



# LABOUR IN THE 'WAR ZONE'

**Class, Gender and the Independence Struggle in Munster, 1916-21**

**Saturday 19 October 2019. 9.30 am – 4.30 pm**

**Boole 1 Lecture Theatre, University College Cork**

All are welcome. Admission is free

## • PROGRAMME •

**9.30 Theresa Moriarty, 'Underpaid, underfed, hard-driven': women workers in revolutionary Munster'**

One hundred years ago women industrial workers shared a systematic pattern of exploitation. This talk will look at these experiences and political, social and organisational responses to them during the revolutionary years across Munster's towns and cities.

*Theresa Moriarty* is a researcher of working women's history, has published local, national and biographical studies of twentieth-century women workers, and has worked on numerous trade union history projects. She is an Honorary President of the Irish Labour History Society.

**9.55 John Borgonovo, 'The 1918 Food Crisis: unrest and militancy in Munster'**

The 1917 German submarine blockade of Britain and Ireland created food shortages. Amid concerns that Ireland was facing another famine in early 1918, a wave of republican-backed land seizures and cattle drives swept rural Ireland, while urban-based republicans and labour activists sought to retain food supplies within the country. This paper will examine the effects of the Food Crisis in Munster and explain why the unrest of 1918 pushed the independence movement away from social agitation during the War of Independence.

*John Borgonovo* is a lecturer in the School of History, UCC. He has published extensively on Ireland's First World War and revolutionary experiences, and was Associate Editor of the award-winning, *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (CUP, 2017).

**10.35 Pádraig Yeates, 'Advocating and Practising *Rerum Novarum* in Revolutionary Cork: Fr Thomas OFSC'**

From 1916 until 1926 Fr Thomas Dowling OFM Cap played a crucial role in moderating class conflict in Cork as Honorary President of the Cork and District Trades, Chair of the Cork Conciliation Board and Freeman of the City. This paper examines his approach to industrial relations and how he reconciled the conservative ideology of *Rerum Novarum* with the proto-revolutionary situations he encountered.

*Padraig Yeates* is a journalist, author and historian. He holds a DLitt from the National University of Ireland. His most recent book is *A City in Civil War: Dublin, 1921-1924*.

**11.25 Dominic Haugh, 'The Revolt of the Bottom Dog: labour, the Soviet and revolutionary struggle in Limerick, 1917-21'**

The Limerick Soviet had a profound impact on the development of the labour movement in Limerick. This development also impacted on wider society as the methods used by the strike committee were to be replicated in future disputes in the mid-west and further afield during the revolutionary period. This paper reassesses the impact of the Limerick Soviet in the light of recent research.

*Dominic Haugh* teaches History at St. Patrick's Comprehensive School, Shannon and is the author of *Limerick Soviet 1919: The Revolt of the Bottom Dog*. He is currently completing a PhD on the labour movement in Limerick during the nineteenth century.

**11.50 Mary McAuliffe, 'Gender and Militancy: Cumann na mBan volunteers as combatants in Munster, 1919-21'**

This paper explores the construction of Cumann na mBan women as auxiliaries rather than military combatants in most histories of the revolutionary decade. Using newly-released archives and re-readings of existing archives and sources it argues that we need to broaden our definition of what we mean by combatant.

*Mary McAuliffe* is an Assistant Professor in Gender Studies at UCD. Her latest publications are *We were there; 77 women of the Easter Rising* (co-written with Liz Gillis), and *Kerry 1916; Histories and Legacies of the Easter Rising*, on which she was a co-editor. She is working on a major research project on gendered and sexual violence during the Irish revolutionary period, 1919-1923, to be published in early 2021.

**12.30 Heather Laird, 'Radical Remembrance: revolution, commemoration and the roads untaken'**

With reference to the latter years of the revolutionary period we are currently commemorating, this talk discusses the importance of making the roads untaken in the past visible and remembering them.

*Heather Laird* is a lecturer in the School of English, University College Cork. She is the author of *Subversive Law in Ireland* (2005) and *Commemoration* (2018).

**2.30 Luke Dineen, 'The Cork Trades Council, 1916-21: republicanisation & revolution'**

Cork was an epicentre of the 1916-21 Irish revolution, in which organised labour played a central role. This talk will provide an overview and analysis of the Cork Trades Council during the revolutionary years when it was at the heart of the revolutionary changes that forever changed the history of the city.

*Luke Dineen* recently completed a PhD (a comparative labour history of Cork and Derry in the revolutionary years) at UCC. His publications include the co-authored *The Cork Council of Trade Unions, 1881-1960* (2019). He is currently researching the history of the Connect Trade Union.

**2.55 Mary Muldowney, 'Class and gender relations during the independence struggle in Munster: evidence from the Military Service Pension files'**

The Military Service Pension files shed valuable light on the activities of men and women who participated in the War of Independence. The applications describe the work carried on by volunteers but they also provide insights into the class and gender relations that were prevalent at the time and later, especially at the different stages when eligibility for a pension was expanded by legislative changes. The responses to applications also illustrate instances of class and gender bias by the civil servants responsible for assessing the merits of each case.

*Mary Muldowney* is Dublin City Council Historian in Residence for Dublin Central. She is the author of books, journal articles and contributions to edited collections covering a wide range of topics, particularly the Irish labour movement and working-class history.

**3.35 Emmet O'Connor, 'Munster labour and the independence struggle: a regional exception?'**

The independence struggle in Munster was paralleled by an upsurge of industrial unrest. Was there a connection between the two, and why were strikes and direct action in Munster exceptionally militant?

*Emmet O'Connor* lectures in History at the University of Ulster, Coleraine and has published widely on labour history, including *A Labour History of Waterford* and the definitive *A Labour History of Ireland, 1824-2000*.

Coffee break

Lunch