

THE

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IN THE DOCK



'The Troika should be in sackcloth & ashes accounting for their sins...'

WRONG ON GROWTH

WRONG ON NAT DEBT

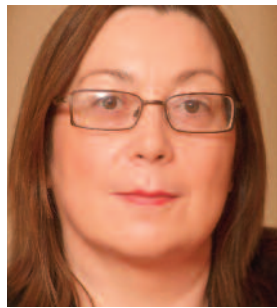
WRONG ON ECONOMY

REPORT PAGE 3



BELFAST MARCHES AGAINST AUSTERITY
REPORT AND PICTURES **PAGES 4 & 5**

Difficult work conditions can cause staff to misuse drink & drugs



Esther Lynch: new guidelines

CONGRESS has called on employers to recognise that difficult working conditions can contribute to drug or alcohol misuse by employees.

Legislation and legal affairs officer Esther Lynch encouraged bosses "to sit down with workers and their unions to identify if a person's job or the way that work is organised might be contributing to alcohol or drug misuse."

She pointed out that Congress had published new guidelines for negotiating fair and legal drug and alcohol policies in the workplace. Ms Lynch made her comments at

the annual EAP Institute Conference of health and safety and employee assistance practitioners in Dublin earlier this month.

She said: "Employers need to recognise that working conditions – stress, excessive work pressure, unsocial hours or monotony – may be a factor in someone starting to drink more or abuse drugs."

"This also applies in jobs where there is ready access to alcohol or where drinking and entertaining is a normal part of doing business."

She warned that disciplinary

action should be "a last resort," explaining that tribunals and courts may find a dismissal unfair "if an employer has made no attempt to help an employee with a problem where work factors are a clear contributory factor."

"What we need instead is a comprehensive workplace policy that offers support, not punishment and our guide aims to help trade unions to see that effective policies are pursued at work, to prevent substance abuse and help those who may have become dependent on alcohol or drugs."

Congress guidelines are available to download at http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/workplace_drug_alcohol_policies.pdf

Equality Act changes let bad bosses off the hook

THE TUC has warned that bad bosses will be let "off the hook" because of the UK government's decision to repeal sections of the Equality Act.

It means that third-party harassment provisions have been removed from the legislation enacted just two years ago.

Announcing the move earlier this month, Jo Swinson, minister for employment relations and consumer affairs, claimed the changes would "help strengthen the business environment and boost confidence by sweeping away needless bureaucracy and out-of-date rules".

But TUC general secretary Brendan Barber hit back, insisting that the U-turn made a mockery of the claim that equality was at the "heart of this coalition government".

He said: "Getting rid of third party harassment will make working life even harder for the thousands of care home staff, teachers and health workers who suffer prejudice and abuse from those they are trying to help."

"And taking away the power of tribunals to make recommendations to employers will make it much more difficult to deal with employers who serially bully and discriminate against their staff."

"These changes are in line with wider government plans to weaken employment rights and let bad bosses off the hook. This is no way to create the decent full-time jobs that this country so desperately needs."

Osborne's 'honey trap'

UNI Global Union general secretary Philip Jennings has accused UK Chancellor George Osborne of setting a "honey trap" for workers with his call for employees to give up fundamental employment rights in exchange for tax-free shares in the companies they work for.

Mr Jennings made his comments in a letter to the *Financial Times* in response to Osborne's speech at the Tory Party conference in Birmingham where he floated the suggestion.

He wrote: "Osborne's plan to give employees 'ownership' of the company is the kind of get-rich-quick scheme which led to the current financial crisis."

"Employees should be aware – if they fall into the Chancellor's trap, out of understandable personal need, they will be selling off labour rights for generations to come."

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Simplistic analysis of cross sector pay should be avoided

CONGRESS has welcomed new Central Statistics Office data on earnings in the public and private sector which it claims confirms the need to avoid simplistic analysis when making comparisons between sectors.

General secretary David Begg said the new earnings data illustrated the difficulties in "making straight like for like comparisons, especially as these often feed into stereotypes and caricatures that are of no help whatsoever to working people."

Mr Begg reiterated Congress' view that the key issue was not possible pay differentials, but the collapse of demand in the economy, the lack of job creation measures and the failure of austerity to deliver a solution to the crisis.

The CSO's *National Employment Survey 2009 and 2011 Supplementary Analysis* found that on average public sector employees had higher educational attainment, longer service, were older, and were more likely to be in professional jobs than their private sector counterparts.

It also found a narrowing in the public sector/private sector pay gap between 2009 and 2010.



O'Connor: unit cost facts

Picture: SIPTU



Begg: CSO data welcomed

Picture: Congress

Central Bank's 'cut pay' call slammed

SIPTU president Jack O'Connor has slammed the Central Bank's call for more pay cuts across the economy.

Pointing out that unit labour costs had in fact improved by about 19% relative to Ireland's main trading partners, he said: "The problem with our economy is not that wages or spending is too high, it is that consumer demand continues to fall through the floorboards."

"It is precisely as a result of the pursuit of this nonsensical approach which reflects an on-going attempt to resolve the problems created by those at the top of society through crucifying people on middle and low incomes."



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Union chiefs' action call on sex trafficking

UNION leaders representing workers from across the Irish economy marked EU Anti-Trafficking Day on October 18 by calling on politicians to take swift action to end sex trafficking and exploitation.

Voicing support for the Turn Off the Red Light campaign, trade unionists from Congress, SIPTU, ASTI, ESBOA, CWU, IBOA and the PSEU said: "We support the TORL campaign and believe the

best way to end the human rights abuses taking place in every county in Ireland is to target demand by making it illegal to pay for sex.

"We reject the notion that the traffickers, pimps and other criminals operating a sex 'trade' here will ever respect the rights of workers.

"Any suggestion that pimps will overnight become model employers flies in the face of reality and the experience in other countries. We fully

support the efforts of the campaign and on EU Anti-Trafficking Day are proud to stand side by side with the survivors of sex trafficking, their support groups and all others fighting to bring about change.

"Today we are encouraging our individual members to contact their local politicians and encourage them to take swift action to shut down a trade which has become the scourge of Europe."

BEGG'S BROADSIDE ON TROIKA RECORD

DAVID Begg has accused the Troika's "neoliberal zealots" of causing untold misery to the Irish people by wrecking our economy and acting in the interests of German and French banks.

The Congress general secretary, who led an ICTU delegation to meet Troika officials in Dublin on October 22, made his comments on the RTE radio show *This Week*.

Describing the whole basis of the Troika's intervention here as "flawed", he pointed out that there had been no growth in the Irish economy for years.

Mr Begg said: "Things have got worse. Austerity has made more of an impact than they [the Troika] calculated for originally and despite being in this for nearly five years now, the position is still extremely bad."

He claimed the problem was the European Commission, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank were wedded to a strict neoliberal approach to dealing with the deficit.

However, Mr Begg pointed out that the IMF position had recently shifted with an acknowledgement that their strict

fiscal consolidation policies had harmed economies at national level.

"They've changed their position on that and we regard the IMF decision of this week as a validation of the argument that we have made consistently since the onset of the crisis.

"But we're still stuck with the problem and don't have control of it, still stuck with the Troika and dealing with their particular issues."

Mr Begg said it was clear the Troika had got both their sums and their economic approach badly wrong.

"If we had had growth over the last few years,

that would have eased matters very considerably. The fact is we did not have it because the calculations the Troika made were fundamentally wrong and we're all suffering for that."

Speaking in advance of the October 22 meeting, he said: "I will forcefully put these views to them but, to be honest, you would have more success talking to that wall because they are a collection of people who by their own ideological convictions are neoliberal zealots.

"They can't see any alternative to the one that they have embraced.

"If everything was normal I would expect to see

the Troika sitting in sackcloth and ashes accounting for their sins and the damage that they have actually done."

Mr Begg called for the period of readjustment to be extended to 2017 and for an intensive investment in the economy.

"The government did move on this earlier this year with a stimulus programme of around €2.25bn over seven years. The work we've done suggests we need a stimulus programme of about €3bn a year. We need to see more of that."

He also emphasised that the debt issue had to be tackled head on.

"We have assumed banking debt as part of sovereign debt – that is absolutely unsustainable. We are never going to get out of this crisis that we're in if we can't get relief on that."

"I have to assume our government is making similar points because the fact now is that the IMF and Madame Lagarde [the IMF chief] in particular has taken the stance means that the Troika position is no longer credible and is causing more suffering than is absolutely necessary."



Picture: IMF staff photograph/Stephen Jaffe

Pointing to a new direction? IMF chief Mme Lagarde with IMF secretary Jianhai Lin at the recent Tokyo International Forum



UK regional pay 'thoroughly debunked'

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis has hit back at the "spurious claims" of 25 economists backing regional pay across the UK public sector made in a letter to *the Times* newspaper last month.

The letter's signatories claimed reforming public sector pay arrangements would both improve services and make it easier for private sector firms to recruit and expand – the so-

called "crowding out" theory.

But the UNISON chief branded the call "unnecessary, unworkable and unfair" and warned that implementing such a policy would be hugely damaging for local economies and "entrench economic decline". Mr Prentis also pointed out that a recent report by Incomes Data Services had proved there was little variation in the cost of living between regions that had not already

been addressed by "London weighting" pay. "These economists should not allow themselves to be used for political ends. The main reason behind the government's interest in promoting regional pay is a not-very-subtle attempt to hold down the pay of public service workers like nurses and paramedics."

He added: "The case for regional pay has been thoroughly debunked. It is unworkable, unnecessary and unfair."

Thousands march to show their disgust at Tory cuts

TENS of thousands of people took to the streets of Belfast, London and Glasgow on October 20 in protest at the UK government's austerity measures.

According to the TUC, 130,000 took part in the march through central London to Hyde Park, with thousands more making their opposition to the cuts clear at the Belfast and Glasgow demos.

The rain held off in Belfast as the noisy and colourful parade moved off from the city's Cathedral district heading down Royal Avenue, past the City Hall before arriving finally at Custom House Square.

There, up to 5,000 people listened to contributions from several speakers, including Congress president Eugene McGlone, assistant general secretary Peter Bunting and Pamela Dooley, chairperson of NIC-ICTU.

Mr McGlone called for "a fair, better way of getting out of the economic crisis" than that advocated by the Tory-Lib Dem coalition and their cuts policy which, he said, only served to "further impoverish our class".

He told the crowd: "We also

need to hold the arrogant, careless criminals who so merrily bankrupted our society to account for what they did.

"We say that the fairer, better way is about paying attention to our needs."

Mr McGlone described as "brave" the decision by Stormont politicians to debate the controversial changes to benefits provision contained in the Welfare Bill.

He claimed this was brave because "whatever comes out of that sausage machine on the hill" will be laid at the door of local politicians – pointing out it will not have been "imposed from Westminster".

"What they are creating is a Northern Ireland Welfare Bill. They are the people who will be held accountable for its outworking.

"So when they take money out of your pocket, they are doing it, it isn't Cameron – it's the parties at Stormont that are doing it. It's their Bill and we have to let them know that."

Echoing Mr McGlone's comments directed at politicians, Congress assistant general secretary Peter Bunting called for the forging



of "an arc of resistance" along with trade unionists in England, Wales and Scotland to "build a robust joint defence" of working people.

He said: "Let this rally today send a message to our MLAs and our MPs from all political parties that we the people are firmly opposed to the failed policy of austerity which destroys lives and futures."

On jobs, Mr Bunting underlined the need to protect what he called "the industrial core of our economy" by investing in skills and people.

"Always remember that each one of these jobs lost represents a parent not able to provide for their children, or a young person discarded in the prime of their career. These aren't just lost jobs, they are lost livelihoods."

Attacking the heartless policies

being pursued by the Tory-Lib Dem coalition, he said: "They don't care about care homes being closed. It will not be their children scarred by long-term unemployment.

"It will not be their elderly relatives forced to choose between eating or heating."

In her contribution, NIC-ICTU chairperson Pamela Dooley said: "As we approach Halloween, the nightmare is unfolding in a very public fashion. It is clear that since the Good Friday agreement a massive section of our society has been living that nightmare for the past 14 years

"Working class women and children in our society are being driven deeper into poverty and the government response is to attack their vital public services and the benefits system which is supporting them."





Bunting: 'we must build an arc of resistance to cuts'



McGlone: 'sausage machine on hill' must account for Bill





'Decent work fundamental task of unions' The cornerstone of national recovery

CONGRESS general secretary David Begg has described decent work as the "cornerstone" of any drive for national recovery.

Mr Begg made the comment ahead of World Day for Decent Work, an initiative of the International Trade Union Confederation, which falls on October 7 each year.

He called the creation and protection of decent work "the fundamental task of trade unions in Ireland and internationally".

"This goes to the core of what we do and why we were founded – to raise standards and protections for working people.

If we are serious about genuine and sustainable recovery in Ireland, we need to focus on the creation of decent jobs and decent work.

"You cannot build recovery on the back of badly paid, insecure and precarious work that drives people into poverty.

"The Decent Work agenda is about giving people security, the means to raise and educate a family and the capacity to develop their skills and knowledge, which aids competitiveness."

Mr Begg noted there was a move across Europe to drive down standards "to the lowest

common denominator" and to erode rights unions and working people had won "over generations".

He added: "This is exactly the wrong way to go and will lead to more inequality, rising poverty and a loss of social cohesion. The best protection people have is to join a union. It is no accident that the countries least affected by the current crisis – the Nordic states – are those which prioritise social protection and good employment.

"Ireland needs to learn from that example to ensure we don't repeat the mistakes of the past."

Check out short film on theme of decent work at <https://vimeo.com/50758264#>




Our call for decent work is more than hot air...

PORTUGUESE unions took to the skies on October 7 – the ITUC-organised World Day for Decent Work. Activists released hundreds of balloons in the skies above Lisbon bearing slogans demanding decent jobs and full respect for workers' rights. It was just one of hundreds of mobilisations and special events

marking the day. Official figures show that 75 million young people are without jobs across the world, many millions more are trapped in precarious work, and tens of millions of new job seekers have no prospect of finding work. The ITUC has described the situation as a "social and economic time bomb".

Picture: ITUC

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AIRLINE SAFETY

Pilots' union slams new flight time proposals

THE European body that represents airline pilots, the European Cockpit Association, has warned the latest EU guidelines on pilots' flying time "will jeopardise flight safety and have significant consequences for Europe's passengers."

The ECA made its claim after the European Aviation Safety Agency published final proposals on new Flight Time Limitations for pilots and cabin

crew. And IALPA, the ECA-affiliated Irish airline pilots' body, also attacked the proposals.

Safety and technical officer Captain Paul Cullen said: "Despite repeated calls for safe and science-based FTL rules to prevent air crew fatigue from endangering flight safety, EASA and the EU Commission are opting for a text that addresses the airlines' commercial needs, but fails to protect passenger

safety." Capt Cullen claimed EASA had also disregarded its own scientific evidence, advising lower levels of standby duty and flying hours.

He added: "This is the scientific evidence commissioned by EASA which it is now ignoring in order to make pilots fly longer." IALPA is also supporting the ECA's call for the EU institutions to withdraw their support from the latest proposals "without delay".



Picture: John Cheney/CWU

CWU aid convoy heads east again

TWO lorries packed with essential supplies set out from CWU's Dublin HQ last month headed for a children's home in Lithuania.

The vehicles, driven by two-person teams from An Post and Eircom, were carrying €20,000 worth of goods donated by union members and local busi-

nesses. They later joined a humanitarian aid convoy of lorries organised by the UK's CWU.

Supplies from Dublin were destined for the 400 children who live in Skuodas Children's Home, situated north of the capital Vilnius. Since 2008, more than €200,000 of aid -

clothing, medicines and medical equipment, household electrical appliances, furniture and toys - have been delivered by the CWU to children's homes and hospitals in central and eastern Europe.

General secretary Steve Fitzpatrick, pictured second from right, said: "It is a

source of pride to the CWU that despite the serious difficulties communications workers and their families are experiencing at home, they are still prepared to put their hands into their own pockets to provide humanitarian aid for children and other vulnerable people in eastern Europe."

ESA savings must go back to our schools

THE Ulster Teachers' Union has urged Northern Ireland policymakers to ensure potential savings made by the setting up of the Education and Skills Authority are re-directed to classrooms.

It follows the introduction of the Education Bill before the Northern Ireland Assembly on October 2.

The move will see the five existing Education and Library Boards, the Catholic Council of Maintained Schools, the Staff Commission and the Youth

Council replaced by one body, the ESA. Ms Hall Callaghan said: "We are on the cusp of one of the most momentous changes in 40 years but if ESA is the vehicle to secure our future of the educational system, it must be fit for purpose and adaptable to the needs of schools.

"It must not be allowed to become a bureaucratic monster that churns out targets and issues ultimatums."

She added: "At a time when education cuts are having a detrimental effect on pupils'

learning due to the squeezing of school budgets, an increase in class sizes, teacher redundancies and the closure of schools, we need to ensure that there are no further hold-ups."

Ms Hall Callaghan pointed out the streamlining of the Boards would allow resources to be returned to schools but cautioned that this had to happen "sooner rather than later".

"We need to ensure the money goes where it is most needed and will give the greatest return."

Hall Callaghan: 'greatest return'

Picture: UTU



PUBLIC SERVICE PAY

Irish public servants are paid international norm

A NEW report by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has exploded the myth that public servants in the Irish Republic are better paid than their counterparts abroad.

In fact, Irish public service pay is on a par with OECD and EU averages when local purchasing power is taken into account, according to the findings contained in the second edition of *Government at a Glance (2011)*.

The research shows that Irish hospital consultants and top central government managers – such as departmental secretaries – are the only public servants paid well by international standards.

However even then their equivalents in Italy, Britain, New Zealand and

Belgium are paid more. IMPACT official Bernard Harbor told *The Union Post*: "Far from being out of step with other countries, as is frequently claimed, the report finds that virtually all Irish public servants earn the same as their European counterparts when relative purchasing power is taken into account."

Relative purchasing power is routinely used in international comparisons of pay in the public and private sectors.

The report reveals that second-rank managers in central government departments are paid at around the OECD average once income is adjusted for social contributions and holiday entitlements.

This places Ireland considerably be-

hind the UK and US. The Republic also trails Australia, Austria and Chile, and is slightly ahead of Norway and Spain.

Irish middle managers are paid slightly more than the OECD average, while secretarial workers are paid well below the international norm.

The research measures the comparative performance of governments, allowing policy makers to benchmark their country's performance against that of other nations.

The income data is also adjusted for differences in purchasing power across countries, and establishes the relative living standards of workers in different OECD countries.

VIEWPOINT Don't believe pay hype P13

Picture: Labour Party



Howlin: Dáil question

New data shows under 2% earn more than €100k

THE proportion of public servants in the Republic on higher pay has fallen – with less than 2% earning more than €100,000 – new figures have revealed.

Brendan Howlin, minister for public expenditure and reform, released the data charting a changing pattern in public sector pay and numbers in response to a Dáil question by Joanna Tuffy TD.

The figures show that the public sector workforce south of the border now stands at 292,000 "whole-time equivalents" with the average salary dropping from about €60,000 a year in 2008 to €54,000 in 2012, inclusive of the impact of the pension levy. They also show:

- The percentage earning less than €60,000 has increased from 75% in December 2011 to 82% after March 1, 2012,

- The percentage earning less than €50,000 has increased from 60% to 68%, and

- The percentage earning less than €40,000 has increased from 38% to 45%.

Expressed as a percentage of the December 2011 employment figure, the single largest proportional decrease in employment was in the €80,000-€90,000 salary band (-42%).

In actual numbers, the single biggest reduction was in the €70,000-€80,000 band (-8,620).

The lowest employment reductions proportionally were in the €0-€20,000 (-5.6%) and €50,000-€60,000 (-8.07%) bands.

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Picture: ITUC

ITUC chief Sharan Burrow

Govts and IFIs must reverse course on austerity

ITUC chief Sharan Burrow has called on governments and international financial institutions (IFIs) to end the disastrous austerity policies that have driven the global economy into a new downturn, and instead to support a jobs and income-led recovery strategy.

She made her comments in meetings with IMF and World Bank officials gathering in Tokyo for a finance summit earlier this month.

Ms Burrow noted that the IMF's own chief economist had revealed in a newly-released report that the organisation's economic projections had underestimated the recessionary impact austerity policies have had on national economies since 2010.

Pointing out that 10 European countries had this year entered a "double-dip" recession, she added: "The IMF report confirms warnings that unions have made to the IFIs and the G20 for the past two years that premature fiscal consolidation would produce a renewed global slowdown.

"It is high time that governments reverse course and support green investments, funding of quality public services such as health and education and other employment creation initiatives."



Picture: IMF/Stephen Jaffe

IMF chief Christine Lagarde

Junior Cert move 'regrettable'

ASTI has described the scrapping of the "high status" Junior Cert as "most regrettable".

Education Minister Ruairi Quinn announced the move on October 4.

General secretary Pat King said: "While there is an overwhelming consensus that the current Junior Certificate needs to be reformed, it is most regrettable that the Minister has announced the end of what is for students, parents and teachers a credible, independent, objective and fair examination and certification system."

He pointed out that the Junior Cert was seen as having "a high sta-

tus" by students, parents and teachers. "Students from all kinds of backgrounds and with a diverse range of interests, abilities and talents are proud of their achievements in the Junior Cert."

Mr King also described as "profoundly disappointing" the manner in which the announcement was made "without consultation with the education partners, including parents and teachers."

He warned: "Education reform... is not something that should be used for eliciting shock and awe, but should follow meaningful engagement with the relevant parties." Mr King

continued: "ASTI is extremely concerned by the announcement that the state-awarded Junior Certificate is to be replaced with a school-awarded certificate. It would be naive to presume a certificate awarded by a school would hold the same status as one awarded by the state.

"The removal of an externally-based assessment model based on nationally established criteria - where written exams, project work, and course work are marked anonymously, outside the school - will impact negatively on the perception of impartiality of exam grades and on student-teacher relations."



Picture: Kevin Cooper/Photoline

Stormont lobby

Trade union and community representatives took their concerns over the Welfare Bill to the politicians' doorstep - the steps of Parliament Buildings at Stormont - on September 11



High stress levels among uni staff

A NEW survey of UCU members has revealed the extent of high-stress levels and long-hours culture at UK universities.

It found that the average levels of stress suffered by university staff was considerably higher than many other workers. On a range of 1.00 to 5.00, where 1.00 is highest stress/lowest

well-being and 5.00 is lowest stress/highest well-being, the average for UCU members surveyed was 2.51, compared to an average of 3.65 for the general working population.

General secretary Sally Hunt said: "We call on institutions to hear this collective cry for help and take action to mitigate the increasingly intolerable

pressure on stressed-out staff.

"As the survey shows, the problem has got worse over the past four years and with funding cuts, increased workloads and rising expectations from students and parents paying much more for their education, the situation is likely to become even worse."



Picture: CC Labour Party

Irish celebs back call to name new bridge over the Liffey in honour of Connolly

A GROWING band of Irish celebrities is backing the proposal to name the transport bridge over the river Liffey in Dublin in honour of trade union organiser and 1916 leader James Connolly.

The bridge from Marlborough Street to Hawkins Street is set to open next summer during a year of special significance for the Irish trade union movement as it marks the 100th anniversary of the 1913 Lockout.

Among those who have already given their backing to the proposal are singers and musicians Christy Moore, Andy Irvine, Mary Byrne and Frances Black;

actors Bryan Murray and Gabriel Byrne; comedians Brendan Grace and Brendan O'Carroll; poets Theo Dorgan and Paula Meehan, as well as artist Robert Ballagh and Dublin GAA star Alan Brogan.

James Connolly Bridge campaign co-ordinator, Brendan Carr, said: "The campaign has met with members of all the political groups in Dublin City Council and the proposal received a very positive response from all the groups.

"What we are trying to do is remember the struggle of the people of Dublin 100 years ago and the link we have between 1913 and 1916 is James Connolly."



Picture: European Union

Bernadette Ségol with EU Commission chief José Manuel Barroso

Social Compact for EU would be Nobel gesture

WHILE welcoming the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union, the ETUC has also called on its leaders to ensure social peace within Europe by ending austerity policies and moving towards an economic policy based on sustainable growth and quality jobs.

General secretary Bernadette Ségol said:

"This is good news and a welcome reminder of the EU's historical contribution to peace since its foundation.

"But we also need now to ensure social peace in the EU. A first step would be for a reversal of current austerity policies and the adoption of the Social Compact for Europe that the ETUC has proposed."

New report charts massive expansion in precarious work

THE negative impact precarious work is having across the world has been revealed in *The Triangular Trap*, a new report by IndustriALL Global Union.

It charts the massive expansion in the use of agency work at the expense of direct, secure and decent employment.

The number of agency workers more than doubled between 1996 and 2009.

General secretary Jyrki Raina said: "Employment via agencies, labour brokers, dispatchers and contractors is being used to replace wholesale permanent, direct employment.

"Its use goes way beyond any legitimate need to fill genuinely temporary vacancies."

According to IndustriALL, the defining characteristic of agency labour is a triangular relationship be-

tween the user enterprise, the agency and the worker.

It effectively isolates the worker from the enterprise that effectively controls their work, their pay and their conditions so that the worker has no say in any of them and has no mechanism to negotiate improvements.

The result is agency workers typically receive lower wages than directly hired workers performing the same work and they are excluded from numerous benefits and face higher health and safety risks.

Agency workers are also typically unable to join a union or bargain collectively.

Mr Raina added: "Employers all over the world are taking advantage of laws which allow them to replace their permanent workforces with agency workers in order to avoid their employment obligations."



Download IndustriALL Global Union's *The Triangular Trap* at http://www.industrial-union.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Triangular_Trap/agency_work_final.pdf

IMF admits austerity has damaged hopes for economic growth

THE IMF's recent admission that it has underestimated the impact so-called "fiscal consolidation" policies are having on economies "totally undermines" the political case that austerity is "the only path to growth", a Belfast-based economist has claimed.

Paul MacFlynn, who works for the trade union backed Nevin Economic Research Institute, pointed out the admission came in the latest edition of the organisation's *World Economic Outlook*.

Writing in *the Irish News*, Mr MacFlynn explained: "It was contained in a research note investigating the accuracy of short-term fiscal multipliers used in economic forecasts for advanced economies.

"Multipliers can have many different meanings but in this instance they describe the effect of fiscal policy on output growth.

"More intuitively they measure the impact that changes in government expenditure and taxes will have on

the economy as a whole."

As an example, if a government decides to reduce expenditure by cutting teachers' pay "then teachers will spend less of their income in the economy and this will have knock-on effects through retailers and producers eventually resulting in a decrease in the total output of the economy, or GDP."

Mr MacFlynn said the IMF had contrasted the actual growth rates for economies in 2010/2011 with what it had forecast before.

"It then looked to see what degree this gap is associated with fiscal consolidation in each economy.

"It found a very significant relationship – that large gaps between actual and expected growth are associated with large amounts of fiscal consolidation.

"The IMF is now admitting that it has substantially underestimated the damage done to the economy by cuts in expenditure and increases in taxation."



Download NERI's latest *Quarterly Economic Observer* at http://www.neriinstitute.net/download/pdf/qeo_pdf_final_autumn_2012.pdf

SQUEEZE ON PAY



Picture: TUC

Brendan Barber: long haul

TUC warns of 8 years of falling incomes

WORKERS in the UK are only a QUARTER of the way through a 12-year wage dive, the TUC has claimed.

It follows an analysis of pay trends carried out by the TUC which showed that workers will have to wait another nine years to get back to the income levels they enjoyed in 2009.

According number-crunchers at the TUC, workers will by then have sustained an average loss of £8,500 in real term wages.

The TUC research, which tracks wage and inflation data between 2009 and 2012 – as well as forecasts from the Office for Budget Responsibility from 2012 onwards – shows that UK workers are just a quarter of the way through a 12-year wage dive.

Incomes have fallen sharply in real terms over the last three years, as wages have failed to keep up with the rising cost of living.

The tough economic climate, combined with higher-than-forecast inflation, has meant that a worker on an average salary of £25,800 in 2009 has lost around £1,600 over the last three years.

The OBR predicts that wages will continue to get smaller until 2013, and that real wage growth after that point will be very weak – growing by just 0.5% a year in real terms after 2015.

General secretary Brendan Barber said: "The dire state of the economy has pushed down wages. Even when wages start to pick up again it will take years to undo the damage wreaked by austerity and high inflation."



Picture: CC Jlasica

These student nurses in the Czech Republic are all smiles as they start their studies. But the frontline reality for many nurses in Ireland North and South is increasing workloads with fewer staff to share the burden...

'Nursing staff are stretched to the limit' UNISON nurses survey flags up work pressure

A NEW survey has revealed the extreme work pressures being faced by Northern Ireland's nurses as a result of the cuts.

The findings, contained in a new report *Stretched on the Front Line – Who Really Cares?*, were revealed at the UNISON NI Nurses Forum earlier this month.

A total of 2,000 nurses from across the North's five Health Trusts took part in the survey conducted in June and July.

It found that almost six in 10 nurses across all trusts and nursing bands perceived staffing levels to be "poor".

UNISON's Anne Speed

said: "The fact that 59% of respondents expressed concern that staffing levels are 'poor' is extremely worrying.

"For many working within the health sector, this won't be a revelation, for them it is simply reflective of the ongoing cuts that are being made to nursing jobs across Northern Ireland.

"Since December 2009, the nursing workforce has decreased by 2% with a further 500 posts expected to be cut by 2013. The number of district nurses has also fallen by 8% over the past two years."



Speed: care being hit

Ms Speed insisted that patient care was being adversely impacted by the cuts.

"UNISON's 2010 report *Care In The Balance*

outlined that a minimum nurse-to-patient ratio saves lives and results in better patient care.

"Yet, this survey shows that 85% of nurses across all trusts and bands state that their workload is 'heavier' than three years ago.

"Over the past three years staff shortages, combined with changed skill or grade mix, has had a major impact, with fewer nurses treating more patients.

"Nursing staff are stretched to the limit. While patient dependency has increased, staffing levels on the wards have not matched this."

Download UNISON's *Stretched on the Front Line* at

<http://www.unison.org.uk/file/UNISON%20Stretched%20on%20the%20Front%20Line%20report%20Sept2012.pdf>

Postcode pay bad for NHS and schools

PLANS for postcode pay in the public sector are unfair and will be bad for NHS patients and schoolchildren in poorer areas, a new TUC survey has found.

Almost two-thirds of respondents in the poll carried out last month think that government proposals for regional pay for UK public servants should be scrapped.

Less than one in five of those questioned backed the move.

Under the plans teachers, nurses

and other public sector workers who live in less prosperous regions would be paid less than colleagues who work in wealthier areas.

This will in effect mean a long-term pay freeze for public sector workers based outside London and England's South East.

General secretary Brendan Barber said: "Apart from the obvious unfairness of paying a teacher in Gateshead less than one teaching in Gloucester, wildly varying pay rates will make it

much harder for schools in poorer areas of the country to attract and retain good quality staff.

"Similarly if individual hospitals are going to be told that in future they are going to have to set their own rates of pay, the time and complexity of the resulting wage negotiations, and subsequent problems with recruitment, as staff that can migrate to parts of the NHS able to pay higher salaries, could have a damaging impact on patient care."



Liam Doran: warning to govt

Removal of allowances for nurses would breach agreement

THE INMO has warned that any government attempt to remove allowances from serving public servants would be a breach of the Croke Park agreement.

Currently, the deal protects public servants' pay in return for their full cooperation on radical change and reorganisation of the sector.

The INMO argues that allowances form a core part of the pay of many grades in the health service and any bid to remove them would put into jeopardy continued cooperation with the change agenda in the health service.

General secretary Liam Doran told *The Union Post*: "The allowances that the government are now seeking to remove, for many grades across the health service, undoubtedly form an integral and core part of the pay of the staff in question."

"Almost without exception these grades, groups and categories of staff are in the frontline of health service delivery, and have already borne the brunt of previous pay cuts, increased demands for services and depletion of staffing levels."

"They cannot be expected to take any further cuts in their weekly/monthly pay and the government must reverse its current strategy on this matter."

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ASTI: Govt must stick to its side of bargain

ASTI general secretary Pat King has warned the Irish government that any bid to abolish a number of allowances currently paid to teachers would be a clear breach of the Croke Park agreement.

He said: "The allowances under threat – Island allowance, Gaeltacht allowance, allowance for teaching through Irish and the allowance for principals serving as secretary to a board of management form an integral part of these teachers' pay and, as such, come under the Croke Park deal."

"ASTI will not countenance a further pay cut for teachers and will challenge any attempt to introduce these changes."

Mr King added: "The public service unions entered the agreement in good faith and teachers have delivered everything asked from them under the agreement. The government must now stick to their side of the bargain."

'Rich spared while poor pay'



SIPTU home helps take to the streets of Wicklow Town in August

Govt must stop cuts to home help hours

SIPTU general president Jack O'Connor has called on the Irish government to stop its plans to cut vital services provided by home help carers.

He said: "These carers provide services to the poorest and most vulnerable people in society who are the most affected by the drastic cuts in home help hours. Money must be found elsewhere to meet budget targets rather than from those who depend on the home help services."

The government plans to cut 450,000 home help hours by the end of 2012, saving €8m.

This is in addition to a total of half a million home help hours which have already been slashed so far this year.

But SIPTU argues that such a policy

can only lead to increased costs for the HSE.

SIPTU lead organiser Miriam Hamilton, who is the coordinator for the Defend Home Help Services campaign, said: "Home helps around the country are telling us that they have seen reductions to their hours and that clients have had their care reduced."

"These workers need time to deliver quality care. Home helps know that neither they nor their clients can afford further reductions in hours."

Mr O'Connor added: "The policy of cutting resources for the poor and vulnerable while sparing the rich from contributing to economic recovery through a progressive taxation of wealth is no longer viable."

Mental health gains are being eroded by cuts

RCN general secretary Dr Peter Carter has warned improvements in mental health provision over the last decade in the UK are in danger of being eroded by funding cuts.

Speaking on October 10 – World Mental Health Day – he pointed out that people with mental health problems needed a great deal of support with their "physical health, their work and their family lives".

However, he underlined that mental health services were now "feeling the pinch due to NHS savings". "Mental health nurses are telling us that hastily implemented changes are jeopardising the improvements which have

been made over the last 10 years." Dr Carter said UK mental health charity Mind had reported that calls to their advice service had increased by 100% during the recession and it is clear that it is "more important than ever" people experiencing problems are able to access help.

He added: "Despite this, services up and down the country are losing their funding and struggling to survive due to budget cuts. We would urge the government to ensure that continued investment is made so that people with mental health problems get the help they need."

PHOTOLINE

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Picture: Mandate



Mandate chief John Douglas at home helps protest outside the Dail on October 18

€130m in health cuts 'preposterous'

MANDATE general secretary John Douglas has slammed the government following last month's announcement of €130m in health cuts.

The move will heavily impact on disabled and elderly people with cuts to home help and community-based services.

Mr Douglas said: "In light of the recent €600m bondholder payment to Anglo Irish Bank, the €130m in health cuts are

preposterous. With this move the government has truly targeted the most vulnerable in our society.

"It shows undoubtedly that their loyalty lies with the bondholders and not with the well-being of the sick, elderly and disabled of Ireland.

"It is unfathomable that €600m can be paid to bondholders, when the health budget is being slashed."



Cameron allowed Osborne to 'tank the economy', claims GMB chief

Unions lash into 'sink or swim' Dave

GMB chief Paul Kenny has lashed David Cameron for his "sink or swim" speech to the Tory Party faithful in Birmingham earlier this month.

He said: "As the economy sinks it is easy for Cameron to talk about swimming for those on decks of luxury yachts buoyed up by the £40,000-a-year tax windfall from his government to the multi-millionaire elite."

Pointing out that the IMF had urged the UK government to ease up on austerity, he said both parties in the coalition had "ignored the size of the knock-on effect of public spending cuts on economic growth" and allowed Chancellor George Osborne "to tank the economy".

Now was the time, he added, for Cameron to instead "steer the economy away from the rocks rather than talking about sinking or swimming".

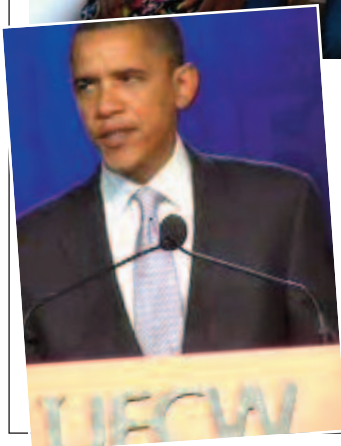
Meanwhile, also reacting to the PM's October 10 speech, Unite general secretary Len McCluskey said: "David Cameron says that we must 'sink or swim' as a country – yet, he has cut the life-belt for the millions of Britons struggling to find work and juggling to make ends meet with squeezed household incomes.

"Britain is the seventh richest country in the world and we have the resources to boost manufacturing capacity and provide proper jobs, high quality education and a truly national health service for all.

"Yet, Cameron's policies are designed to benefit a minority, when what we need is a manifesto of hope for the many."

Picture: UFCW

Meet Team Barack!



THESE UFCW members in Philadelphia are among tens of thousands of union members and activists from across the States who are joining Team Barack to get the vote out for the November 5 US Presidential election.

Writing in the current issue of the Mandate newspaper *Shopfloor*, Michael T. Bride, of the retail and food processing union UFCW, said: "Those on the right typically want to utilise divisive social issues in the US to persuade voters – the so-called po-

tent cocktail of 'God, Guns and Gays'. The UFCW believes that if the election is decided on economic issues, then it will be clear who it is in the interests of workers to vote for.

"Economic growth must be prioritised over austerity and delivering jobs for the middle class are more important than tax cuts for the wealthy.

"If these are the issues that decide the election, then there can only be one winner – President Barack Obama."

Unite appoints NI community coordinator

UNITE has appointed a new community co-ordinator in the North to mobilise unemployed people, students and pensioners in a bid to improve their local communities.

Robert Montgomery is one of six community co-ordinators appointed by the union across the UK.

Their role will be to organise at grassroots level, offering new com-

munity members the benefits of belonging to a trade union for 50p a week.

Mr Montgomery said: "Unite's new community membership will give people a way to come together to collectively take action and give working class people hope.

"This government has left people feeling they are powerless. With

Unite's community membership I believe we can give confidence to working class people and empower them with the union's training and learning opportunities and also through using our collective strength."

Unite's regional secretary Jimmy Kelly added: "The community membership scheme seeks to energeti-

cally engage and bring together groups not traditionally covered by trade union membership.

"We need to mobilise right across communities in Belfast to improve lives and take a stand against the austerity policies of the coalition which have brought misery to millions of people across Britain and Ireland."



BERNARD HARBOR examines the latest international data comparing the pay of Irish public servants with their counterparts abroad...

Picture: IMPACT

Are you minting it? Don't believe the hype on pay

THE IMF's brief discussion of international public service pay comparisons in its September 2012 country report on Ireland is just one interpretation of how Irish public service pay rates compare to those in other countries.

According to the IMF, Irish public service pay was 11.2% of GDP in 2011. This compares to an OECD average of 10.8%, or 11.1% for OECD countries who are members of the EU.

In other words, Irish public service pay is roughly in line with comparable EU countries as a percentage of GDP even before you deduct the so-called 'pension levy' (an average deduction of 7%), which is not included in the figures.

The IMF also made comparisons based on GNP, which is significantly lower than GDP because it excludes the profits repatriated by foreign companies operating in Ireland.

The GNP comparison makes Irish public service pay look significantly higher than rates in comparable countries although, again, it does not take account of the so-called 'pension levy'.

However, foreign companies are taxed on what they produce here, so any assessment of our budgetary options needs to take account of their role in the Irish economy.

By using GNP as a measure, you bump up Ireland's public pay figures by excluding a large chunk of foreign direct investment activity, even though taxation income accrues from that activity and helps pay the public service pay bill.

The tax income includes income tax paid by staff of foreign multinationals and corporation tax on profits which, alone, is estimated to generate about €3.5 billion of exchequer income a year.

In any case, all our Troika and EU targets are based on GDP. So it would be odd to take a single

aspect of the budgetary picture – public service pay – and base policy on a different measure from everything else. The IMF is not the only source of international public service pay comparisons either.

The latest, most up-to-date and comprehensive data on international public sector labour costs comes from the OECD.

Its 2011 report found that Irish hospital consultants and top central government managers – such as departmental secretaries – are paid well by international standards.

Cost of employing Irish public servants is about average when adjusted for price differences by measuring relative purchasing power

But, aside from these stark exceptions, the OECD report found that the cost of employing Irish public servants is about average when adjusted for price differences by measuring 'relative purchasing power'.

Relative purchasing power is routinely used in international comparisons of pay in the public and private sectors.

Similarly, recent Irish legislation on setting minimum pay rates in low-paid sectors (the *Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2012*) also requires that any international pay comparisons must take "into account the cost of living in the member state concerned."

The OECD says its figures capture the so-called 'pension levy' but not the pay cuts (also worth an average of about 7%) imposed in 2010.

Bernard Harbor is head of communications at IMPACT

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