1993

The DIT Examiner: the Newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union December, 1993

DIT: Students' Union

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Recommended Citation
DIT Students Union'. The DIT Examiner December, 1993. DIT, 1993

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Students' Union will defy Bill

The DIT Students' Union has said that the new Criminal Justice (Public Order) Bill will not prevent students from organising and taking part in protest marches, even if it means breaking the law.

"It won't stop us marching, and we are prepared for fines or even jail," said Deiric O Broin, President of DITSU.

Under Section 8 of the new bill, introduced earlier this year by Justice Minister Maire Geoghegan Quinn, it will be an offence to distribute or display writing, pictures, or signs which threaten, are abusive, insulting or obscene. Section 7 creates the offence of disorderly conduct at a public meeting, whereby acting in a disorderly manner at a public meeting for the purpose of preventing the transaction of the business of the meeting would be punishable by three months in prison and/or a fine of £500. Simply put, it will not of a silent variety, or which will give gardai more power to make any demonstration or protest which is not of a silent variety, or which does not end rapidly. "It really is an infringement of what we see as a democratic right to protest," said Mr O Broin. "We're very worried about the effect it will have on demonstrations and protest marches," traditionally the most obvious and noisy way in which students make themselves heard and air their grievances.

Mr O Broin also expressed the associated concern about the sweeping new powers of search and arrest the bill gives to the Gardaí. "The worrying thing is that it gives so much power to the Gardaí. It leaves it all to their discretion. The vast majority are trustworthy but no organisation is perfect."

The Bill was sharply criticised by the United Nations Committee on Human Rights during its summer meeting. Former judge and UN ambassador for Cyprus, Andrea Mavrommatis, said that the bill would give gardaí "more power than the average European country."

It was the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace which brought the contents of the controversial bill to the attention of the UN committee. Mr Jerome Connolly from the Commission told the DIT Examiner that in terms of practical politics, he felt it was very difficult to see further changes being made. The commission is resigned to the bill becoming law then, but Mr Connolly is worried that its provisions could easily be abused. He said that the wider picture was not being considered. "Our prisons are overcrowded as it is; this could just put more people in prison."

The Council described Section 9 of the Bill, which deals with littering in a public place, as "ill-defined, vague and arbitrary." DITSU is currently seeking legal advice on the controversial bill.
It enlightened an awful lot of delegates as to the simple structure that exists for the giving out of funds, such as the Social and Cultural Council and Sports Council. Many delegates were unaware that they have access to central funds if they come together.

On a more basic, though no less important level, the weekend was a perfect way for the officers from the various colleges to get to know each other.

All was not work, however, for while there were plenty of speaking sessions, the evenings were reserved for sessions of a different kind. It seems there was even a cello involved.

After the course finished, the delegates were asked to fill out a questionnaire giving their opinions on the weekend. The comments were, by and large, favourable: "The whole course enabled me to gain a more collected broadened view of the organisations in the DIT. The more communication between officers the better. Things are restricted financially for the societies but events like this will go a long way to enhancing the work of all societies' representatives." There were some complaints about what was seen as the rushed nature of the weekend and its timing. Moran pointed out that the event will be held earlier in the year in future. Meanwhile, there is to be what he called "a really big meeting of all clubs and societies at the beginning of December."
It sounds farcical, as if Flann O'Brien or Tom Sharpe might have toyed with it as an idea for a scene but here it is, in all its truthful glory: determined to make their point and life as difficult as possible for what they saw as an indolent and unsympathetic system, they cycled their lightless bikes past policemen as often as it took. Up and down, up and down, and when they were arrested, they demanded that their court case be conducted in Welsh. It was their right and if it wasn't recognised, the bikes were close by...

This was the work of the dedicated men and women of Cymdeithas yr iaith Gymraeg, The Welsh Language Society, founded in the 60s and committed to furthering the use of the Welsh language, which at that time was not recognised by the government in London. Their determination has known few bounds; they have organised protests, sit-ins, occupation of Government buildings and even police stations, not that some of them have had to voluntarily occupy these particular buildings. They have engaged in the selective destruction of property, but are keen to stress that they have never hurt anybody. Plenty of ruffled feathers over the years.

The strenuous activities in Wales in the past thirty years have resulted in a Welsh Language Act which will give official recognition to the language. Irish is already officially recognised; in fact it is our first language, though you'd hardly know it.

"Ireland is the only country in Europe that became a member of the EEC without asking. Every other country said 'this is our national language, we want recognition for it. Irish is seen as a minority language.' Mr Ó Brádaigh appreciates that the task of furthering the use of the Irish language is an uphill one, given the apathy of the general public and the antipathy that festers in the second level school system and the feeling that "the government doesn't give a shite".

"That's why I can justify everything done in Wales to be done over here."

Mr Ó Brádaigh and members of na Cumainn Ghaelach a all over the country met last year to see if they could organise a national body designed to push the idea of bilingualism. To this end, they visited Wales this year and met the Welsh Language Society, along with members of NUS Wales.

At the moment, as Convener, Mr Ó Brádaigh is in a position to work within the students' union organisation. "The single best way to bring forward the Irish in college is to put up signs initially. People will see it in use; there is no point in going up to people and talking in Irish. Signs are the easiest way and then we can advance on that."

Ultimately Mr Ó Brádaigh believes that if people use the language it will come back. And there's always the bicycles...

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With his long, heavy coat, shapeless, heavy sweater, torn Levis and all purpose, clumpy boots, Deiric Ó Broin is the very model of a modern (male) Irish student. He looks like a student, he has a flat in Rathmines and he has a lot of REM tapes. Is there any doubt as to his occupation? Well, yes, there is.

He is always on the go, always running somewhere, and he carries a smartish, organised bag that upsets his otherwise very casual (he would say practical) image. Most students are rarely on the go and running is generally immediately preceded by cries/totums of cheap/free beer. Smartish, organised bags are not common. The biggest giveaway for Deiric Ó Broin though is the pager he carries everywhere. He can always be contacted and as President of Dublin Institute of Technology's Students' Union (DITSU), that's probably a good, if burdensome, thing.

It's a full-time job and he is proud of his position and of what he does, though he probably wouldn't agree with the first part of that assertion. However, he gives himself away at one point by describing what he does as "not a nine to five job, it's a vocation." He clearly takes pride in his work and, as Conveners, but does not feel the loss of influence will discourage potentially good officers from running in future elections. "We're there to work for other people," he says, meaning that if people are involved solely for their own ends, they should stay away. It's a nice thought. He's probably right about the future conveners, though, the position will still act as a stepping stone for interested students. Ó Broin is himself a former President of the Rathmines Student Union. He was previously a Deputy President and began his career in student politics as one of those much maligned creatures, a class rep.

Anybody can spot the progression and it is natural to wonder about further political ambitions. I ask. He is vague and non-committal, a lot like a politician. "Not particularly," he begins and then he's off, and on a tangent, talking about the student movement using terms like "very progressive", and "an engine for change within society".

"I think it is, I think it can produce great change. I think it's where ideas begin." When asked for an example to support such admirably high flown notions, he cites the recent abortion information service. "A lot of people took the stand for what they saw as an individual right and they were prepared to pay the price by going to jail or whatever. They've been vindicated by the referendum."

When we return to the subject of his future political ambitions, or absence thereof, he says that he just does not know. His shelves are lined with political works. Make of that what you will.

As a man who sees the student movement as an engine for change within society, and as a member of USI, he would presumably like to see the disaffiliated unions return to the fold. As it stands, though USI represents about 113,000 students, including all in the DIT colleges, five of the seven universities are disaffiliated - UCC, UCG, Trinity, UCL and St Patrick's, Maynooth. The reasons are more personal than political, says Ó Broin, which leads to as wide a chasm as any. Reaffiliation will be very difficult.

"It would be quite hard." The use of the conditional tense suggests that he understands. "You're dealing with personalities. Some things you can't argue rationally about. You can't argue rationally about God and you can't argue rationally about personalities."

The analogy is clumsy but it presents a clear picture. Ever tried to argue with someone who disagreed fundamentally with your fundamentals?

Looking at him in all his student finery and listening to him speak easily and confidently about his work I wonder how many people see him as a woolly jumper wearing, lefty doggerel spouting student bore who harbours secret desires to be a corporate lawyer (he plans to study law next year). I ask him what he thinks about that.

"I try not to take up too much time worrying about what people think about me. I try to be as constructive as I can." It can't be a prepared answer, but it sounds like one, polite, slightly deferential but self confident. A politician's reply.
The Piano

Cannes Winner, moody, Harvey Keitel, not American. Got to be worth a look. And it is. Holly Hunter is the mute by choice mail order bride shipped off to New Zealand with her daughter and her piano to be with the husband she's never met (Sam Neill) She doesn't like him much but falls for the bizarrely accented Harvey Keitel as the neighbour who has been accepted by the Maoris. A love triangle then, but definitely not equilateral. And the piano is important in this tale of real passion, sexual awakening and impotent jealousy. Powerful, odd, amazing to look at. Art house on the bigger screens.

The Wedding Banquet

The Strictly Ballroom of 1993, they cry. Not at all, for while this does occasionally have the other worldly feel good flavour of the Australian comedy, it's a much more thoughtful class of a thing. It's a film with moments of comedy, rather than a comedy. It does veer quickly into serious territory, so be prepared.

It's the story of a successful young Taiwanese man who's living happily in Manhattan with his boyfriend. His life becomes complicated when his parents, who believe that he has just settled down with a good woman, come to America to celebrate in style. Complications, to put it mildly, ensue.
Were it not for the recent so called Date Rape trials in England, particularly the high profile media-saturated Austen Donnellan case, this article would, in all probability, not have been written. At least not now.

The idea of Date Rape is relatively new to us. Though its patently obvious to anyone with a degree of sense that the reality has always been with us. But now it is part of our vocabulary. for better or worse - it at least suggests that there are categories of rape. With some being perceived as less serious than others - and the outcome of the Donnellan case raises a number of questions about the issue. The legal implications could be huge and there may even be implications for the interaction between men and women.

Austen Donnellan, a student in King's College, London, and a group of friends were at a Christmas party at which, not surprisingly, debilitating amounts of alcohol were consumed. Both he and the student who later made the accusation of rape were very drunk. They left the party to get some air and then went back to her room where they had sex. According to him, she made it perfectly clear what she wanted him to do. After sex, they slept and some time later when, presumably, the effects of the alcohol had at least partially worn off, Donnellan awoke to find her caressing him and he attempted to again instigate sex. The woman ran from the room, telling him that she couldn't believe what he had tried to do.

Crucially, she did not seek help or go to the police. It was only when she went to her tutor, a man she described as being "very much a believer in women's rights" that matters seemed to spin out of control. This followed an attempt by Donnellan to talk to her after a lecture. The college authorities were informed and it was decided that Donnellan be 'tried' by a committee of academics, students and a solicitor. The police were not to be involved and it was suggested that Donnellan plead guilty to a lesser charge.

Donnellan, to his lasting credit, given the seriousness of the allegation, decided, having spoken to his tutor, to go to the police. It was he who brought the case to court and last month he was acquitted of rape by a jury of nine women and three men. Their deliberations took little more than an hour, but the reverberations may well be felt for a long time to come.

For a start the lives of both parties have been changed forever.

Donnellan is undoubtedly a hero to some but others will always regard him with, at best, suspicion. Some will blast him in spite of the jury's decision and the glowing character references he received from several women friends during the trial.

As for the woman, her reluctance to go to court, as many woman are in rape cases, was borne out. Her lifestyle has been cruelly exposed for all to see - she admitted to several one night stands, all with old friends because "you still both know where you stand" - and her credibility has been shattered. As with other rape trials, the media could not mention her name but here friends and colleagues in college know who she is. She was perhaps naive and led by the others but she felt she had been raped and that will always be with her.

Now, however, we have to ask the questions: Where will it all end? After this, how do we define date rape? When does a drunken fumble in that dark, where consent is ascertained in thick mumbles, if at all, become a criminal act? Are we careering towards a situation similar to that extant in certain US colleges where political correctness is rampant and all encompassing. In a controversial new book, "The Morning After: Sex, Fear and Feminism on the Campus", Harvard graduate Kate Roiphe writes: "Everyone agrees that rape is a terrible thing, but we don't agree on what rape is. There is a grey area in which someone's rape may well be another person's bad night. There hasn't been a remarkable change in the number of rapes, it seems, just a change in how receptive the political climate is to those numbers."

Not surprisingly, Roiphe's book has caused an almighty furore in America, a country where in at
least one college, there is a strict code governing the stages of a seduction. Male students must have definite verbal consent every step of the way.

Exactly where are we going from here?

Helen O'Sullivan is Women's Rights Officer in USI. She feels that the media coverage afforded the Donnellan and other cases has tended to cloud the whole issue of rape.

"It's such an unusual case. Women are raped and attacked every single day of the week and it doesn't even make the front page. And yet you get one man who's acquitted of rape last month and everyone's talking about it." Agreed, but the harsh truth is that it doesn't make the headlines precisely because it happens every day of the week and it would be negligent of the media not to examine closely a Donnellan case.

Ms O'Sullivan believes that such heavy media coverage is ultimately detrimental to women. The Donnellan case is the exception.

"The more coverage they get, the more people are talking about these poor unfortunate men and God, yes they are innocent, acquitted, whatever, but for all the thousands of women who've been raped or attacked, women could act as a further deterrent, as if one was necessary, to women considering action in even the most cut of cases: What if they don't believe me?

Ms O'Sullivan cites the recent Levinia Kerwick case.

"What could be more simple than that? Yet how many Irish women now after that dare bring a case, even a slightly more complex case, to court and expect a fair deal?" She's right, of course, but then it cannot be ignored that if Austen Donnellan had not taken his case to court, the full set of facts may never have emerged and his academic future (at least his academic future) would have been decided, amazingly, by a committee. In a rape case.

His decision has been vindicated by his acquittal by a jury of his peers - he saw court as his only chance - but a precedent has been set.

"It's hard enough for a woman to prove a rape case as it is," says Ms O'Sullivan, "harder still in a date rape case. And now this; it's virtually impossible. That case, I'm sure it was properly judged and all the rest, but it's still sending messages."

It's sending several of them, not the least worrying of which, according to Ms O'Sullivan, is its reinforcing of the whole concept of date rape.

"I really don't like the distinction between different types of rape. Rape is rape and that simply means sex without consent and whatever level of violence is applied, then there's the difference."

She also thinks that the sections of the media have turned the debate on date rape into a wider crusade which is reflecting badly on women.

"The papers aren't generally concentrating on the case. There's an awful lot of anti-feminist comment being made. It's not just the case being reported, the whole discussion around it points towards "radical feminists" as they put it, I don't know who they are."

Well, they are people like Andrea Dworkin who has written that "the hurting of women is... basic to the sexual pleasure of men". Dworkin is a feminist writer, her views are considered within the term has been termed 'radical', ergo, she is seen as a radical feminist. If the term has come to have derogatory overtones, can the blame for this be laid at the door of the media? This writer can now be accused of taking a single quote from a single author, removing it from its surrounding text and giving it a life of its own by isolating it. Perhaps, though it is not a quote that can easily be misunderstood. Helen O'Sullivan accepts that it is intelligent people with the most extreme views who tend to get the most press coverage and it must be assumed that anyone who puts forward such views knows this.

Rape is a horrible, vicious crime and we must never lose sight of this. So often it is brutally clear and yet the victim is afraid to come forward. This has to change. But we must also face up to the complexities raised by the Donnellan case and those like it. It has raised the spectre of grey areas.

Ms O'Sullivan believes that people have to become a lot more responsible about their sexual behaviour and that women have to be more assertive about saying no. But as for two people getting blind drunk and then having sex, "it happens all the time".
We spoke to a number of students about the Donnellan case and what it implied. Most had strong feelings but what emerged quickly were the complexities of the issue. The words “very difficult” were frequently spoken.

Dave Colman, a third year student in the College of Marketing and Design, said that Donnellan had been vindicated by the court’s decision but that the trial and attendant coverage had been “a bit unfair on the girl”. In his opinion, a drunken fumble becomes date rape when the woman says “no” and the man doesn’t stop.

Angela Day, also a third year in COMAD, said that if a situation arose when both parties were drunk and there was no verbal consent on either side prior to a blurred encounter, then neither party could call rape afterwards. However, she expressed the widely-held worry that the case would make women less likely to take cases to court.

Colm Breheny would prefer that the names of both parties remained out of the paper. “Unless a person is found guilty, there should be no names. You don’t see the girl’s name splashed across the paper.”

Cathy Maguire, a student in Bolton Street College of Technology, was of the opinion that the incident in London “just happened”, but felt for the woman. She saw no reason why “every little detail and incident in her life was brought up”. She has no time for the militant activities in the USA, describing them as “real burn your bra stuff”.

Byron Williams, a graduate seemingly unable to drag himself away from his old haunt College of Technology, Kevin Street, initially felt that it could be considered a case of rape, but having thought and talked for a moment revised his opinion, deciding that “it was a very difficult one to answer. It’s very hard to blame anyone”.

Clare Cavendish, also of Kevin Street, said that “if a woman cries rape, you have to listen. I don’t see how anyone, woman or man, could possibly want it or lie about it.”

Second Year Doreen Curran from the College of Music, while feeling that the case was not one of rape, agreed that any similar situation would be “more complicated than normal”. Another second year, Sinead Collins, described the issue as “very difficult” and said that as the law stands in rape cases, “it very unfair for women to have to go through all that.”

Neville Kenny, a fourth year student in Rathmines College of Commerce, expressed similar sentiments. “I wouldn’t like to be a woman now, having to go through that (a rape trial) with society not behind me”. In rape cases, he said there should be no generalisations. “Each case is going to be completely separate.”
Vision On

Being appointed to a high profile and powerful position that has never before existed brings a whole range of pros and cons that can finally result in a memorable period during which much important work was accomplished. Or it can prove overwhelming and give the appointee long, agonising nights of questioning; what have I gotten myself into? It is a test of character that most will not be required to undergo and many would be thankful for that.

If Dr Brendan Goldsmith ever asks himself "what have I gotten myself into" it is doubtful if he is referring to his new position as President of Dublin Institute of Technology; a wrong turn made into a traffic jam on a Monday morning, perhaps, but he does not come across as a man who shies away from difficult tasks. So how does he see himself?

"I suppose you could take the narrow interpretation from the DIT Act but really the President is Chief Executive, senior academic, senior administrator, encourager, persuader, harrasser, browbeater; all of these things rolled into one. I like to visualise that at the end of the day the President is someone trying to give a vision to people and more importantly, trying to get people to bring their vision together to put the whole thing forward." This definition is not one he even pauses to think about and he uses the word "vision" without batting an eye.

Dr Goldsmith has worked with the DIT since 1974, after returning from Oxford where he gained a Doctorate in Mathematics. This followed his first class honours degree in Mathematics from Queen's University. His last position before being appointed overall President of DIT was vice-principal of DIT, Kevin Street. Not surprisingly then, he still considers himself as a professional mathematician, and, a little surprisingly perhaps, still lectures at Kevin Street.

"I think it's important to stay in touch with the frontline, that's where the real action is. It means that when you're with colleagues and discussing issues, you're a bit more in touch with what's going on when people further down the line are telling you. You can relate to them more closely." He seems keen to remain as far away as possible from an ivory tower of any description, and with as physically scattered and diverse an institution as the DIT, he will have to. Losing touch would be easy.

"The DIT is changing, indeed, the new position occupied by Dr Goldsmith marks one of those changes, and it sets up more changes, both in the immediate future and the long terms. It is an exciting and challenging time and once what he calls the hectic, finding your feet "crisis phase" is over - and he thinks it is - the work can begin in earnest.

"The first aim has to be to bring the DIT together as an institution and that means we need to finalise our position in relation to the overall structure and then implement it. It's one thing to have a plan." This integration will, he knows takes some time and its not helped by the fact that the DIT is a multi-campus site, but it is, he says, the primary reason for the setting up of DIT and so it has to happen. For Dr Goldsmith, integration is basic and vital for the future of DIT, as is its power to award its own degrees. The latter can't happen without the former and so the two will be tackled together. The DIT Act - a "very very important change" - will allow the work to progress but it is not the act that will be making the decisions. The act won't have to act, and ultimately people will look to the President. Bluntly, the words "integration" and "centralisation" tend to set off alarm bells in people's heads.

"Change is very very hard, " he concedes. "It's easy to sit back and say, 'change colleges x,y and z but don't change us, we're perfect.' People have to feel not threatened. There really isn't a need to feel threatened." When the DIT changes to a faculty structure, it needs it now if it is to go where Dr Goldsmith wants it to go.

"Too many part time teachers who should be full time, a lack of facilities, a lack of faith in itself, a lack of money - these are just some of the issues facing the Dr Goldsmith and his team. With responsibility comes accountabili-
Stoking The Furnace

Anyone who has paid a visit to the offices of the Union of Students of Ireland in North Great Georges Street cannot have failed to notice that they have seen better days. Sure, the work has been carried out regardless but the image given by the actual building is, I am sure, not the desired one. For starters, just what is the bath doing in the hallway?

No longer will visitors have to ask themselves such challenging questions for USI has new offices, a new location, hell, a whole new student centre. This week sees the opening of the new centre in the fiercely trendy Temple Bar area and it marks the end of a two and a half year slog for all concerned, not least current USI President Tom Duke.

"It came up in conversation in 1990/91. We wanted to move into the area of commercial services, and if it's possible to get new premises incorporating a student club and venue, wouldn't it be great? So we approached the Managing Director of USIT on a Thursday. We viewed this place on Friday and he put an option down on Monday. " The development proceeded the way it had begun.

"The whole thing has been a battle against time. This place has to be spot on, we don't want to cut any corners."

To an untrained eye, at least, none have been. The centre is situated in an old building, but don't be fooled for a second. Inside all is as modern as can be, bright, clean, uncluttered and practical. The new design work has been combined with the original brickwork of the building, somewhat the Irish Film Centre.

In addition to the new offices for USI, the centre will eventually have three other sections; a student club, a venue for gigs and an information bureau. Only the information bureau remains to be opened and it is expected to do so sometime next summer.

Upstairs, in the student club, there is a suitably long bar, fixed seating and moveable seating, and on a higher level an area for pool tables and video games; these can be moved out of the way in the evenings. This will be open to members during pub hours. "We're hoping for a capacity up here of about 450 and downstairs of 800," says Mr Duke. Downstairs is the location of the multi-purpose hall, named, promisingly, The Furnace, where gigs and discos will take place. The USI offices themselves are on all three floors of the building. On the third floor, a tube-like effect has been created by the addition of a new circular roof. This will be the open plan office for the six USI officers.

The total cost of the new centre has crept towards the £1.7 million mark. At least one Merchant Bank is involved and USIT have also helped out. Duke says that the plan is to get a financial institution to buy it and lease it to USI for a number of years. The carrot here is the tax incentives available in the Temple Bar and Mr Duke has said that without these, the project would never have gotten off the ground.

Tom Duke, USI President

"We want students to treat the place with respect. They're getting beer at a good price, they're being treated well. Everything here is good quality on the grounds that student shouldn't have to drink in shitholes." Put simply, the idea is to abide by the rules and to have a good time. Sounds easy.

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Well, it has to be said, it was a ding dong battle from the moment the whistle went, real end to end stuff and truly a game of two halves.

Northern Ireland had the upper hand early on but simply couldn’t copperfasten their superiority with a goal, despite the fact that the game took place on a level playing field, and a state of the art football was employed, employment being the number one priority. The ball, incidentally, spent very little time at grass roots level, but this was not the unmitigated disaster it could have been for the rangy figure of Niall Quinn was ever present to head down the ball whenever it was hoofed hopefully up the park. Meanwhile, Terry Phelan made darting runs, Roy Keane was a midfield general, the elegant figure of Paul McGrath stroked the ball around the park with pin point accuracy and Ray Houghton ran around like a blue ansd fly.

It seemed for a while that the Republic had their backs against the wall but the second half was a different kettle of fish, indeed, a horse of a different colour and the boys came out fighting, gee up by a half-time pep talk from their enigmatic manager, Jack Charlton. They took the game to Northern Ireland and at the same time gave nothing away. The Republic were determined not to let Northern Ireland ride roughshod over their dream.

And then, against the run of play, Northern Ireland scored. The Republic were, naturally, stunned and very possibly, sick as parrots. Northern Ireland, meanwhile, were temporarily jubilant for it was looking like they were about to have their cake and eat it, that their bread had indeed been buttered on both sides.

Throwing caution to the wind, and realising that there was no use crying over spilt milk, the Republic upped the pace and began to pepper the Northern Ireland goal with shots. The fans began to feel that it was only a matter of time before their attempts paid dividends. Northern Ireland defended stoutly, though the tackling was so fierce that many an attacking player was rocked to his very foundations.

The goal came out of the blue, Alan McLoughlin (an inspired substitution) chested down the ball and struck a sweet volley past the flailing arms of the Northern Ireland keeper. McLoughlin was embraced by his team mates, over the moon to a man. The hero of the day was just pleased to have scored while Packie Bonner denied any involvement in the goal.

Sensing victory, the Republic piled on the pressure, and refused to give an inch while Northern Ireland fought a rearguard action. But it was all over bar the shouting, despite the fact that the fat lady had not yet sung.

When the final whistle went, the Republic were relieved to have come through it all in one piece. Northern Ireland had refused to simply go through the motions; instead they had given the Republic the game of their lives, asking and receiving no quarter. But it had ended in tears and for them it was time to reflect on what might have been.

The Republic are on their way to the USA, Northern Ireland are not, but at the end of the day, in the final analysis and when all is said and done, football was the real winner, Brian.

(with apologies to David Rice and the Rathmines School of Journalism stylebook)
I t is a truism that in every profession and every type of job there will be a number of people who will be competent, a smaller number who will be very good and a tiny minority who will prove outstanding.

The flip side, of course, is that there will be those who are a little less than competent and some who are downright bad. Bad businessman, bad journalists, bad lawyers and bad teachers. It's there but we don't have to like it. The question is how often can something be done about the existing situation in a given profession.

Brian Doolin is a law lecturer in DIT Rathmines and secretary to the Dublin Colleges Branch of the Teachers' Union of Ireland. He is blunt about the situation in DIT colleges, just as a recent conference in Maynooth was in relation to the state of affairs in Irish universities. "There has been no formal training for teaching staff coming into third level colleges. In particular, there has been no training for staff who come into DIT colleges."

"The first reason could be that the colleges are endeavouring to recruit people for their expertise in their area of discipline so they are looking for the best accountant or the best architect."

The Union of Students of Ireland has expressed concern about the situation. In a submission to the recent National Education Convention, it pointed out that "the area in most need of the introduction of a teacher training structure is the third level. Lecturers in third level colleges are very often thrown in at the deep end, without the benefit of a training support system. It is unfair that they do not currently enjoy the benefit of a training support system."

USI said that the cost of such training must be borne by the State. The lack of resources in education is a problem that Mr Doolin also brings up. Old, expected and all too true. The money isn't available to introduce new third level teachers to aspects of teaching, its psychology, philosophy and its very practicalities. This means that while the good lawyers, accountants and architects are available, they are to a large extent expected to turn themselves into good teachers. By nature, human nature, this is very much a hit and miss situation.

This problem is exacerbated somewhat by the huge dependence on part-time staff. This is seen as a serious problem by the TUI. "It's often said that the reason you employ part-time people is that they are more knowledgeable about their subject. There's an implication here that the full-time part of staff does not keep abreast of his or her subject. The other question is of course that the college wishes to be perceived, in the public domain, as being up to date."

"The problem with part-time teachers often is that they don't. They do this merely as a sinecure, a few extra pound a week. They don't do a great deal of preparation, they don't have any commitment so if they have to choose between a professional duty and a teaching duty, they take the professional duty so classes are often left without. They don't prepare the work."

Mr Doolin believes that by and large the "present system is working and is working relatively well". But in the absence of any clear evidence that the present system isn't working, and he is very careful about pointing this out, (he uses the phrase three times), he would like to see introduced some period of compulsory training at third level. "I would equally like to see some system where there would be continuous in house training for members of staff. Whether this is compulsory or not is a matter for discussion. I wouldn't think that the general body of staff would have any objection to some kind of in house training." He expressed the worry that if the situation ever arose that a teacher be dismissed for incompetence as a teacher that there be some sort of compensation.

"Clearly, I think that the TUI would not discuss any system that didn't have protection, particularly for those who might be seen under the system as being unsuitable."

For the time being however, nothing is going to change. Mr Doolin himself has pointed out some of the problems that do exist (given the cost and importance of third level education, is "relatively well" good enough?) but as far as he knows, there are no proposals floating about to introduce some sort of in house training or testing of teachers' skills as teachers. Dr Brendan Goldsmith, President of the DIT, has said elsewhere in this paper that the over prevalence of part-time teachers is a situation that will be tackled and this may help but it does not go to the very core of the problem, this being that there are people teaching in third level institutions who simply have not the first idea how to properly communicate their knowledge.

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