industry so let's take it back together.

Update on Sectoral Employment Order applications:

- The Mechanical Contracting Industry application is in process. A case management been given to the Labour Court.
- The Electrical Contracting Industry application was made earlier in the year and submissions have now been lodged with the Labour Court. The Labour Court posted all submissions on the 17th July and these can be viewed on www.workplacerelations.ie. A court hearing will then take place in September 2017 (date to be confirmed).

JLT Ireland, your approved provider of home insurance, has enhanced its current offering to TEEU members.

Option 1 gives you annual home insurance with €25 cashback as a gift to you on all new policies taken out.

Option 2 is the new Multiyear home insurance whereby members can enjoy the certainty of a guaranteed price for two or three years.

MultiYear Home Insurance gives you even more certainty and security. Not only will you have the reassurance of our outstanding cover, you'll also know exactly how much your home insurance will cost for the next two or three years. You simply choose how long you want your cover to last – either two or three years – and we'll give you a guaranteed price over the term of the policy. Plus you don't have to pay the whole premium up front as we offer easy payment options with a low deposit and APR.

Our straightforward repayment options make it easy to pay your MultiYear Home Insurance premium. Simply pay a 5% deposit and we'll collect the remaining premium in instalments with a low APR.

MultiYear is underwritten by Zurich Insurance plc. Zurich Insurance plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Terms, Conditions and standard underwriting criteria may apply. MultiYear Home Insurance is available for owner occupied homes only and those that are claims free for the last three years.

Remember your family members can also avail of these home insurance options through your scheme by simply calling the dedicated number at renewal.



Fabia Gavin
Membership Services
Co-Ordinator

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TEEU members land a knock in Italy

Recently two TEEU members took to the boxing ring in Lucca, Italy where they were part of a "Dublin v Italian selection" in an open air tournament. Kieran O'Neill (Mercury Eng.) in his role as Team Manager/Tournament Organiser led the team. Kieran is the Secretary of the Dublin No. 10 Mechanical Contracting Branch and he is well known throughout the sport of Irish amateur boxing.

The guy delivering the knock out blows was our own George Bates (Apprentice Electrician and Team Captain). George is the current Irish No. 2 Lightweight Elite Boxer.

Facing off against Francesco Lami, George won by a Knock out in the 2nd Round helping the team to win the overall tournament 3-2.

Kieran O'Neill praised the entire team but gave special mention to George, saying, "We could easily see George representing Ireland in the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020."