

# THE TRADE UNIONIST

NATIONAL  
FEDERATION  
OF SHOP STEWARDS  
AND RANK AND FILE  
COMMITTEES

FIRST ISSUE 5p

## EDITORIAL

Many people have asked: "What are you going to do now that the National Wages Agreement has been accepted?"

The answer is simple. We will continue to fight for workers' rights. It has become obvious that democracy is dying in the trade union movement and it is equally obvious that the job of restoring all workers' rights lies in the hands of the workers themselves.

The time has come once again for the rank and file to organise, to mould ourselves into a cohesive unit, acting together to restore those rights which were handed down to us.

There is an insidious force operating against the working man today: the combined strength of the Federated Union of Employers, the Government and our trade union leaders. All this is pitted against the working man's efforts to raise his standard of living.

The only real strength a worker has is the right to withdraw his labour. If any organisation supports the limiting or taking away of that right it will be acting in the interests of the bosses.

## DEMOCRACY

How many more jobs must be thrown away in productivity deals? Why do unions work at causing redundancy while claiming to be working for our benefit?

Democracy in the trade union movement starts with the free election of your officials, but they are appointed by executives — and removed by executives if they do not toe the line. So they must push the executive's policies and not yours. These same executives are rewarded with senatorships and appointments to Boards of Directors. Here you have the last word in treachery. Judas never had it so good. Maybe if he had been working a productivity deal he would have sold out the twelve apostles as well.

We are dedicated to organising a nation rank and file organisation to cement our strength; to test our ideas; to pass on our experiences to all trade unionists. The strength of rank and file trade unionists must be shown to be united and seen to be nationwide.

At the same time we know we must work within our individual unions in an effort to inform our fellow members that we reject policies of collaboration that led us into national wage agreements.

We believe in the unity of our movement, the unity of the rank and file at the place of work and throughout industry. We believe in unity to pursue full equality for women workers, unity to win a national minimum wage for all workers, and unity in respecting the picket line.

It is to maintain this unity and defend these principles that we write and sell this paper. We hope this paper will always be the workers' paper — arguing your cause, defending your struggles, encouraging solidarity. And stripping bare the lies of the bosses and devious arguments of our corrupt leaders. We hope it will do just that, in the interests of workers throughout the nation.

## SACKINGS THREAT

**O'LEARY, the Minister for Labour, is trying to pull another stroke. A document marked "Confidential", prepared by him, is circulating among the union top brass. It has come into our possession. It spells out plans for the wholesale sacking of trade unionists and protection for scabs.**

— A worker may be sacked for his "conduct" or if management find fault with his "capability, competence or qualifications of the work on which he is employed" This leaves the gate wide open for victimisation and intimidation. Any foreman could use these reasons for sacking a trade unionist any day of the week.

— A worker may be sacked for "some other substantial reason". As if they needed other reasons! This clause would give management a free hand to fire at will.

— A sacked worker may take his case to the Rights Commissioner if the boss doesn't object. If he did object the worker would go to the Labour Court and failing agreement, the decision of the Labour Court would be final. An appeal could be made to the High Court on a point of law only. The cost would be very high.

Few trade unionists who have been in front of the Labour Court would care to place their livelihood in its hands. No working man has the right to expect justice from a Court.

— There is no guarantee that a worker who proves he was unfairly sacked will get his job back. He would receive compensation.

Most employers would have no objections to paying a few hundred pounds to wipe out the trade union organisation on his job.

— Trade unionists may not contest the right of management to make a man redundant, for under the proposed legislation redundancy is now grounds for fair dismissal. At a time of rising redundancies, when trade union action is needed to save every job, this would be a body blow. Redundancy is often used as a convenient way of getting rid of the best trade unionists.

O'Leary's game is simple. He hopes to put an end to the right to strike to defend a victimised worker. We have already known, through years of struggle, that the best way to defend a man is to go outside the gates. Nowhere in his legislation is there a guarantee we will still have that right. He hopes that many workers will believe his system of Commissioners and Courts are the best way to prevent unfair sackings, and the strike weapon will die. Count the men on your job who will take the easy way out and say "let him take it to court". Name the officials who will say "Don't be rash lads, I'll go to Court with him".

It's no accident he sent copies to the union top brass. They hate strikes, but they like an afternoon at the negotiating table. And sure, wouldn't all those cases mean more jobs as Rights Commissioners and

in the Labour Courts. Just the thing for an official who feels the years or his members catching up with him.

The Dublin Shop Stewards Committee issued a statement demanding that the government ratify Convention 135 of the International Labour Organisation which gives shop stewards effective protection from victimisation. If Mr. O'Leary is concerned to help trade unionists, he can tear up his legislation and sign this Convention.

**The Dublin Shop Stewards Committee does not believe that protection legislation will by itself stop victimisation. United trade union action on the shop floor is, and always must be our salvation. That is why we tell O'Leary "the days of hire and fire are gone. You will not bring them back. We will destroy your legislation before you destroy our traditions".**

## CLERY'S ~ WHY THIS STRIKE

By a member of the Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks Strike Committee

600 members of the Clery's sales and clerical staff are now out on strike. The strike has been caused by the arrogant attitude of Clery's management who transferred a man

from the lino department to another section without any consultation with the member's union. This means a loss of wages for the man concerned and highlighted just one of the many unfair aspects of the salesmen's job. This action broke a house agreement

## OFFICIAL STRIKE IN 47th WEEK

Four members of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union were sacked without notice from their jobs, as teachers at the National College of Art and Design in June 1973. Mick O'Flanagan, the Administrator, told the Labour Court they had been "disloyal". They had "made public statements critical of the College" and had "exerted pressure on T.D.'s". They were also accused of meeting with the parents of suspended students. Despite their disbelief at the reasons given, the Labour Court found the College had a "right to dismiss".

The teachers were really sacked for supporting their students who had been wrongfully suspended and were later reinstated after a high court case. The teachers also sought an end to primitive conditions — no contracts, no sick pay, holiday pay, open to instant dismissal etc.

The strikers tenacity has shown the N.C.A.D. Board and Mr. Richard Bourke T.D. and Minister for Education, that sacking is not always an easy solution.

The Board has now set up a sub-committee "to resolve the problem". Further support planned by the Shop Stewards Committee will help the Board's sub-committee come to a speedy solution.

We appeal to trade unionists to support the N.C.A.D. Strike Fund. Send to:

A.T.G.W.U. 112/113 Marlboro St. Dublin 1.





# THEY SMASHED THE WAGE AGREEMENT

by JOHN FINLAY, ATGWU Convenor, Rowntree Mackintosh  
Years of anger and frustration with abysmally low pay and long hours, felt by the 600 members of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union has finally begun to catch up with the Rowntrees management. For four years Rowntrees have hidden behind the National Wage Agreement to stop a decent basic and a just bonus. On Saturday 20th April, in the presence of Mr. McAuley, President of the Federated Union of Employers, the slim protection of the National Wages Agreement was removed and Rowntrees had to concede:

1. A substantial rise in bonus rates.  
Males: 4p an hour at 125 performance, amounting to £3.11 per hour after June 1st.  
Females: 4p an hour at 125 performance, amounting to £2.09 per hour after June 1st.
2. Retrospective payment to March 11th, with the Rights Commissioner to examine the claim back to January 1st.
3. Negotiations on a consolidated high day rate.

This big advance came after 6 months of fruitless negotiations through normal channels. Yet one week of a work to rule, which cut production to 13% of normal, achieved this result.

This action was a blatant breach of the National Wages Agreement, for under its terms no industrial action may be taken to secure an improvement in bonus rates. To make matters worse for the upholders of the National Wages Agreement, we gave no increase in production to "justify" the increase in bonus, another flagrant breach of the N.W.A.

We appreciated this with pleasure. Mr. McAuley and Rowntrees appreciated it with barely concealed alarm. Matt Merrigan, District Secretary of the A.T.G.W.U. made a suggestion to them as to where they could put the copy of the National Wages Agreement they were waving at us. We feel that no agreement can be allowed to stand in the way of our members' living standards. In the whole of the Sugar and Confectionary trade the basic rates are:

Males £23.09 — Females £17.05  
To make matters worse, our bonus payments had not been updated since 1963. The ratio of bonus to basic had dropped as follows:

Males from 33% to 16%  
Females from 33% to 10%  
So the Company were selling their goods at 1974 prices and paying 1963 bonus for it. To make ends meet we had to work 12 hours overtime week in, week out. We aim to put an end to this disgrace in the next six months by obtaining a

The Corporation workers and Confectionery workers have broken the Wage Agreement. Few thought they had industrial strength. What they have done, so can you.

by JOHN O'MEARA AUEW SHOP STEWARD

The Corporation strike was justified. The final settlement gave us a salary structure, the main principle of the claim. Annual rises will mean an improvement of £5 on the basic after 11 years (pre National Wage Agreement sum). Yet we know it falls well short of our original expectations, including both existing service pay and dirty money. Increases are small at the bottom of the scale. But we gave little in return, just a willingness to negotiate, which means nothing. So we broke the National Wage Agreement.

The Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers led the unofficial action that started the strike. Events proved us right. After two years of negotiations the unions involved and the Shop Stewards Committee was stalling and hiding behind the National Wage Agreement, even though it had just been rejected. It was a case of "now or never".

## CONSOLIDATED HIGH DAY RATE.

Overtime and bonus rates will be incorporated into our basic rate for a standard 40 hour week. In addition we will be seeking a % rise in this rate as the cost of living rises; 2/3 of full pay on retirement and improvements in sick pay and holiday pay. The company will be looking for concessions but we knocked the idea of reducing manning on the head and we are adamant the company will not have the right to make permanent workers redundant.

I hope that we have gone a long way to achieving, will be taken up throughout the Sugar and Confectionary trade and beyond. If your members are solidly behind you, the National Wage Agreement isn't worth the paper it's written on. We have broken the Agreement; McAuley of the Federated Union of Employers knows it, McGrath, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions industrial relations officer knows it. We ignored the Steering Committee of the Employer/Labour Conference who wanted us to attend a meeting to rule us out of order. We have proved that if you take action, you can deal direct with your employer and make him meet your members' demands. The National Wages Agreement can only tie you down if you think of it as a holy law not to be broken. It's up to you, brothers and sisters to flood in behind the bridge head we have made.

In some ways our strike should have been more united. In my opinion it was not our action against the employer, but weak and unprincipled trade unionism at the top of the trade unions that was to blame. Our strike was a threat to their holy cow, the National Wage Agreement". The outright supporters of that Agreement wanted our strike smashed in case we jeopardised another deal. The verbal opponents were against us because we would show up their words for what they were. So the general workers were ordered to cross the pickets, while the craft union leaders spent their time selling us the deal and getting us back

We are much clearer now about the way ahead. You cannot have a united strike without a united organisation at the start. We played a part in forming a joint stewards committee to fight the claim. We found some sections had no stewards and others needed tougher stewards. The committee got off the ground but remained too much a talking shop. Now we need a strong committee with the support of the men that can give a lead when the officials let us down.

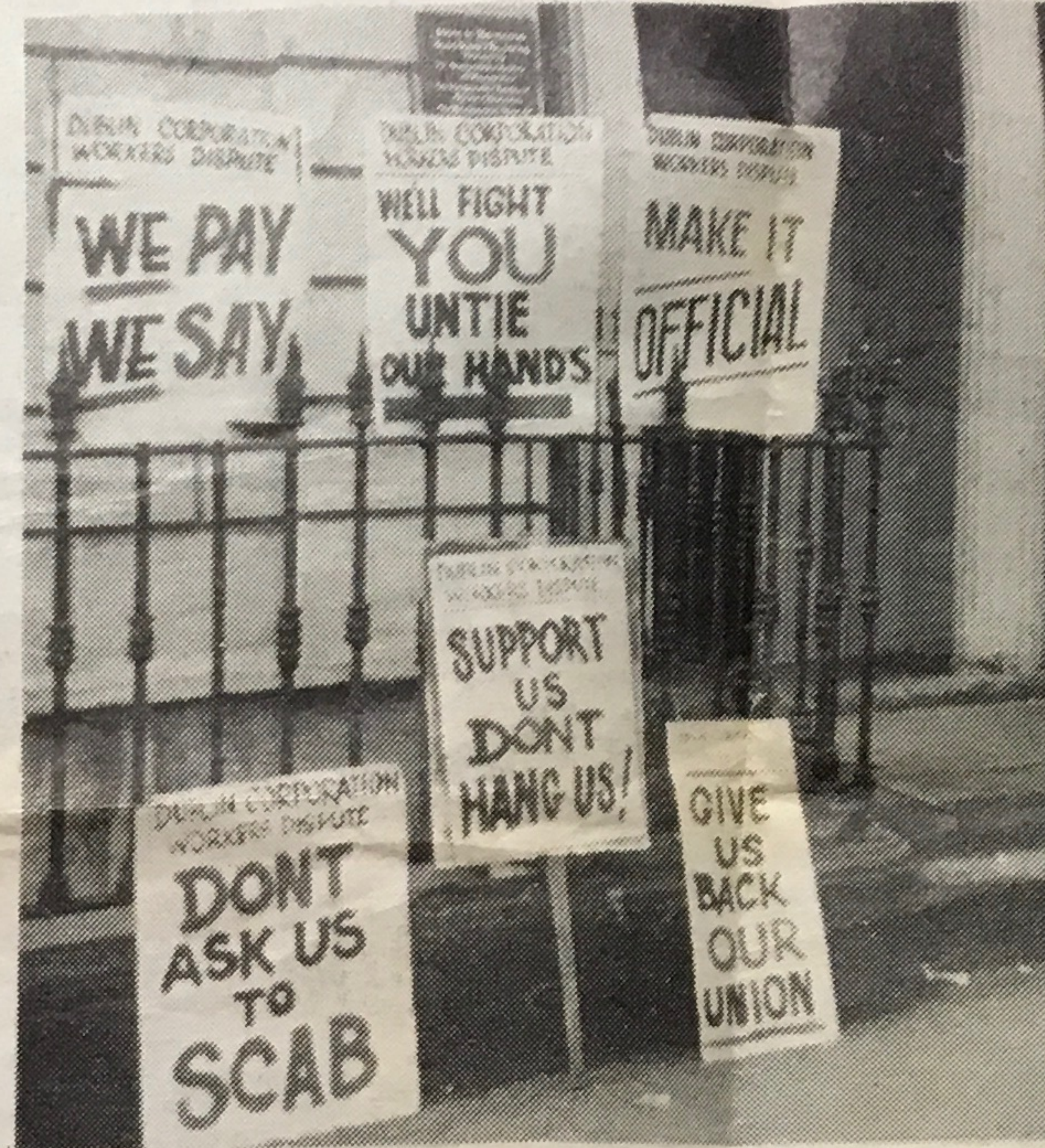
It will be very important to build on the common ground we have with the general workers. Some stood resolute by us in the strike and we must organise jointly with them. We cannot complain of them while our own house needs putting in order. We have a job on hand but we have the will to win.

by Tony Murray N.E.E.T.U. Engineering Section Committee

I believe there are many lessons to be learnt from the recent Corporation strike and the most important is there must be no more National Wage Agreements.

The claim for a salary scale — similar to that in the Electricity Supply board — had been lodged with the Corporation for approximately TWO YEARS. A group of shop stewards formed an ad-hoc committee towards the end of 1973 to press the maintenance craft group of unions into processing the claim. However the second lesson we learnt to our cost was that the full time officials of the unions — with a few notable exceptions — wanted to carry on hiding behind the National Wages Agreement and allows the Irish Congress of Trade Unions do less than half the job for which they were elected and paid.

The unions allowed the Corporation to hedge negotiations with them until the second draft of the National Agreement had been fiddled through and foisted on the workers of the country. With the Agreement signed, they went to negotiate



B. O'Brien, U.C.A.T.T. Shop Steward, Dublin Corporation

At 9 a.m. on the morning of the 27th of March members of the Dublin Corporation Craftsmen Shop Stewards Committee placed a picket on the H.Q. of the Irish region of the U.C.A.T.T. at 35 Lr. Sean McDermott St. Those involved were painters, carpenters and slaters, all members of U.C.A.T.T. the union with the largest number of craftsmen employed by the Corporation, approx. 350. The picket was a protest at the treacherous performance of the officials concerned in the dispute which at this stage was in its fifth week. Three of the twelve unions involved N.E.E.T.U., E.T.U. and the A.E.U.W., had by this time made the strike official. All twelve unions had rejected an offer which came nowhere near the demand for parity with the E.S.B. craftsmen. It wasn't an offer, it was an insult and the U.C.A.T.T. members rejected it by a massive majority, 116 against 6 for. We felt at this stage that the delegates concerned, Gibney and Courage, should

with their hands tied behind their backs, and a sword hanging over their heads of being called before the Employer Labour Conference and ruled in contravention of the National Agreement.

The treacherous role of Congress and their use of the two tier picket then became evident. Under rule, the unions can instruct their members to cross pickets and this they did. Congress acted like Devil's advocate, in pointing out a resolution passed at the 1973 Annual

make the strike official already on Unofficial we had not been we out of work because official pickets despite from our delegate to demanded that the s official and once again "This union is not in Corporation. Go back the official pickets", with the Regional Secretary that he wasn't even a Since this man lives in Dublin one is inclined he had been doing well during the five previous proceeded to tell us that from his involvement building strike that st anyone anywhere. He then told us that somewhere else and v It was then decided th would have to be a lit picket. A number of r in occupation.

Delegate Conference, payment of strike pay respect another unions failed to challenge the papers.

Brother Brennan, su and Courage, demanded into the strike to see w of trouble makers are ever published, I am co show it was the condit individuals that were th

# O'LEARY'S BILL : EQUAL PAY NO NEARER

BY ANNE SPEED ITGWU NO. 2 BRANCH

O'Leary, the Minister of Labour has promised legislation giving women equal pay. But a closer look at the Anti-Discrimination (pay) Bill shows just how fraudulent that claim is. The Bill is riddled with loopholes.

1. Where a woman is working in an establishment which employs only women, she has no right to claim equal pay, even if there are men working next door to her for the same employer doing identical work.
2. If women in one branch of a large firm win a claim for equal pay, women in other branches of the same firm do not automatically receive the award also.
3. Many employers pay women at a rate lower than any grade of male workers. No steps are taken in the bill to outlaw the practice of having a separate rate specifically for women workers.
4. A woman who is victimised by an

employer for pursuing an equal pay claim receives limited compensation but cannot be reinstated.

5. Most important of all, no equal pay claim can be proved without women entering a job evaluation scheme. This legislation merely reinforces the unjust terms of the National Wages Agreement. It will be necessary for women to prove that the work they do is equal to that of men or is of equal value. This is to be decided by management's time and motion men who will decide what skills and attributes women workers possess. Clearly little justice can be expected.

What makes this legislation all the more galling, is that since the publication of the Commission's "Report on the Status of Women", equal pay has become a matter of widespread concern to trade unionists. This has not been matched by the government, the employers or the leadership of the trade union movement. Their concern in the question of equal pay has a different motive.

The employers are interested simply because women are becoming increasingly important in the manufacturing and administrative branches of industry. The work is badly paid and they hope a gimmick will induce more women back to industry.

There are now 5,000 more women employed in the manufacturing sector, and 20,000 more in clerical jobs than 10 years ago.

As for the leaders of the unions, they have been able to ignore this social injustice since very few women have played a part in union affairs. According to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Information Bulletin, only 0.5% of women trade unionists have played an active part in union affairs.

The trade union leadership prefer an apathetic membership, but recently the effects of three National Wage Agreements and rubbish about them helping the low paid have spurred many female trade unionists into action on equal pay. This change in the climate of the trade

union movement has been quickly detected by O'Leary who introduced the bill to head off any real militancy about equal pay and lead this legitimate demand into the dead end of job evaluation.

The loopholes in the bill have been attacked within the trade union movement and by radical women's organisations, which has forced the union leaderships to criticise the bill. A few weeks ago the I.T.G.W.U. said of the bill, "It will be welcomed by the trade union movement in general and women workers in particular". You can judge the sincerity of their new found criticisms.

It is clear that the rank and file of the movement, women workers in particular, are the force to change this bill. We must through our union branches, pass resolutions condemning this legislation. We must put pressure on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to get full equality for women workers. The need is for the rates of pay of women workers to be raised to those of male workers throughout industry now without the trap of job evaluation.

## National Federat

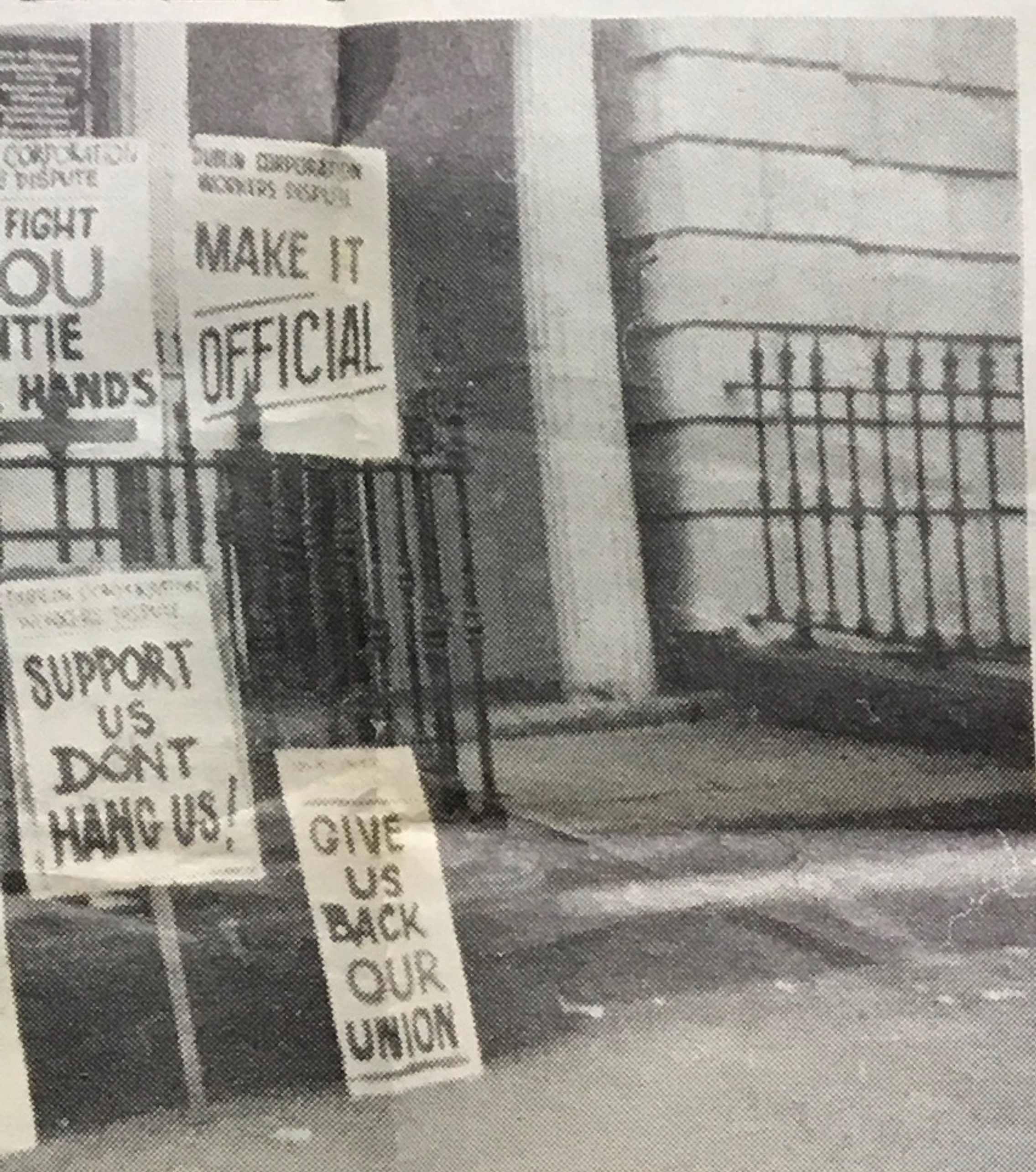
On April 20th, a National Shop Stewards and Rank Committees was established important and welcome together in a permanent trade unionists who made the National Wage Agreement aftermath of its acceptance a national rank and file discussed and the representatives were unanimous that such was necessary in a while besides wages, including equal pay, trade union rights for greater democracy in An organising committee to meet bi-monthly, with of assisting affiliated groups publicity and the growth of committees in new areas. It was also agreed that a committee should be based paper was to serve national news. The affiliated committee contacted as follows:

DUBLIN  
CORK

30 Strand  
Dublin 3.  
J. Kelleher  
Mayfield.



# AGREEMENT!



Shop Stewards picketed on the H.Q. of U.C.A.T. At St. Those involved were slaters, all the union with craftsmen employed approx. 350. The treacherous officials concerned in this stage was in its twelve unions E.T.U. and the time made the twelve unions had come nowhere near with the E.S.B. offer, it was an T.T. members rejected 116 against 6 for. ge that the delegates and Courage, should

Delegate Conference, pro-hibiting the payment of strike pay to those who respect another unions picket. The unions failed to challenge their statement in the papers. Brother Brennan, supported by Mulhall and Courage, demanded a sworn enquiry into the strike to see who the "handfull of trouble makers are". If the results are ever published, I am confident that it will show it was the conditions and not individuals that were the cause of the dispute.

## National Federation formed

On April 20th, a National Federation of Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committees was established. This is an important and welcome step, bringing together in a permanent organisation those trade unionists who made contact during the National Wage Agreement talks and the aftermath of its acceptance. The need for a national rank and file organisation was discussed and the representatives present were unanimous that such a development was necessary in a while number of areas besides wages, including redundancies, equal pay, trade union rights and the need for greater democracy in the unions. An organising committee was set up, to meet bi-monthly, with the responsibility of assisting affiliated groups with meetings, publicity and the growth of rank and file committees in new areas. It was also agreed that while the editorial committee should be based in Dublin, the paper was to serve national needs and carry national news. The affiliated committees can be contacted as follows:

**DUBLIN** 30 Strandville Ave. Nrt. Strand Dublin 3.  
**DUBLIN 3.** J. Kelleher, 47 Corrib Lawn Mayfield, Cork

# A good night's work UNION NEWS

by DERMOT O'KELLY ITGWU Section Committee Secretary  
**CLONDALKIN PAPER MILLS**

300 hundred workers at Clondalkin Paper Mills have been operating an overtime ban for 8½ months. The men, members of the Workers Union of Ireland, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and the Bookbinders and Allied Trades Union are claiming time and a quarter for shift work, double time for Saturdays and double time for working two shifts in 24 hours.

The claim is fuelled by a deep felt anger at the miserable rates being paid at the moment for shifts that cuts across social life, disrupts the family and is, quite simply, dehumanising. Every worker is a living testimony to the physical effects of this system.

Clondalkin Paper Mills is controlled by C.A. Cusack, former President of the Federated Union of Employers, and he has brought the "wealth of experience" gained in that position to bear on Clondalkin workers. A tough line has been taken throughout the negotiations.

In 1972, the Irish Transport and General Workers Union passed a resolution at Annual Conference that the Union would seek time and a quarter for shift work. There is no evidence in 1974 that the union has taken any steps to fight for this. The claim has been entered under the Anomalies clause of the 14th round of the National Wage Agreement. The

Company has stubbornly refused to meet the claim. Here is Mr. Cusack's solution to the problem; "1974 will be a rough and bumpy year but facing it with courage and determination, we will ensure discharge our responsibilities to our Families, the Company (of which we are all part), and our Country". In 1974 and we were expected to swallow it! What this meant for the men was seen in the Labour Court recommendation, which to honour of the men, offered a rise of 1 2/3rd %.

The devious effects of inter union squabbles has not helped. While the men have been of one mind, the executives of the two unions have played politics at the expense of the men on the shop floor. The I.T.G.W.U. has been half-hearted about the claim from the start, while the W.U.I. backed down at a crucial stage.

The men have been fighting a long hard battle, and we took a big step forward when the men undertook a 6-day sit-in in defence of the claim. The men have shown the Company their strength and determination in spite of threatened redundancies, short time working and general intimidation from management. It is to the credit of the men that they are still pursuing a claim they believe to be just. This fight will prove to be but the first step towards big advances for the membership at Clondalkin and a move towards industrial peace — providing just claims are met.

The Post Office Officials Association conference in Athlone on April 21st has passed relatively unnoticed. The title of the Association has been changed to include the word "Union", a welcome step. Executive meetings will be held outside Dublin to ensure that no one group find it easier to attend. A major motion to set under way a campaign for full civil rights for trade union members, to organise without interference from management was passed. The Civil Service scheme of conciliation and arbitration, which bars all trade unions from negotiating for permanent civil servants, was condemned.

Hours of work were criticised. 43½ hours is the regular working week. Women are excluded from night duty allowance although they work till 8.00 p.m. while Sunday time is not yet paid at double time. Action was demanded about the situation where men of 30 years service are still called temporary. The battle to improve trade unionism in the civil service is hotting up.

## ANNUAL MEETING

At the Annual meeting of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, No. 16 branch, two important resolutions were passed which will be of interest to all trade unionists. Clondalkin Paper Mills trade unionists proposed a resolution that paper would not in future be supplied to non union houses. A resolution was also passed instructing branch secretaries to actively pursue the 1972 Conference decision that shift work be rewarded at time and a quarter.

## COACHMAN DEPARTS

By BRIAN O'CONNOR ITGWU  
 After a five week strike at "The Coachman Inn", the Labour Court found in favour of the strikers. The strike arose when the boss, Mr. Frank Quinn sacked the bar manager without explanation. When the other workers asked the reason why, they were told it was none of their business and he could sack who he liked. The barmen rightly saw this as victimisation and went on strike with the full support of their union, N.U.V.G.A.T.A. When the boss learned of the Labour Court ruling, rather than face the men and with what looks like simple spite, he sold the premises to Madigans as a vacant premises.

## REGULAR MEETINGS

Kevin Duff, No. 14 Branch ITGWU Vice-President writes about the A.G.M. on 21st April  
 There is an urgent need to improve participation at branch level so that the branch becomes a forum for the views of the membership. We need regular meetings for which proper notice is given and to which all members can come. A resolution to this effect was passed at the A.G.M.

Participation is low at present because members don't feel that their opinions matter. Although 500 members attended a meeting on the National Wage Agreement and none spoke for it, yet at the end of the day the Agreement was accepted. When that happens our members must feel "Whats the use? Our views aren't heard anyway." But we have to make our views heard and this means a huge job of educating and informing our members.

Our meeting took place in Liberty Hall which was built in memory of Connolly and Larkin. There is no reason why the struggle they began should not continue today. We need to get a reform movement going, to put pressure on the union officials to do more than give the age-old financial reports. We cannot allow the unions to become white elephants, especially today.

## KOSANGAS VICTORY

by NOEL REDIGAN, ITGWU SHOP STEWARD  
**KOSANGAS**  
 Our members at Kosangas, here in Dublin at Longmile Road and Alexandra Road, and in Cork at Middleton and Whitegate have recently completed a successful strike which lasted three weeks. We obtained an apology from management for causing the strike and £62 back money as compensation.

Management refused four members the right to use the canteen. On March 28th management had planned to hold their Christmas Dinner (!) The men in question wanted their normal lunch but were physically prevented from entering by management despite there being 13 places available. The change from normal facilities being available was taken only 15 minutes before the lunch break, without consulting the shop stewards. Normally 10 days notice and consultation takes place.

A delegation from Dublin visited the members in Cork who agreed to take part in strike action. Good relations with members in Cork exist because we keep in regular contact.

**We hope "The Trade Unionist" will be read throughout the trade union movement.**

**You can help by selling copies in your place of work and union branch.**

Name .....

Address .....

No. of copies .....

**Fill this out today — send to:  
 40 Upper Rutland street,  
 Dublin 1.**

**I wish to apply for membership of the Dublin Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committee:**

Name .....

Address .....

Union (and) Position .....

**Send to K. Quinn 30 Strandville Avenue  
 Dublin 3.**

## CLEARING THE AIR

### EDITORIAL POLICY

The editorial committee was elected at a general meeting of the membership. We are prepared to accept as ARTICLES, contributions from trade unionists which are in general agreement with the aims of the committee. We will accept as LETTERS for publication, articles which are opposed to the general views of the Committee.

No article or letter will be censored. We would like to point out that signed articles do not necessary represent the views of the Committee. Also contributors are responsible for the contents of their article only, and not the articles of other contributors.

Articles and letters should be sent to:

**The Editorial Committee  
 40 Upper Rutland Street  
 Dublin 1.**

### MEMBERSHIP

At the first meeting of the Committee at the Matt Talbot Hall on 28th November, the conditions of Membership were laid down. They are:

1. Shop stewards
2. Branch Committee members
3. With the approval of the Committee, trade unionists who represent a substantial body of opinion at their place of work.

Accordingly, if you are interested in joining the Committee, we invite you to apply for membership to the Committee's officers. It is necessary to point out, since there has been deliberate confusion about the qualifications of membership sown by those who do not support the Committee, that the conditions for membership are the same today as they were when the Committee first formed.

The editorial committee would like to say that this newspaper will never be a vehicle for sectarian attacks, and we invite other publications to set the same standards.

### CLARIFICATION

During the Dublin Corporation Strike, it was announced on RTE that the "Shop Stewards Committee" had advised the men to return to work. The Committee referred to was the "Joint Craft Unions Shop Stewards Committee" and not the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee who supported the Corporation strikers throughout.

- GALWAY** T. Shanahan C/o Galway Crystal  
**DROGHEDA** M. McGuinness 9 Patrick St. Drogheda  
**SLIGO** V. Hunt 28 St. Edwards Tee. Sligo.  
**DUNDALK** W. Rainey, Jenkinstown, Dundalk  
**WATER-FORD** D. Cheesty, 48 Woodlawn Grove, Cork Rd. Waterford  
 The National Federation can be contacted through: D. Whelan 38 Aran Quay Dublin.

Clery's continued  
 whereby any dispute must be discussed jointly before action is taken by either side. In this case the man involved was accused by Clery's of "inefficiency" and this unjust accusation was not open to question as far as they were concerned. The action typifies the dictatorial take-it-or-leave-it attitude Clery's have always adopted to their staff, especially over the past two or three years.  
 The workers at Clery's are calling on the general public and fellow trade unionists for the fullest support for our strike. The inconvenience caused is the fault of the management. We demand that they re-instate the transferred man in his original job.



## GETTING ORGANISED

by BERTIE GALBRAITH A.T.G.W.U.  
SHOP STEWARD REG ARMSTRONG'S

Safety is a dirty word in Irish industry. A man is expected to work in appalling conditions and suffer these conditions without a word of objection.

Managements have been getting away with murder, by ignoring and when necessary victimising and intimidating workers who dared complain about conditions that are a danger to health, life and limb.

Men are told that bad conditions are the hazards of the job and that the men are not forced to work and can leave at any time. If you work in a job where conditions are bad and safety at a minimum form a safety committee, get a mandate from the men and bring the factory inspector in. Don't expect him to solve your problems though, you will still have to force management to change things. If you register your committee with the Department of Industry and Commerce, the employer must recognise you (but he will be entitled to a rep. on the committee).

It may take some time to eliminate all the hazards but an active safety committee can achieve justice from an employer without fear of victimisation.

To assist in the formation of a safety committee consult your union or the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee.

*If you wish to highlight unsafe conditions on your job, or let other trade unionists know of progress you have made, write in to "The Trade Unionist", as we hope articles on safety will be a regular feature.*

### A statement from the Working Committee for the establishment of National Apprentices Association, to *The Trade Unionist*:

This committee is a development of a resolution which was moved at a Seminar on Apprenticeship in Liberty Hall, 17th November 1973. Since this date it has been active in organising meetings of apprentices from all the training colleges in Dublin, and at present it is preparing to organise meetings in Regional Technical Colleges throughout the country. At the moment our main task is to inform all apprentices in big and small workshops of our existence.

Membership of the Association is open to all apprentices and young craftsmen, but they must leave when they reach the age of 24. This ensures that the Association remains in the hands of apprentices. We decided on this age limit because some apprentices finish their time as young as 20, so it was felt important to retain their experience. Most apprentices only realise the problems of apprenticeship in their 4th or 5th year and only then feel like doing something.

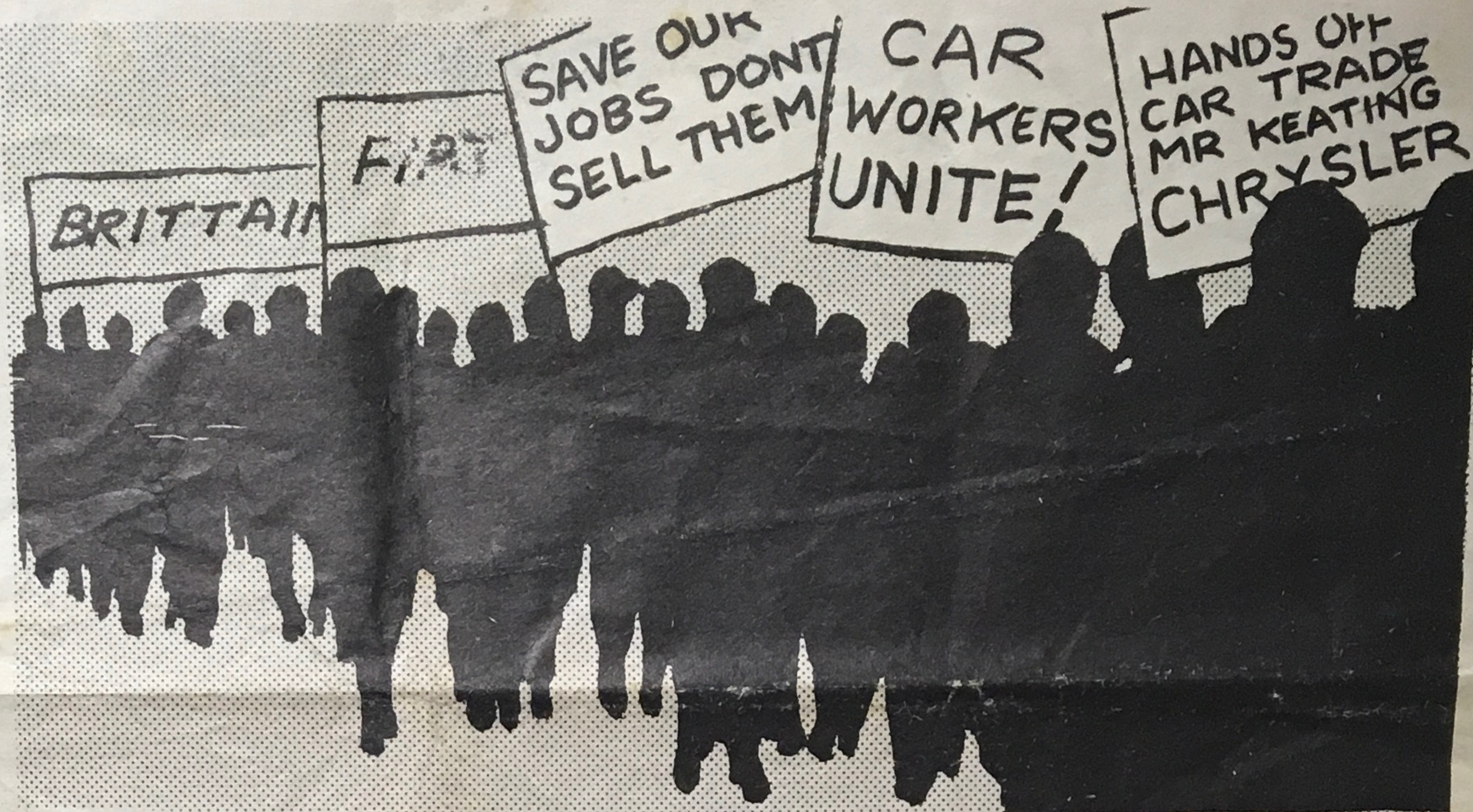
Our main aims at the moment are:

1. To establish contact with other apprentices' groups around the country and establish communication links.
2. Compile in document form the problems and needs of these groups.
3. Establish communications with craft unions.
4. Attract funds.
5. Hold a National Conference to formally establish and constitute a National Apprentices Association as soon as possible.

Certainly one of the most important tasks is to discuss with the different trade unions the problems of apprentices and to get their views. We did write to all craft unions informing them of our existence. Reactions from the unions have been slow so far, although we have received some positive replies. We would hope for more interest from the trade union movement on the question of apprentices and apprenticeship, for the whole question of training is really important for the future.

Then there is the problem of finance, especially for an apprentices association, which relies entirely on the donations of its members. This limits the work we can do in many ways and therefore donations are gratefully received.

Any apprentice interested in attending



# CARS CRISIS

The British Leyland assembly plant at Kimmage is likely to be the test case for Irish car assembly workers. Negotiations are taking place to transfer assembly workers to Ballyfermot to make car frames in place of Leyland cars. Under the terms of entry to the EEC the car assembly firms must provide suitable alternative employment if they close by 1985.

Many workers at Kimmage are concerned at the way negotiations are going, and feel that they will get a raw deal that will set the pattern for other assembly plants. Last October a notice was posted, without consulting the men, that the new work would start 3 months either side of January 1975. Not everybody was guaranteed a job, only those "suitable for retraining". The union officials, unknown to the men, had been negotiating for several weeks with management. They had allowed a licence for shift work to go through without objection. At the first joint meeting of AGEMOU and ATGWU members, Frank Stuart, District Organiser, didn't tell the men it involved night work and had "left behind" the correspondence referring to the granting of the shift licence. A further meeting was held and a request was made for a meeting on the shop-floor, which was never held. At the third meeting, only a brief outline of negotiations was given, thereby stopping the men drawing their own conclusions from the details involved.

It has since come to light that the suitable alternative employment offered is not at all suitable. There will be a loss of money. Instead of the district rate paid at present, plus 25% bonus, there will be flat time with no bonus, and 1/6 for shift work. There is talk of making shift work "attractive" but nothing more definite.

Retraining at AnCO will be very inconvenient, and amangement will be able

to pick and choose who they want. About 20% of the men will be too old for retraining and shift work will stop as many again from taking the new employment.

A meeting was held on Friday 3rd May to hear a report back on an instruction given to the union officials to tell management shift work was unacceptable. The full time officials were not at all successful and are now pushing for early and late day shifts, which is just as unacceptable. A request for a further meeting was refused by Steward, since he feared a further meeting will take up a motion placed at the last meeting instructing union negotiators to withdraw from negotiations.

The situation is vague and no guarantees have been received on a number of issues.

1. Will there be a loss of earnings?
2. Will all 120 production jobs be saved?
3. Will all present employees receive an offer of employment?
4. What will happen to the men who cannot retrain or work night shift?

The unions may let things drift until the new work starts and then it will be too late.

The AGEMOU officials have paid the problem little attention. The ATGWU have shifted from their policy of no redundancies to no redundancies at any price, even if the work is not suitable alternative employment (i.e. loss of earnings and night shifts). Those of us who attended the carworkers' march last June are disappointed the fine words and fighting policy spoken of is not being put into practice. Some of us will be starting a fighting fund, and we appeal to other carworkers to help us put the officials back on the right course. This is in your interests too.

J. HANLON A.G.E.M.O.U.

## FIAT: Workers defend sacked steward

A clear and definite example of the unity and solidarity of the workers employed in Fiat (Ireland) Ltd. emerged from the recent strike (18th April) in the company when the entire workforce of assembly workers, clerical workers, supervisory staff, mechanics and general workers came out in support of the A.G.E.M.U.O. shop steward and a member of the ATGWU WHO HAD BOTH BEEN SUSPENDED.

As light personal conflict between the workers involved appeared to give management the opportunity to carry out this high-handed action and the men in

our meetings, which are held once every two weeks, should contact the Secretary.

Peter Davitt  
29 Richmond Cottages  
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Dublin 1.

question were only informed of their suspension as they were leaving the workshop at normal finishing time.

Contrary to normal procedure the company's wild-cat action was taken without consultation with the mens' unions. Again, contrary to normal practice on the job the shop-steward was given no opportunity to discuss the issue with the men in the canteen or to contact the union. In this situation there was no alternative but to resort to that traditional and formidable weapon, which every worker has at his disposal, the picket.

In the minds of the Fiat workers the picket is still sacrosanct and its appearance was accepted without argument in the spirit that an injury against one is an injury against all.

Faced with this well organised strike, management wilted and made a feeble

## Cars action committee

BERNIE HOULIHAN, a member of the A.T.G.W.U. Automotive and Vehicle Building Branch, and a delegate to the Dublin Council of Trade Unions writes

Since entry into the E.E.C. redundancies have been occurring throughout industry at an alarming rate, with unions and governments doing little or nothing to prevent further closures and dismissals.

The government have it within their power to prevent this from happening, but it would seem they are being dictated to by the multi-national companies who indulge in a type of blackmail which threatens sanctions such as withdrawal of capital. If, as seems likely, the government will give in to these pressures, then the trade union movement must fight this issue and convince its members that paltry redundancy payments can never compensate for full employment.

Many union executives are apathetic, since they accept redundancy as a necessary feature of industrial life, thus ignoring fundamental trade union principles.

The motor assembly industry is a typical example of an industry which was written off by the government and unions alike in the early 60s but due to the resistance and determination of the workers this industry (despite the lifting of tariffs under the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement and entry into the Common Market) has survived. Redundancy can be fought and no-one, or group of union executives can decide that it must be accepted. In the final analysis it is the rank and file member who must fight to ensure that a policy of "NO REDUNDANCY" is being implemented, otherwise he will have no alternative but to accept the decision of those whose sole concern is profit at any cost.

gesture to the shop steward to withhold the suspension for another day, to enable talks to take place. But the strike had now begun: all of Fiat's premises, head office, assembly plant and service department were closed completely. The men were now bargaining from a position of strength and management in their anxiety to get production going again were compelled to set up an immediate meeting between the unions, top management and shop stewards.

At this meeting the company were forced to admit they acted hastily, and had no option but to reinstate the suspended workers immediately.

A total victory was gained by the workers, but full praise must be given to the officials and members of both A.G.E.M.O.U. and A.T.G.W.U. for the active support they gave. GERRY KEANE



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