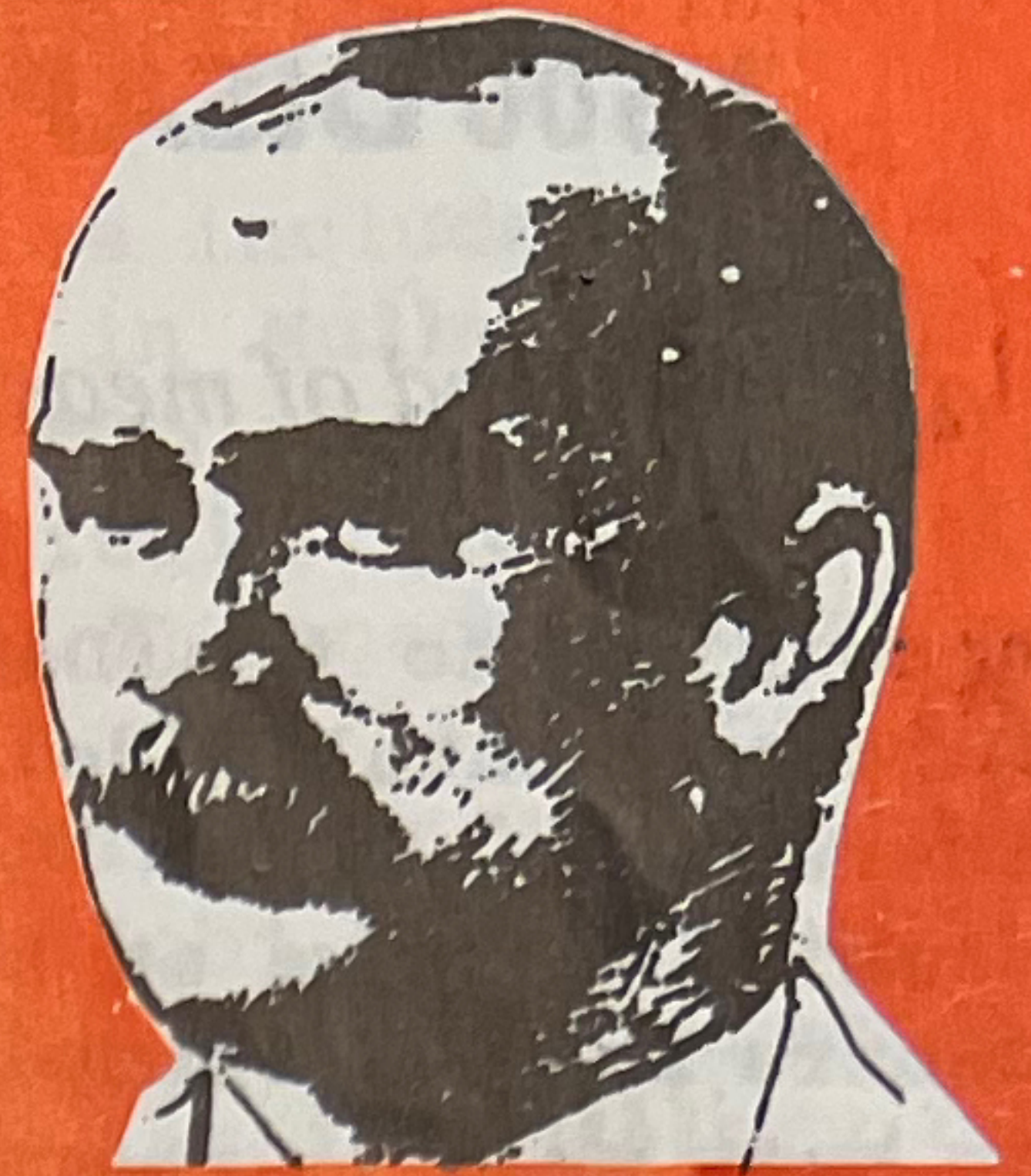


THE

CAMPAIGNER



ESTABLISHING THE RIGHTS OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN THE SOUTH INNER CITY Sep/Oct 1992 Vol. 1/No. 2 10p

Produced by The Connolly Centre For The Unemployed, 82 The Coombe, Dublin 8. Tel. 530803

ANOTHER WINTER OF DISCONTENT!

As McCreevey continues to axe Social Welfare benefits

Never before, in the history of the state, has there been a Minister of Social Welfare who, despite the current high levels of poverty and unemployment, is so hell-bent on reducing an already inadequate welfare system to shambles.

To say that Mc Creevey is an inappropriate person for the job is an understatement. His argument for reducing welfare entitlements as being the solution to ease burgeoning welfare expenses is indicative of a man who fails to see beyond the simplistic approach !.

A Minister of Social Welfare, should, considering the actual nature of his or her job, be particularly sensitive to the needs of the poor, the unemployed and low-paid workers, as it is their job to reduce the disparity between their position in life and the position of people who are comparatively more financially secure !.

Unfortunately Charlie Mc Creevey is not fulfilling the role required of him as he has already proved that he does not possess the necessary requirements for the role he is supposed to carry out. In fact all he has served to achieve is to further polarise the position of the less well off in Ireland - they are real people with very serious and very real problems, thus they deserve a Minister who possesses the qualities to negate their problems so that they can begin to live their



lives with dignity.

The Department of Social Welfare is a "progressive and caring" agency.

Charlie Mc Creevey

What is particularly disturbing, not to mention insulting, is the fact that Mc Creevey commissioned an advertising company, Doherty Advertising, to create an image for the Department of Social Welfare as being, in his own words, a "progressive and caring" agency. The new image basically consists of a "bird in the hand" logo, but it is their provocative slogan - "We Care For Your Welfare", which is really hard to accept - it is nothing more than a big joke !.

Mr. Mc Creevey please note that it will take a good deal more than a patronising public relations whitewash to convince the unemployed and the poor of this country that their welfare is really your concern and this can be achieved by going out and about to meet the people who are suffering from your unacceptable changes to Ireland's Social Welfare system.

OIREACHTAS JOBS REPORT

Disappointing First Report

Despite the fact Labour Minister Brian Cowan was quoted as saying that he is "very impressed" by the first report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee, the report has not, in reality, produced any original, concrete proposals !. In actual fact some of the proposals seem to conflict with the realities of the Government's actions.

For instance, the report proposes the setting up of a £100 million venture capital fund to aid unemployment, but in this year's Finance Bill, the Government cut allowances for employees who wanted to own a share in the business in which they worked.

Another confusing proposal in the First Report is the suggestion that the Social Employment Scheme should be expanded when in actual fact dozens of SES projects are closing throughout the country because FAS have ceased to provide additional funding to them.

Unfortunately it appears that the committee is not coming up with any ideas to reduce unemployment, instead it appears that they are merely generating a collection of ineffective reports based on unworkable aspirations which in effect gives the impression of tokenism.

The report also suggests increasing the number of available places on various temporary work training and education schemes which were never intended in the first place to act as alternatives to real sustainable jobs. It is necessary that the Government produce concrete ideas on solving the serious issue of unemployment and it appears that these ideas will not be initiated by the Joint Oireachtas Committee in the very near future !.

7,500 DISAPPEAR - HAVE YOU SEEN THEM ?

New method of measuring Irish Unemployment reduces total by 7,500

According to the Department of Labour monthly dole figures, there are 7,500 less people signing on - we at the Connolly Centre For The Unemployed happen to know exactly where they are - they are alive and functioning and are continuing to sign on despite the fact that the Government are convinced that they do not exist !.

In May 1992 the Central Statistics Office introduced a new method (the Standardised Unemployment Rate) of measuring Irish Unemployment because they feel that it will "bring the series more in line with internationally accepted criteria for measuring unemployment".

The group which devised these changes comprises representatives of the Central Statistics Office, Government Departments, and the 'Social Partners'. They decided no longer to count the following categories of people as unemployed :

* People working for 50% or more of the previous four weeks (week-on/week-off workers).
-1,500 cut in monthly figures.

* Self-employed persons in receipt of Unemployment Assistance.

- 3,700 cut in monthly figures. Self-employed persons who earn so little that they still qualify for Unemployment Assistance are being excluded, apparently because they have a high level of 'job attachment'. They must be earning less than £55 per week, they must also prove that they are also available for and seeking full-time employment. This will include those people hit by recent changes in the Social Welfare code in relation to casual work.

In the same month they lowered the pre-retirement scheme qualification age from 58 to 55 cutting a further 2,360 from the dole.

The most important change reduced the unemployment rate from 20.9% of the workforce to only 16.7%.

It is vitally important that people realise that the Government figures fall far short of the real figures. Even at 16.7% the jobless figure is a shame !.

SOCIAL WELFARE ADVICE

Have You Claimed Yet ?

If you are a married woman and were claiming social welfare benefits during the period December 1984 and November 1986, it is likely that you are entitled to receive arrears payments.

The payments are being made since August. The Department of Social Welfare are currently posting out claim forms to women who qualify. It is important that married women who feel that they qualify for back payments and have not yet received the necessary forms from the Department of Social Welfare should call into us here at the centre as we have two Social Welfare Officers who will be more than happy to help you fill out the forms correctly as required.

Also, please note that if you have any other social welfare related problems you should contact either:
Paul Kennedy or Damian Walker at the centre or or ring them at 530803.

STAFF PROFILE

This column is the first in a series whereby staff members of the Connolly Information Centre will be given the chance to inform you, our readers, what it is they do at the Centre besides drinking coffee and smoking like chimneys !.

In this issue we interview **Angela Glen**, our **Employment Placement Officer**. Angela began working at the Centre in May of this year. Her first task was to, in her own words "establish a relationship with Fas so that I would be in a position to fully inform unemployed people who come in to see me about all the available courses and job training schemes.

In the course of dealing with unemployed people seeking work it became clear to me that the Centre should begin to make some in-roads into the jobs crisis in the South Inner City. We decided the best way of doing this was to start off our own **Jobs Register**, this entails people writing down their relevant details on a reg-

istration form so that I can contact them if a suitable vacancy occurs either through Fas or local employers.

We hope to be able to use this Jobs Register as part of our efforts to get the local business community to bring their vacancies to us. My aim for unemployed people on our register is to eventually find them full-time employment within their own community, however having said this, we do need people to be aware of the Jobs Register and the ambitions of the centre as a worthwhile source as a jobs centre. I appeal to all unemployed people living in this area to come in to see me.

I also help people to develop interview skills and will help anybody to write a curriculum vitae and to represent themselves as best they can.

In an effort to make people aware of the services that we have to offer we place posters advertising the Centre and the services

that we provide in the three local Employment Exchanges. So far I have had a good positive reaction from this . We get people who are unemployed ranging in age from 15 up to pre-retirement age who wish to avail of the personal service we offer. The interest in our Jobs Register has surprised us and we believe that we can achieve our objectives although we are fully aware of the fight we have on our hands in order to address the dire unemployment situation which exists in the South Inner City. Demand for the services has been such that we feel the need to eventually expand the service". The following is a list of the services that we provide:

- Compilation of C.V.'s
- Newspapers are made available
- General help and advice about securing employment
- List of available apprentice ships
- ESS and SES jobs noticeboard
- Photocopier is available

Employment Subsidy Scheme - Prone To Exploitation

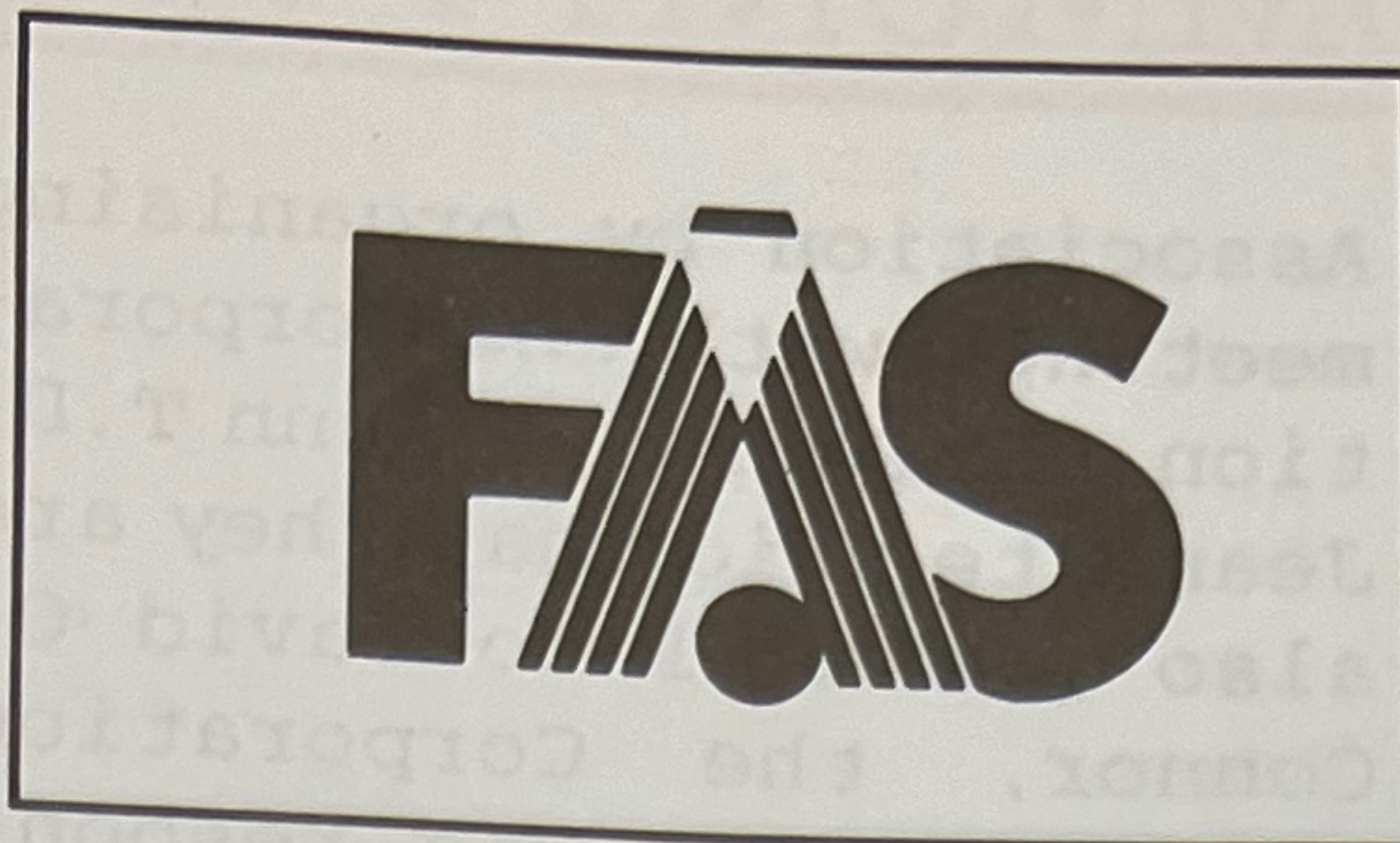
The Employment Subsidy Scheme is the most recent major initiative by the Government to tackle crippling unemployment.

The scheme commenced in February and its aim is to support the creation by employers of 15,000 additional jobs. The support offered by Fas comes in the form of an employment subsidy of £54 per week per employee with the proviso that the job must last for a minimum of 78 weeks.

The Fas information brochure clearly states that an employer must adhere to certain stipulations, the most major one being that the employer must pay the normal wage for the job and it is understood that Fas will vet an employer to ensure that they comply with this.

Unfortunately, this is not the case. In order to increase the number of placements under the scheme, Fas are obviously turning a blind eye to the exploitive rates employers are paying out to ESS workers.

Having carried out extensive research into vacancies advertised under the scheme I encountered rates of pay which I can only describe as pathetic. One example was of a Printing Company



in Dublin 2 who were offering £65 per week for a Printroom Assistant. Bearing in mind that this wage was subsidised to the sum of £54 per week, the company had the audacity to supplement this amount with £11 per week which means that the actual wage they were paying was a mere £11 every week or 14% of the total wage being offered. The rate recommended by the Irish Printers Union for a junior Printroom Assistant is £91.31 per week!

How can Fas claim that they are vetting employers in order to discourage exploitation of the scheme is beyond me as the above position was advertised in their d'Olier Street office, as were all of the jobs that I looked into.

The Employment Subsidy Scheme is an Employers based scheme and it is up to employers as to how the scheme develops.

Fas Press Officer

Other examples included a Service Company in Mulhuddart who were offering a meagre £96 per week for a full time Personal Assistant to a Managing Director. Now this rate of pay can by no means be termed as "the normal wage for the job" as an experienced P.A. to a Managing Director can normally attain a salary of at least £150 per week.

Mr. Charlie Douglas, Press Officer for the A.T.G.W.U., said that he had reservations about this scheme as he feels that it is open to abuse by employers as they may decide to recruit somebody solely because there is a subsidy available.

The ultimate gauge of how badly the scheme is failing is the fact that of the 15,000 available places only 1,361 places have been taken up so it is obvious that the unemployed have no intention of participating in this cheap labour scam.

When contacted, Fas stated that although there will have to be a review of the scheme at some stage it is, as of yet, too soon to do so.

Brian Cowan, the Minister of Employment, is stubbornly refusing to listen to any proposals for improvements to the scheme, despite its obvious failure!

St. Catherine's Church Meath St.

A Shrine to St. Catherine of Alexandria existed in Meath Street since 600 A.D.

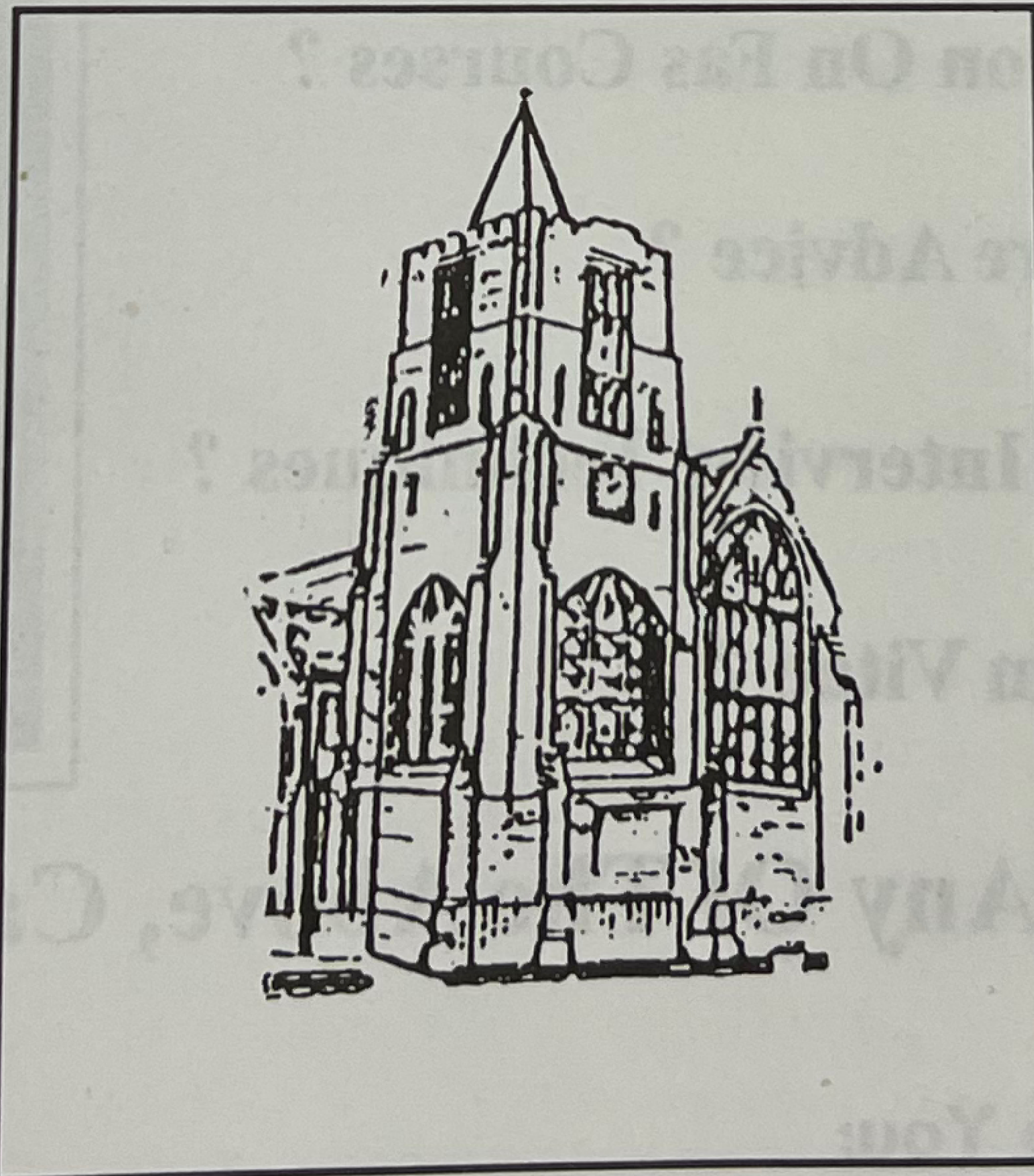
Her Feast was a Holy Day of Obligation up to the 17th Century.

In 1650 the Church moved to Dirty Lane (the top of Bridgefoot St.), where it was the Parish Church for Bridge St., James St. and Kilmainham.

In 1792 the present site was obtained and an octagonal Church was built there.

Another Connolly Research Project

The Connolly Centre released another research project, entitled Diet Nutrition In The South Inner City in August. The project was carried out by Margaret Cole and Martin Griffin and it ser-



The present church was constructed on the same site in 1852 at a cost of £2,000.

ved to discover the dietary habits of Social Welfare recipients living in this area. The survey discovered that there was a definite link between unemployment and bad eating habits.

European Week Of Action Against Unemployment

3rd - 10th October

March Against Unemployment

Tuesday 6th October

Assemble at 1.00pm

The Garden Of Remembrance

**Please Attend The March
And Show The Government
That You Want Positive Action
Against Unemployment**

COMMUNITY FOCUS

In this editions Community focus we interview Mrs. Jeanette Cullen, Chairperson of the Oliver Bond Flats Tenants Association.

Jeanette was born and raised in The Bond, as it is known affectionately amongst the locals. She has been active in the Tenants Association for 10 years and has been Chairperson for the last 4 years.

Jeanette feels that if it were not for the very hard work which the Tenants Association puts in, a lot of the improvements to the Flats would not have taken place, a more recent example of this being the complete internal and external refurbishment of the flats. The refurbishments were initiated by the Tenants

Association by organising meetings with the Corporation and Padraig Flynn T.D. Jeanette said that they are also grateful to David O'Connor, the Corporation Architect who was responsible for the improvements.

Jeanettes Concerns

When Jeanette was asked about the problems which exist in the complex, she replied that she was very concerned about the high rate of unemployment amongst residents which runs as high as 80%. Although Jeanette feels that the vast majority of residents are happy living in The Bond, she feels that there is still a need for more facilities. She feels that there is an urgent need for a bigger community centre

which would house a much needed pre-school as well as providing leisure facilities for teenagers and old folks alike.

Jeanette has been married for 15 years to Joe, a former staff member of The Connolly Centre, and is living in what used to be her grandmothers flat.

Hard Drugs Now Banished

Jeanette is pleased to say that, as a result of the passionate work of the residents, the pushers who once sold heroin in the complex have now been banished and that as a result there are less break-ins.

According to Jeanette The Bond is now a very safe and quiet place and many residents would never consider moving to another area.

CONNOLLY CENTRE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

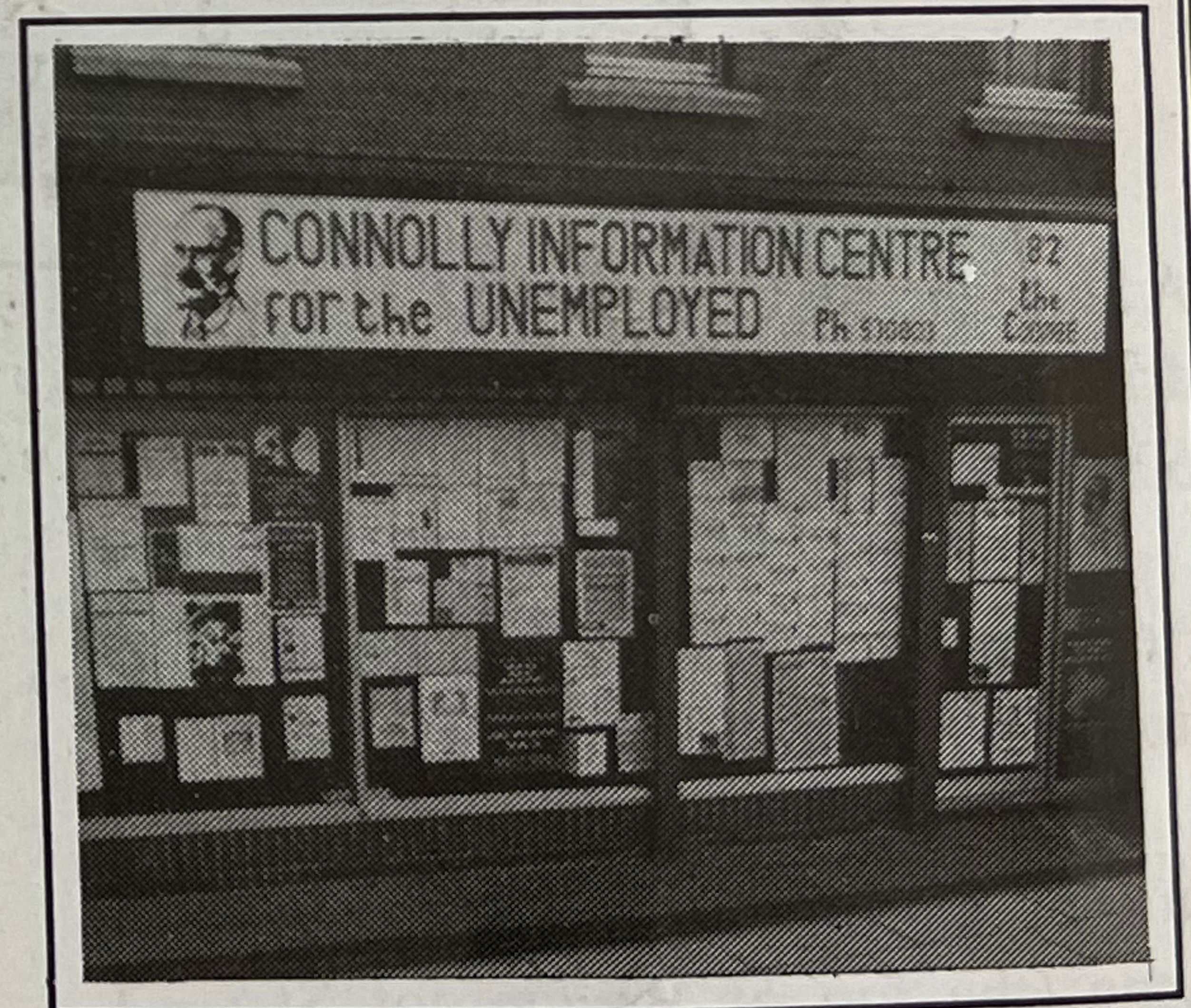
Are You Currently Unemployed ?

Do You Require Information On Fas Courses ?

Do You Need Social Welfare Advice ?

Would You Like To Learn Interview Techniques ?

Do You Need A Curriculum Vitae ?



Well If You Require Any Of The Above, Call Into Us Now !

Our Staff Are Here To Help You:

Employment Officer: Angela Glen

**Social Welfare Officers: Paul Kennedy
Damien Walker**

**Office Hours: 10am - 5pm
Monday - Friday**

The Connolly Centre For The Unemployed, Dublin 8. Tel. 530803

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