



TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND / AONTAS MÚINTEOIRÍ ÉIREANN

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**RODDY
DOYLE
INTERVIEW**

VOL.32 / NO.7

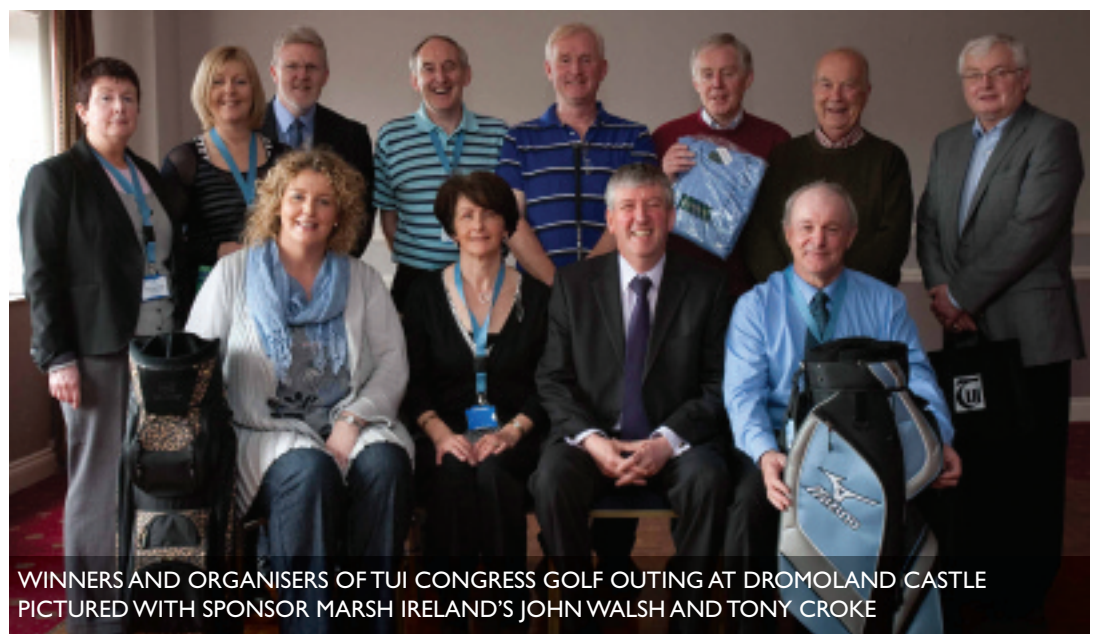
May 2010



ANNUAL CONGRESS 2010 – STAND UP FOR EDUCATION

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WINNERS AND ORGANISERS OF TUI CONGRESS GOLF OUTING AT DROMOLAND CASTLE PICTURED WITH SPONSOR MARSH IRELAND'S JOHN WALSH AND TONY CROKE



CONGRATULATIONS ARE EXTENDED TO VAL LYNCH AND HAULIE O' SULLIVAN ON THE SUCCESS OF CLONAKILTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE VEC SENIOR 'A' FOOTBALL FINAL AGAINST ST MALACHY'S HIGH SCHOOL, CASTLEWELLAN, COUNTY DOWN.



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Printed by:
Typecraft Ltd.



Despite the appalling prospect of the Croke Park proposals and the daunting situation we as teachers and lecturers find ourselves in, this year's Congress was of vital importance in demonstrating that we can still act with a common purpose. It was hugely encouraging that there was such unanimity on motions of vital importance to the future of our members. The clear message given to the new Minister by the polite silence of the floor was a perfect response to a Government that has betrayed us. It would, however, be remiss of me not to distance the union from the activities of a few delegates who only seemed to wish to draw attention to themselves at this high profile event.

We are currently balloting on the Public Sector proposals against the backdrop of teachers and lecturers and other public service workers having taken a hammering over the last eighteen months. We have suffered huge losses in income and the education system in which we work has been systematically destroyed. What confronts us now both as professionals and as trade unionists is a decision as to whether we capitulate totally or stand up for ourselves.

The so-called Croke Park proposals are another attempt to rescue the country on the backs of the education system, its

teachers, and public sector workers generally. The Government and the media are attempting to scare teachers and lecturers and other public servants into submission, to weaken their resolve to protect themselves and to accept whatever is being proposed as some kind of patriotic obligation.

There are no savings to be made in the education sector; it has been squeezed dry by successive administrations and especially by the budget of November 2008.

The only possible way savings can be made is:

- if we are complicit in inflicting further damage on our schools and colleges,
- if we displace our part-time colleagues by doing their work
- if we allow the dismantling of the limited promotional opportunities available to teachers and lecturers

Above all, do we want to be party to a sell out of the fundamental principles of trade unionism by engaging in negotiating away hard won conditions of service that generations of TUI members fought for?

The overall objective of Government is the worsening for all time of our

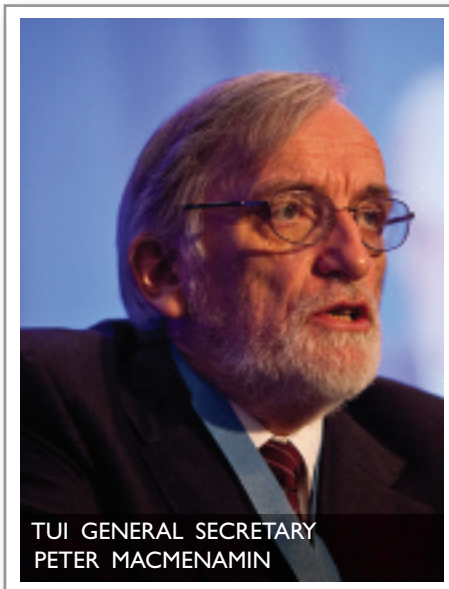
conditions of service and our contracts. There is no prospect in the foreseeable future of restoration of stolen pay and there is no a guarantee of no further cuts to salary up to 2014. The Government has an inability-to-pay clause built into the proposals.

Colleagues, reject the proposed deal by Voting "No" in the ballot or we will totally lose our credibility as professionals and as a trade union.

This is my final editorial as President of TUI. I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all the best in the coming months and years of what will undoubtedly continue to be a most challenging time for the profession and for workers. We have endured tremendous upheaval over the last two years, and the education and industrial relations environments look vastly different to how they did in 2008. One certainty remains though: it has never been more vital that the trade union movement in general and TUI in particular remain united and resolute going forward. Our very survival depends on it.



Don Ryan, TUI President



TUI GENERAL SECRETARY
PETER MACMENAMIN

“ You the members will be the sole determinants of TUI policy ”

Some of the main points made by TUI General Secretary Peter MacMenamin in relation to cutbacks and education resourcing, the Department's new skills role, apprenticeship issues and the sovereignty of TUI in his keynote speech.

Cutbacks and anger

The anger of our members against the imposition of both the pension levy and the pay cuts must be expressed, it must be focussed and it must be focussed against those responsible.

These cuts were imposed by Government. A Government which is now widely regarded as the most anti-worker that there has been since the foundation of this State: by a Government which has rescued the wealthy, bailed out the banks, cut social welfare payments, withdrawn special needs and language support teachers and eliminated book grants to disadvantaged families. It has, on two occasions during one twelve month period, unilaterally imposed pay cuts on its own employees.

This, colleagues, must be the target, it must be the focus of our anger and it must be our determination to ensure that this Government is brought to an end as soon as possible. Furthermore any other grouping with similar notions and similar policies must not achieve power in this country. This, colleagues, is not a party political position. It is a position based on values. Values such as equity, such as fairness and such as the appropriate sharing of both the good in the good times and the bad in the bad times.

Right now we seem to be in a new form of redistributive politics. Instead of redistributing wealth, noticeably not done in the good times, the Government has allowed wealth to be concentrated among

a few; developers, bankers and others in an inner circle. When they blew all they had and much more through personal, greed the Government squandered the nation's resources for generations into the future by distributing the personal debts of those few resulting in a liability equivalent to €12,000 for each individual, man woman and child in this country. We elected a Government that has done this! Worse still we re-elected them! Let's get real and say enough is enough.

Education under-resourced

Education is under resourced and the widespread cutting of numbers and of resources has no place in education in this country at this time. In as much as this philosophy underlies the proposed agreement we must oppose it. We have set a target of spending on education at 7% of GDP and have asked political parties to buy into this target. Some have.

We have said that the moratorium that creates a void in the middle management in our schools and which reduces staff numbers in our Institutes while student numbers grow is unacceptable and must be reversed. This must happen now.

Against a background of the ability to find money for banks why should any public sector worker do more for less? Why should teachers and lecturers allow for a renegotiation of contracts and commit to an additional weekly hour – even if it is non teaching – in return for no pay cuts?

TUI has had it confirmed recently by an independent research company that on average teachers work 43 to 46 hours per week. This is not news to you or to me – you are doing it, I know you are. It may be news to the general public. It certainly is news to Government and I warn that to push teachers in this direction will be counter productive.

Education and Skills

Colleagues, there is one decision that Government has taken in the recent past that TUI has welcomed. This is the transfer of the training/skills function from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment to the Department of Education. The new Minister for Education and Skills now has the brief to look after this enlarged portfolio, amalgamating the training function of FAS with Education. We have already met the Minister and have had very preliminary discussions relating to this.

We hope that this will not only bring into this area some of the resources formerly available to FAS but will also eliminate the duplication and overlap of effort in the provision of the necessary up-skilling and re-skilling of people, both in employment and on the live register. Our schools and our Colleges can through PLC and other Further and Higher Education programmes provide these courses. I believe that they can be done in a better manner than many of the existing so called training courses and that we can give appropriate and necessary qualifications with the courses.

Perhaps in the light of this development the new Department will remove the blinkers and stop seeing Further Education as a mere offshoot of second level and accord it the status it deserves. It must once and for all remove this ill informed and ridiculous limitation on PLC places and also fully implement its own report on PLCs – Mclver – in accordance with TUI policy.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship stands to gain potentially once it is fully under the education ministry. At present the apprenticeship system is an excellent system producing very high quality craftspeople. However it is based on consistent levels of employment and fares badly with fluctuating employment levels. To register as an apprentice a young person must first find employment, not easy now. They will then register as an apprentice and receive the necessary training and education with a significant level of on the job training with the employer, provided of course that the employer manages to stay in business.

The effect of this employment driven scheme is that as employment dries up the enrolment of apprentices plummets and the output of qualified trades people also dries up. This is happening now and the jobs of our members are put in jeopardy. Inevitably also, once the economy picks up there will be a lag in the supply of qualified crafts people who will then be needed to maintain the development of the economy. This happened in the '80s.

Why not reverse the process? Let a young person register as an apprentice, get the education and training in the same way as now along with the "on the job" training done by way of work placement with an employer. It is far easier for an employer to commit to a period of work placement than to four years employment of the apprentice.

This has many benefits, for the regulation of output of trades people, for the economy as well as for the employment of our members in Institutes of Technology.

TUI will determine own destiny

Let me conclude, President, by repeating the assurance that I gave to the Executive Committee recently in relation to an issue which has been of concern to many. TUI's decision on the proposed public service pay deal will be just that; a TUI decision. Nobody else will overturn it: not an aggregation of teachers votes; not an aggregation of public service workers votes, not the Public Services Committee of ICTU; not ICTU itself. The sovereign decision of TUI will be just that. Nobody but TUI has the right to negotiate on and to decide on the conditions of service of TUI members. There may well be a decision taken by the PSC in which we may find ourselves in a minority. So be it. We have the right to take our own decision. We will exercise that right.

As your General Secretary I will never allow a decision of TUI to be usurped by another body against the will of the members of the union. You the members will be the solid determinants of TUI policy.

Media Reports of Jostling of Minister

Most of the national media carried reports of the Minister for Education and Skills, Mary Coughlan, being jostled by delegates as she left the hall following her address to TUI Congress on Wednesday, 7th April. For many this appeared to be the lasting memory of Congress and while some broadcasters, most notably RTÉ, played the matter down, it did nonetheless portray the union in a bad light. Most media overstated the matter significantly.

The facts are as follows.

A number of delegates holding anti-NAMA posters left the hall in advance of the Minister and mounted a protest outside of the conference hall. At least one other delegate, perhaps more, left the conference hall at approximately the same time as the Minister to join that protest and, in doing so, drew the attention of photographers who were following the Minister. The photographers then sought to move into a better position to take

pictures of the protest. This then led to some of the Minister's security people also moving to protect her all of which led to some jostling. However contrary to reports, the jostling was not directed at the Minister and there was no physical contact made with the Minister by TUI delegates.

It is clear that the incident was caused by TUI delegates in that had the unauthorised protest not been held there would have been no such incident and the seriously adverse media comment would have been avoided. This adverse comment is regrettable and the Union totally disassociates itself from this protest.

The vast majority of Congress delegates treated the Minister with respect and showed their anger and opposition to Government policy by welcoming the Minister with total silence throughout her address.

Caller to RTÉ Liveline

One caller to the RTÉ radio programme *Liveline* on Friday, 9th April, following Congress, claimed to be a second level teacher and TUI member. He gave his name as 'Pat' stating that he was horrified at the attitude of the TUI and was resigning his membership. During the period of the phone-in, the same 'teacher' stated that there was no need to spend time preparing lessons and later in the discussion inquired how many hours does a second level teacher work during a week.

TUI does not believe that the person in question was a teacher and has received no resignation from any such person. TUI believes this to have been an imposter purporting to be a teacher seeking to do damage to TUI.

TUI President Don Ryan's response to Ms Mary Coughlan, TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills

7th April 2010

Go raibh maith agat, a Thánaiste. Ba mhaith liom fáilte a chur romhat féin agus roimh d'oifigi anseo inniu go dtí Comhdháil Aontas Múinteoirí Éireann.

Tánaiste, you and your officials are welcome to the annual congress of the Teachers' Union of Ireland. I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Education and Skills and I note that you are the first Tánaiste since Seán T. O'Kelly in 1939 to hold the education portfolio. For the record, Tánaiste, his tenure lasted only 19 days.

In my response to your address I will direct my remarks to you as Minister for Education and Skills and also as deputy leader of this country

I think it is important, Tánaiste, to point to the record of your immediate predecessor as Minister for Education and Science. During his term of office and in the name of so-called patriotism

- funding was withdrawn from disadvantaged schools
- grants for alternative programmes were slashed
- capitation funding for Traveller children was slashed
- book grants were abolished
- school transport charges were increased and
- language support was reduced

The main party of government of which you are a member agreed for politically expedient reasons to restore some funding to redress some of these shameful cutbacks. A school year has almost passed since commitments were made in the Revised Programme for Government to a full restoration of grants - grants for alternative programmes, physics, chemistry, music activities and schoolbooks. Where is the funding you committed to last



DON RYAN ADDRESSES CONGRESS

October? Our schools have not received a single cent of this vital funding. Neither has there been any restoration of language support teachers to schools where more than 50% of pupils do not speak English as a first language.

Attend to this, Tánaiste. Immediately!

As part of the systematic dismantling and destruction of public education in the last 18 months over 1000 teachers were lost to our second level schools. As we predicted a year ago, this has resulted in fewer programme options and the loss of subjects, particularly the sciences - an area your government continues to pretend to prioritise. All the rhetoric about the 'Smart Economy' sounds stupid when this is allowed to continue. The allocation of 500 jobs between primary and post-primary over three years is totally inadequate. Like most of what your department does, there has been no transparency in this process, and your department conveniently omitted the further education sector from the allocation.

You cannot cut your way out of recession, Minister. Our schools and colleges are understaffed and education is severely damaged.

Tánaiste, you must restore to schools and colleges their full complement of staff.

Your predecessor, who was reported to be the 'Tough Nut' and hard man of the cabinet, was responsible for these cutbacks. A minister charged with the care of the children of this country, as you are now, should not earn a tag more appropriate to a front row forward than a frontline politician.

Tánaiste, work with us, not against us. Work with us in an atmosphere of shared responsibility and mutual respect.

Tánaiste, in our meeting with you last week, we prioritised the lifting of the moratorium on the filling of promotional posts. These positions are the very backbone on which our schools and colleges operate. The moratorium has also dismantled adult education services. Adult Education Officers, Adult Literacy Organisers, Adult Education Directors and VTOS Coordinators are not being replaced.

Such provision is critical and it is pitiful that the Government has resorted to such insane measures. It confirms how far removed your department is from reality.

Minister, you have just announced a token alleviation of the moratorium but in many cases the roof has already caved in. You are now trying to prop it up with matchsticks.

Our directive, Minister, will still apply to any post which remains unfilled.

Our concerns about Special Education Needs provision and support for dealing with pupil disruption have not gone away. In fact, the needs have become greater. Public sector schools, other than fee-charging schools, carry a disproportionate responsibility in meeting the needs of disruptive and Special Needs pupils. Fee-charging schools take on little or none of this responsibility, yet you give tens of millions of euro to an already-privileged but exclusionary school system.

Tánaiste, so much for a just society. Give the resources to schools which meet their responsibilities to society.

Minister, let's deal with the illusion that teachers enjoy permanent teaching positions. Let me provide you with some facts: 90% of teachers employed in Norway and Austria are permanent teachers; the figure for Denmark is 97%. In our sector in Ireland only 68.2% of teachers are permanent and listen, Minister, more than half our teachers under 30 years of age are part-time. Let's dispel the myth, cultivated by ignorance, that teaching is a secure employment. Minister, we need a mechanism to secure the employment of current fixed-term teachers. Why, Minister is one in every three teachers part-time? Why, Minister, are there no permanent teaching jobs advertised any longer? We know the student population is set to grow in coming years. So why are our members on permanent probation?

Minister, create permanent teaching jobs for our young teachers and lecturers. You claim that education cannot be exempted from cuts but this is something you can do. Do it right now, Minister.

Let me advise you on two other major concerns we have in respect of our part-time teachers and lecturers. Firstly,



Tánaiste, we will not allow rogue and contrived interpretations of the Part-Time acts by employers and your Department's failure to prevent abuse and breaking of European and Irish law. We have already advised many of our members not to sign contracts which contain offending clauses. It is not good enough that we must resort to lodging cases with Rights' Commissioners while your department sits on its hands. When it comes to Whole School Evaluation and subject inspection, you're not found wanting in imposing regulation.

Minister, regulate the application of the law in this matter.

Secondly, we will not tolerate the race-to-the-bottom policy which is emerging of yellow-packing the teaching profession. We will not tolerate this insidious development which appears to be supported by your department, wherein teaching and lecturing posts are being downgraded. This is happening in the case of 'teaching-only' contracts in the Institutes of Technology and in ESOL, BTEI, Adult Literacy and Youthreach. There is no grade of 'tutor' in the teaching profession.

Minister, this is not a tutors' conference. This is a teachers' and lecturers' conference.

Your own department's position on this matter is equivocal, at best. Minister, we will not allow any new grade or title for qualified teachers and lecturers to be introduced as a device to underpay our members.

Minister, there has been a distasteful attack on teachers and lecturers in this country in the last 18 months. The latest example is the attempt by the Institutes of Technology Ireland to influence the Hunt Group in order to undermine the academic contract. There is an ignorant denigration of the Institute of Technology sector currently being engaged in by some ill-informed commentators in business, the media, and, disgracefully the Higher Education Authority. This undermining of the sector is designed to extract changes to our members' contracts.

The IOTs have made an immense contribution in this country to skills development, in particular through apprentice education. As the economy has declined, so has the number of registered apprentices. Minister, we will oppose any knee-jerk reaction to the downturn in apprentice numbers. We will seek to ensure that the economy has a ready supply of qualified apprentices. Cooperate with us, Tánaiste, in ensuring the survival of this valuable asset to economic recovery.

We have witnessed similar attempts at second level to undermine the role and public respect for teachers. We know, and you know, from independent surveys such as the Talis report, the OECD Education at a Glance report and, most recently, the Teaching Council survey that teachers in this country are highly valued. These reports show that the public can be assured of a high quality service from teachers and lecturers despite this government's failure to value and support them. What use to you and the public is a demoralised and angered teaching profession?

Minister, it's time to call the dogs off.

Amongst several issues that your department has reneged on, are the failure to honour Labour Court recommendations, including the claim for incremental credit under Labour Court recommendation 18366, the Cork Institute of Technology Rights' Commissioners decision and the Labour Court recommendation for directors of VEC Outdoor Education Centres. What hope do we have if a state department, having consented to a process of independent adjudication, now refuses to honour the outcome?

Minister, sort these issues out immediately.

Tánaiste, we welcome the announcement that the training element of FÁS will come under your remit as Minister for Education and Skills. I agree with much of what you have said. This will present all of us with many opportunities and challenges. We know you carry a huge amount of experience in the area of labour activation and retraining from your previous ministry. The transfer of the training portfolio to you will allow resources to flow into the Further and IoT sectors. It will also allow for the removal of the obstacles that impede the development of both sectors, such as the cap on numbers in further education colleges. We received unanimous support from the Dáil Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education for the removal of this artificial impediment and we expect you to address this immediately. We can be supportive and pro-active in developing and providing

reskilling and retraining initiatives. However, along with removing the cap on numbers, it is essential that further education is recognised as a discrete sector within your department and that the resources agreed in July 2008 are provided.

Tánaiste, I wish now to address you in your role as deputy leader of this country. I want to remind you why the delegates here today and all of our members are seething with anger. Their pay has been cut on two occasions. Their pensions are threatened. The education service in which they work has been decimated. And you are now telling us that worse could come.

This is an outrage, Minister. If your Government thinks we are going to continue to take it, you are badly mistaken.

All of this is happening to rectify the mismanagement of this country by your Government. And neither you nor any of your colleagues in Government has decency to admit your huge mistakes. We are outraged by your Government's arrogance. This is totally and absolutely your fault, Minister, and your Government's fault.

This is an ignominious time in the history of this country, a time when the life chances of citizens, their children and grandchildren have been sacrificed to save the necks of those who have committed treason against this country. This treacherous behaviour has been going on for decades in this country, mostly under the watch of a political party of which you are now the deputy leader.

Yesterday, Tánaiste, this congress resoundingly rejected the proposed public sector agreement. It is a massive con job. It is another attempt to rescue the country on the backs of the education system, its teachers, and public sector workers generally.

When we chose teaching as a career - many decades ago in the case of some of us - it was not about looking after Number One, unlike the unscrupulous characters that your government has given refuge to. No other civilised country

would tolerate this. Is it any wonder, Tánaiste, we are seething with anger?

We are not going to engage in the bogus transformation of the education system sought by your Government because its purpose is clearly not to improve the quality of education in this country. We are not afraid of reform: on the contrary, we have always embraced reform and we will continue to do so. We have developed and pioneered programmes in every sector of education in which we are involved.

What we need, Minister, is a fundamental transformation of Irish society to get to the point where honesty and decency prevail; where addressing inequalities in society is the guiding principle of those who run this country. Teachers and lecturers want to part of this transformation and a transformation of the education system to eliminate cronyism and elitism so that each individual learner and citizen has an equal chance.

But we reject outright any attempt to worsen our daily work, dressed up as transformation. We are going to tell all our members what your department's intentions are.

Listen, really carefully, please, Tánaiste: we are not going to allow any further impositions on teachers and lecturers.

Finally, Tánaiste, we will no longer be treated as the soft targets that we were in the past. If you want to preside over an education system and a public service that delivers high quality services, you and your cabinet colleagues will do well to remember this.

The only basis on which we can possibly work with you, Tánaiste, is if your government

- treats us with respect
- treats our jobs with respect
- treats our contribution with respect and
- treats our livelihoods with respect.

Thank you, Tánaiste. Thank you, colleagues.

Structures Review – report carried by Congress

On the instruction of Congress 2009 a review group was set up to look at structures and processes within the TUI.

This report drawn up and approved by the Executive Committee has now been endorsed by Congress 2010 in Ennis and will form a significant work schedule for the Executive Committee over the coming time. This seeks to address both structures and methods of communication within the Union and will seek to improve communications from Head Office and the Executive Committee to individual members and from individual members through schools and branches to the Executive Committee.

Much of this communication will utilise information technology and the TUI website will assume much greater importance in the future.

Voting procedure

X **Ballot on proposed Public Service Agreement -**
Voting papers issued on 6th May.

X **Ballot of Presidential Election –**
Voting papers issued on 11th May

It is imperative that all members carefully attend to the voting procedures as set out. In recent ballots there has been a large number of invalid votes. These are almost exclusively as a result of members failing to record the name of their branch on the envelope.

Three things must be written on the envelope:

- (i) a signature
- (ii) the name printed
- (iii) the name of the Branch

The purpose of these is to secure both the authenticity of the vote and the secrecy of the ballot.

Unless each of the three items listed are completed the vote will not be counted.

Ensure your vote is counted, please comply with the procedures.

VOTERS SIGNATURE:

PRINT NAME:

BRANCH:

*Failure to **SIGN** in the appropriate space, print your **NAME** and enter the name of your **BRANCH** will render your vote void.
This information is necessary to ensure validity of the vote and to protect the security of the ballot.*

TUI in the media - Congress 2010

TUI's strong position on the pay proposals and a range of other issues received extensive media coverage in the days before, during and after Congress with around 300 newspaper articles and 160 broadcast pieces logged over a four week period.

Landmark surveys on workload and interculturalism were launched in the weekend before the conference and garnered blanket coverage. An Irish Independent editorial on foot of TUI's

survey on teacher workload stated that 'educators are not getting the credit they deserve', while an Irish Times opinion editorial by Peter MacMenamin outlined some home truths about the vicious attacks on teachers' pay and the low rate of permanency in the profession in Ireland.

The union also responded strongly to criticism of the profession by Dr Ed Walsh in both print and broadcast media.

TUI representatives were interviewed for RTE, TV3 and TG4 television news bulletins and featured on RTE Radio's Morning Ireland, Drivetime and news programmes and various other Today FM, Newstalk, 4FM and regional current affairs and news programmes, with the union General Secretary appearing on RTE 1's Primetime programme on the Tuesday of Congress.

Full details are available from TUI head office.

NEW TUI AREA REPRESENTATIVES



Ciaran O'Donnell
Area No 3:VECs:
 Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath
Replaces Dan Keane



Brian Crossan
Area No5:VECs:
 Tipp NR, Clare, Limerick City
Replaces Noel Spittle



Fergal McCarthy
Area No 9:VECs:
 Cork City, Co Cork
Replaces Vivienne MacSweeney



Mick Glynn
Area No 13:
 Community and Comprehensive areas:
 Dublin, Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow
Replaces Jimmy Kelly



Kevin Farrell
Area No 15: Colleges:
 Dublin (excluding City), Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Meath, Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Wicklow, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford
Replaces Paul O'Hara



Gillian Quinlan
Area No 17: Colleges
 Cork, Tipperary, Waterford:
Replaces Pat Ahern

Full list of TUI Area Representatives

VECs

- Area 1:** Wicklow, Kildare, Laois, Carlow - Gerry Quinn
- Area 2:** Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Offaly - Denis Magner
- Area 3:** Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath – Ciaran O' Donnell
- Area 4:** Wexford, Co Waterford, Waterford City, Tipp SR, Co Kilkenny - Tom Creedon
- Area 5:** Tipp NR, Clare, Limerick City – Brian Crossan
- Area 6:** Co. Dublin, Dun Laoghaire – Gerry Craughwell
- Area 7:** Kerry, Co Limerick - Dan Joe Cahill
- Area 8:** Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal – Michael White
- Area 9:** Cork City, Co. Cork – Fergal McCarthy
- Area 10:** Dublin City Post-Primary – Paul Whelan
- Area 11:** Galway City, Co Galway, Co Mayo – Tony Rushe

Community and Comprehensive Areas

- Area 12:** Cavan, Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Longford, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, Westmeath - Manus Brennan
- Area 13:** Dublin, Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow- Mick Glynn
- Area 14:** Carlow, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Offaly, Tipperary Waterford, Wexford – Michael Gillespie

Colleges

- Area 15:** Dublin (excluding City), Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Meath, Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Wicklow, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford – Kevin Farrell
- Area 16:** Dublin City - Paul McSweeney
- Area 17:** Cork, Tipperary, Waterford – Gillian Quinlan
- Area 18:** Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Roscommon, Westmeath – Dermot Duffy
- Area 19:** Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Mayo, Galway - Ide Ni Fhaolain

Tyranny of the majority cannot be allowed to rule

by Peter MacMenamin, General Secretary, TUI

Originally published in Irish Times 15/4/10

At all times democracy is a very delicate and sensitive concept. This is particularly true in industrial relations. The normal principal of "majority rule" does not and should not always apply; it is easy to fall into the trap of the "tyranny of the majority" whereby a majority can steamroll over a minority thereby ignoring the legitimate interests of that group. This is not democracy which should always be judged by how it deals with legitimate minority interests.

A clear example of this tyranny would be if a pay offer was made to 100 workers where 60 were to get a pay rise at the expense of 40 who were to suffer a pay cut. The 60 would outvote the 40 if they looked at the proposal in a selfish manner

looking only at how it affected them. This is the tyranny of the majority in action.

It seems that some senior trade union leaders fell into this trap recently in addressing the overall outcome of the proposed Public Service Agreement when they suggested that it would be a majority rule at the end of the process.

They suggested that the acceptability of the proposals be decided by a vote of unions at the Public Services Committee of ICTU. On first look this all seems very democratic, particularly when each union has a voting strength at the committee related to its size. But in reality and practice it is quite the opposite.

Let us consider one of the minority groups - teachers who have recently reacted very strongly against the proposals.

As part of the proposals they would be required to work an extra hour, at a time when an independent survey, conducted for TUI shows they already work an average of 43 to 46 hours a week, and such proposal having been described by the editorial in a national newspaper as an insult to the great majority of teachers who work very long hours. In addition teachers are being asked to agree to have their contracts renegotiated without any idea as to what changes might be brought into these contracts. The obvious question arises. Why should any group



DIT's Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre (LTTc) is now accepting applications for our three postgraduate programmes:

Postgraduate Diploma in Third Level Learning & Teaching DT906: The aim of this one year programme is to equip participants, who already have teaching responsibilities, with the requisite knowledge and skills to be more effective and competent lecturers/trainers. The focus of the programme is on the development and demonstration of good practice in the design, delivery and evaluation of curricula. For further information, contact the programme co-ordinator: Martina Crehan, martina.crehan@dit.ie

MA in Higher Education DT913: The MA in Higher Education is structured around key areas in higher education and enables participants to deepen their knowledge, develop their research skills and apply these skills to their educational interests and specialist areas. This programme is delivered part-time over 2 years so that participants can fit study around work and other commitments. For further information, contact the programme co-ordinator: Dr. Marian Fitzmaurice, marian.fitzmaurice@dit.ie

MSc Applied eLearning DT580: This 2 year part-time MSC will enable participants to develop the pedagogical, cultural and technical skills needed to design, deliver, support and evaluate appropriate eLearning opportunities in their workplace context. It is aimed at a wide variety of academics and industry professionals with an interest in eLearning practice. For further information, contact the programme co-ordinator: Dr. Roisin Donnelly, roisin.donnelly@dit.ie

Detailed information on programmes can be accessed at <http://lttc.dit.ie/lttc/programmes/>

other than teachers decide on the acceptability of this proposal in this situation?

Similarly, some workers in the Health Services are being asked to spread their normal working day to any time between 8am and 8pm and to work over any five days of the week, weekends included. It is not the right of any group other than health service workers to decide on the acceptability of this proposal.

It has been said that this is the way that these agreements were always dealt with. Even if it were true, this on its own is a very dangerous argument. If we never learned from the errors of history we would throw out all equality legislation because at one time “that was the way it was always done”. Apartheid would be okay as would capital punishment even for minor crimes. We must evolve our thinking and decide what is right or wrong on the merits of the issue, judged in today’s terms.

Pre 1987 public service pay agreements were just that – agreements to do with pay which did not involve changes in conditions of service for workers. They were quite appropriately decided by the majority rule principle by workers across the public sector. Since 1987 the Government and the social partners, including trade unions, have engaged in negotiations on social policy issues that resulted in a social partnership agreement. The first social partnership agreement was the *Program for National Recovery* in 1987 and since then there have been seven agreements. The first five did not directly affect conditions of service and were, again I believe, appropriately, decided on a

majority rule basis. A variation to this was the *Program for Competitiveness and Work (PCW)* in which as an alternative to a straight pay increase for groups of workers there was a local bargaining clause in which changes in work practices could be negotiated in return for greater pay increases. These agreements outside of the main agreement and were exclusively decided on by the workers to whom the proposals applied.

The last two social partnership agreements, *Sustaining Progress (2003-2005)* and *Towards 2016 (2006-2015)*, have imposed changes on conditions of individual minority groups of public service workers. These changes were written into the main proposals and as such were voted on by workers in all unions, whether the agreements applied to them or not. They were then adopted on a majority rule basis by a special delegate conference of ICTU, minority views being suppressed. TUI believed this was entirely inappropriate and tabled the following motion at the ICTU Biennial Congress in 2003.

This Conference respects the integrity of each union or group of unions in both the negotiation of the conditions of service of their members and of the decision-making process in relation to any such negotiation.

This Conference directs the Executive Council to respect these principles in any future negotiations towards any proposed National Agreements and to utilise approaches such as the local bargaining clause in the PCW in order to implement such principles.

This motion was carried. It determines that only the workers concerned in changes of conditions of service would decide on the acceptability of those changes if they are in return for pay rises; for example that teachers should decide on teachers’ issues, health workers should decide on their issues etc. This position is now ICTU policy and it is a policy that must be adhered to – even if it is inconvenient.

It certainly appears that this policy was being ignored when several union leaders recently pronounced on the majority rule principle, presumably doing so in the belief that only a few extremists would take the view that the present proposals were unacceptable and that the tyranny of the majority could be brought into play to crush this minority and leave them isolated. This is not in accordance with good trade union principles.

ICTU sees itself as a democratic organisation dedicated to the protection of the rights of all including minorities. It wishes to bring about greater unity within the affiliate unions. This is surely brought about by adherence to policies democratically developed and not by talking about majority rule in such a sensitive proposal which affects different workers differently.



CHAIR OF DUBLIN CITY POST PRIMARY BRANCH BEN BISHOP PICTURED WITH TUI VICE PRESIDENT BERNIE RUANE AT CONGRESS

Note on Tax Refunds and Teachers' Fee Refund Scheme

- **Tax refunds** - Individuals may be able to claim a tax refund against fees paid for courses relevant to your profession – check it out when you are making your next tax return.
- **Teachers' Fee Refund Scheme** - This fund may provide some funding support for courses approved by your Board of Management/VEC and leading to appropriate qualifications. The fund is administered by the Marino Institute of Education on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. Notice of this initiative issues to school principals each year for circulation but you can also access details at www.mie.ie/refundoffees.htm). Please note an application for a refund can only be applied for on completion of a course.

Junior Cycle Reform Initiative

In an earlier edition of TUI News we advised that in June 2009 the Minister for Education and Science requested the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment to advise on the reform on the Junior Cycle and more particularly the Junior Certificate Examinations.

The first step taken by the NCCA in this regard involved the preparation of a consultation document - Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a New Junior Cycle, which is now available on the NCCA website and can also be accessed through the TUI website. The document contains a number of ideas on Teaching and Learning; Qualifications; Curriculum; Assessment and Evidence of Learning. Drawing on international and national experience and research projects in relation to the provision of lower secondary education it sets out possible pathways to a new Junior Cycle experience for young people. It also makes suggestions on how schools and the system in general could move towards desirable change in lower second level education.

Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a New Junior Cycle was officially launched by An Tánaiste on 21st April and will be subject to consultation with a range of partners over the remainder of 2010, after which a draft framework for a new Junior Cycle will be designed and pilot activity will be undertaken in schools. The outcomes will lead to further consultation and dialogue before any definitive ideas for change are presented to the Minister.

It is imperative that the union and its membership engage with the ideas carefully and in some detail, examining educational issues and resource implications and prepare a strong response. This must be informed by the perspectives of branches and practicing teachers so please make your views known to your Area Representative and/or the Education and Research Officer. Send your views by post or email to bjudge@tui.ie or showard@tui.ie.

Innovation and Identity: Ideas for a New Junior Cycle is now available at www.ncca.ie and www.tui.ie.

DEIS Initiative – what's happening

To date the evaluation of DEIS in post-primary schools has focussed both on achievement and on the manner in which DEIS has been received in schools, communities and by students themselves. A number of attitudinal studies and focus groups have been conducted and views of a wide group of stakeholders have been surveyed. A further questionnaire will issue to a number of schools in the autumn concerning the implementation of DEIS with the focus on planning. A composite report is expected but each participation school will get feedback on their own data. This work continues to be supported by The Education Research Centre (ERC) and the Department chairs a steering group to support the evaluation work in which the TUI participates.

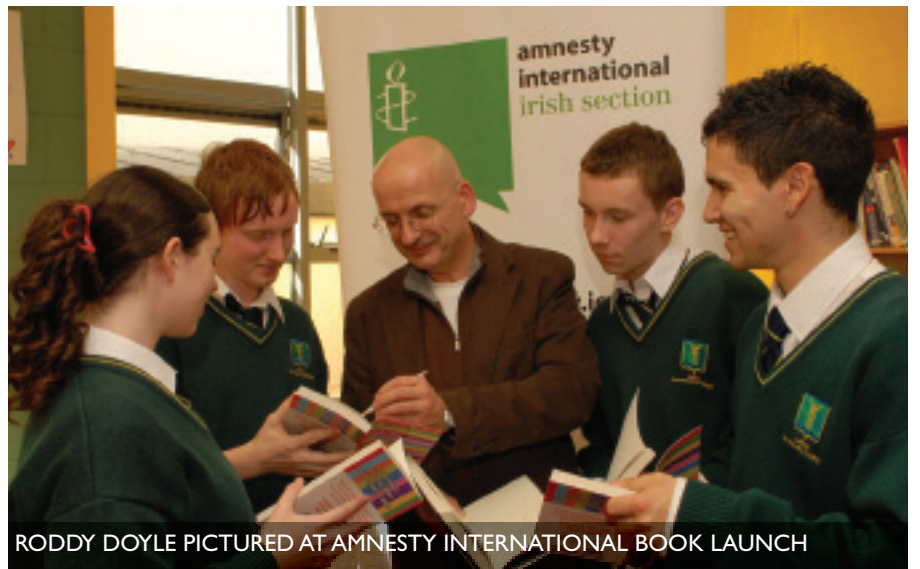
The Department is currently preparing for the next identification process to select schools for inclusion in the next round of DEIS. It is hoped to commence a comprehensive consultation process to include relevant education stakeholders before the end of 2010 to ensure that the identification process meets the needs and concerns of all stakeholders. This work will inform the process of combating educational disadvantage and selecting schools to participate in the next round of DEIS.

The teacher unions will be engaging with the Department on this matter in due course. Areas of concern include criteria for determining inclusion of schools into the future, targets to be achieved and guidelines for operation. We would welcome your observations and ideas in this regard. Please forward to your area representative or the Education and Research Officer.

“The decision to shut a school just seems so savage”

Born in Dublin in 1958, former TUI member Roddy Doyle taught English and Geography in Greendale Community School before coming to prominence with the so-called Barrytown Trilogy of *The Commitments*, *The Snapper* and *The Van*, all of which were subsequently made into successful films. He won the Booker Prize in 1993 for *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, while *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* and *Paula Spencer* further enhanced his reputation as one of our greatest living writers.

His new novel, *The Dead Republic*, completes the *The Last Roundup* trilogy and more specifically the story of Henry Smart, Easter Rising hero and confidante of historical figures as diverse as James Connolly, Louis Armstrong and John Ford. Roddy also established the Fighting Words creative writing centre with Sean Love which opened in Dublin last year. The centre helps students of all ages to develop their writing skills and to explore their love of the craft.



RODDY DOYLE PICTURED AT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL BOOK LAUNCH

How does the ethos of the Fighting Words centre differ from how creative writing is addressed in schools?

I'd like to think it complements English being taught in schools. When I started teaching, and certainly before that when I was in school doing Honours English, I never got an opportunity to write a short story. You weren't allowed to write fiction. I think those times have changed somewhat, so we see it as being complementary which is why most of the groups come from schools and the schools are really supportive. It's just allowing the kids to work from a different angle.

For example, this story project involves kids writing a short story and the whole endeavour lasts a school year. That's a new thing for them because ordinarily if they're told to write a short story it might be in class time, or they might have to do it at the weekend or it might be part of an exam. There's a time element and the message is 'get it done as quickly as you possibly can'. We approach things entirely differently, looking at work and seeing how you can improve it by taking away a couple of sentences or adding on a couple of sentences, so letting them know that the work isn't finished until it's finished. It's a

more relaxed way of going about the creative process. We're also quite keen that kids get writing as quickly as possible, they don't have to analyse why it is, so I think the notion of telling a kid what a short story is doesn't make much sense. Just get them to start writing and they can find out as they go along. It's just getting the kids to see writing as more than something they have to do in school. Art is easy to sell to young children particularly because they can throw the paint around but writing isn't quite as easy to sell in that regard.

What do you miss the most about your time teaching in Greendale?

The daily interaction. The casual interaction. I certainly wouldn't miss the mock exams or the last couple of months of any school year, but I miss and always did miss that casual interaction, the "hello, how are yas" and the bit of craic. I went from a job where I was in meaningful daily contact with maybe 150 to 200 kids – more on a busy day – to having meaningful contact with nobody except myself, which is part of the job. I liked the job, but now and again on days like today when I'm in the company of those kids, they're brilliant, they're really great. They seem to get nicer

and nicer all the time. They don't in fact, you just get to know them better. There would be a little nostalgic itch out there alright, because kids are kids. They're charming in their way.

Were you active in TUI during your teaching years?

There was a branch and I was a member obviously, and I went to branch meetings. I was never chair or secretary of the branch, but I was an active member insofar as I suppose unlike a lot of people I went to the branch meetings. I did picket duty as well when called upon, in the rain!

Your first four books were written while still a teacher. How did you mix the two disciplines?

I didn't have children at the time so life was relatively uncomplicated. I used the holidays. For the first book, *The Commitments*, I started it at the end of the Christmas holidays, it would have been just after New Year's Day. I got a chunk of it written then and tried to write every evening. I got an awful lot of it done in the easter holidays that year and I finished it during the 1986 World Cup. It's a short novel but it only took me six months and it never ceases to amaze me that I wrote it that quickly. Particularly that easter, I was staying up all night because I was quite feverish in terms of the writing process. I also wrote two scripts and a television series while I was still teaching. *Family* was filmed in the second half of 1993 and I gave up teaching in June of that year. Then one child and two children arrived and life got too complicated. I taught English and there was a lot of correcting involved.

There was clearly a huge amount of research involved in the Henry Smart trilogy.

They would be books that I couldn't have written when I was teaching, just in terms of the sheer time involved. It's no

coincidence that the books I wrote when I was teaching involved absolutely no research whatsoever, except the bit about pregnancy! The net would have been handy but it wasn't around at the time.

The trilogy demanded an awful lot of research, that's a full time job. The first two books particularly but the new one, while there was a certain amount of reading involved, I was bringing him back to Ireland and closer to the present day, bringing him to a time that I was alive in basically.

Did you find it strange following Henry up to the present day?

It didn't feel strange but I found myself drawing on my own history and geography. He becomes the caretaker of a primary school and I was thinking of the primary school I went to myself that would probably be very like the primary schools that were all built in the 1950s and '60s. So I didn't have to start looking up what the schools looked like, whereas if he was the caretaker of a school in the United States I would. The geography was more familiar so in a way it's more relaxing so you can concentrate a bit more on the writing. I'm not sure whether it was two years or three years, but in terms of time it wasn't as cumbersome as the first two.

Historical fiction is often criticised for taking liberties or distorting true events. How do you react to that?

If people want to read history they should read history books, they shouldn't read history as fiction unless it's a different kind of history they want to see. I did a reading in the Falls Road, and it was terrific and a great event, but there was a lot of people that told me very cheerfully that they didn't agree with my analysis. I'd be worried if they said that they did agree with me. A couple of jazz purists didn't like my descriptions of Louis Armstrong and the depiction of him and the use of him. The new book has John Ford among other

people in it so I'm sure there'll be criticism of that as well.

Is literature appreciated in Ireland in 2010?

I think the arts have always been appreciated. I think maybe there was more national pride in relation to it before perhaps. When I won the Booker Prize in 1993 I found it a bit embarrassing because it was almost like going to London representing Ireland. But I wasn't, I'd just written a book and happened to be Irish but there was a lot of weight thrown on that Irishness which probably calmed down which is no bad thing into the last decade.

Is there an over reverence to some literary figureheads?

To an extent. I think it goes down to this notion of identity. What does it mean to be Irish? To be a holder of a passport and be born within a certain geographical limit? I don't think it means an awful lot. But I suppose there are points of identity and we take pride in sporting achievement. So why wouldn't we be pleased that Seamas Heaney won the Nobel Prize, I couldn't think of a nicer man to give it to. And then there's Yeats and Joyce and of course there are these great names so I can see why and if Ireland is to be seen as a commercial entity they're great marketing figures and they were all very photogenic as well. And the work is absolutely brilliant but where they achieve sainthood or become untouchable, that's when it becomes an issue.

Have you been surprised in the past by the reaction to the TV production of *Family*, or the throwaway comment about *Ulysses* needing a good editor?

I knew it was going to be a very powerful piece of work but I didn't realise it would have that big huge political life, that I'd be the subject of news broadcasts, or that

Questions and Answers would be dominated by the thing. It became this rolling story for a whole month. You could never anticipate that. If you set out to write something to achieve that effect, you couldn't.

But the Joyce thing was just funny. I was in New York in January 2004. I was one of four people on a panel including Frank McCourt and Colum McCann, just having a kind of informal chat about Joyce really, and I made the point and I laughed. There was a journalist in the audience and she wrote about it and left out the other lads completely and took away all the laughter, so it was like I'd issued a press release. I came home for the weekend, I was teaching for a semester in New York, and when I got off the plane and turned on the mobile there was a whole rake of texts asking 'what have you been saying?' It went from the Sunday Tribune to the Guardian, and then in spread out all over the world. It was daft really. It was kind of amusing but at the same time a little bit of a reminder that media can be a complete monster and it must have been a slow month really.

And then there were all sorts of theories that I was doing it because I had a book out later in the year so I was trying to be controversial or I was bitter because my books weren't selling as much as they used to. But the whole notion that somehow or other you can't criticise a book because it's almost got the same power in Ireland as the Bible or the Koran, *Ulysses* which only a fraction of the population have actually gotten around to reading. And I've read it twice so I think I'm entitled to have an opinion!

Did you find the English curriculum restrictive?

At the time, yes. It was getting better when I was leaving, but there was the notion that there were just a few set texts that you were stuck with. But I never felt stuck with *Lord Of The Flies*, because I think

it's the perfect book for teenagers. It's just an amazing book. There's so much in it, so many lessons about great writing. But then there's something like *Persuasion* by Jane Austen and there are people who will drool at Jane Austen, but you've got a bunch of kids and you want these kids to read beyond their schooling. You want them to take away the itch to read. You want them to have a book in their pocket whenever they're waiting for a bus. *Persuasion* isn't going to do that in most cases, and yet you were stuck with it every four years so it was very restrictive, the predictability of who was coming up in the exams.

I really detest the newspapers' coverage, even RTE's news coverage of examinations. Are we the only country in the world that actually has news coverage about what's on the paper this year? People calling Joe Duffy to complain that Yeats wasn't on the paper this year, and it's actually on the news! I think it's a feeding frenzy, I think it's all about points and private schools and measuring the work of a child according to the points that he or she gets. And if you look at these education supplements, it's all ads for grind schools and institutes.

What were your feelings on the closing of Greendale?

It was devastating. For personal reasons that had nothing to do with education, it was a bit like a death. I found it really horrible. There was an amazing event a few months before it finally closed down, it was an open night on a Friday night and there was no formality to it, they just opened the doors and thousands, literally thousands of people who had been involved came along, mostly kids, but they were now middle aged. It was just shockingly moving, some of them I hadn't seen in twenty five years or longer who I used to teach. And there were clusters of friends who were still friends and people

who looked from the distance exactly the same as they did before but then when they got closer you realised they were in their forties. The decision to shut a school as opposed to redefining the school or somehow broadening the scope of the school just seems so savage. And because the area was built in one quick moment in time, the bulk of the people who moved in were young couples and the kids were all broadly the same age. So you got at one point thousands of kids and suddenly very few. It was such a stupid thing to shut down a school because there are very few kids. These areas go through these cycles and in a couple of years time they'll be wondering where's the secondary school.

Do you think the education system should be completely insulated from cutbacks?

I think it should be one of the last things to go. I would reiterate that this [Greendale closure] isn't me talking about a decision that was made six months ago because we no longer had the money. This was a decision that was made in the boom time when we were flinging money around and allowing it was just disgraceful. So it wasn't a financial purge, so why was it decided just to shut the place down? It's also a slap in the face to everybody who went there. Say you have guys who go to Belvedere. "Where did you go?" "Oh, I went to Belvedere." All these doors open. "You sat beside Drico" or whatever, this little closed world. And a kid who went to school in Greendale. "Where did you go to school?" "I went to a school that doesn't exist any more." That's drastic.

So it was almost a class thing?

Very much so, I've no doubt about it whatsoever. It could have been a convent school somewhere else or in a more solidly middle class area and it would have been maintained.

Roddy Doyle's new novel *The Dead Republic* is available in all good bookshops.