

• IRISH OPINION •

The VOICE OF LABOUR

EDITED BY CATHAL O'SHANNON.

NEW SERIES. VOL. I, No. 26.

MAY 25, 1918.

ONE PENNY

Tadhg Barry
on Skill.

“A.E.” agus
Lucht Oibre.

The National
Will.

The SHORTT Way.

Men shall clap their hands at him
And shall hiss him out of his place

—Job, XXVII., 23.

(As Passed by Censor.)

We publish this document, but accept no responsibility for the statements therein made, nor can we vouch for their accuracy.

By the Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland.

FRENCH.

Whereas it has come to our knowledge that certain subjects of his Majesty the King, domiciled in Ireland, have conspired to enter into, and have entered into, treasonable communication with the German enemy;

And whereas such treachery is a menace to the fair fame of Ireland and its glorious military record, a record which is a source of intense pride to a country whose sons have always distinguished themselves and fought with such heroic valour in the past, in the same way as thousands of them are now fighting in this war;

And whereas drastic measures must be taken to put down this German plot, which measures will be solely directed against that plot;

Now therefore we the Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland have thought fit to issue this, our proclamation, declaring, and it is hereby declared as follows:—

That it is the duty of all loyal subjects of his Majesty to assist in every way his Majesty's Government in Ireland to suppress this treasonable conspiracy and to defeat the treacherous attempt of the Germans to defame the honour of Irishmen for their own ends.

That we hereby call upon all loyal subjects of his Majesty in Ireland to aid in crushing the said conspiracy, and, so

far as in them lies, to assist in securing the effective prosecution of the war and the welfare and safety of the Empire;

That, as a means to this end, we shall cause still further steps to be taken to facilitate and encourage voluntary enlistment in Ireland in his Majesty's Forces, in the hope that without resort to compulsion the contribution of Ireland to those Forces may be brought up to its proper strength and made to correspond to the contributions of other parts of the Empire.

Given at his Majesty's Castle of Dublin this sixteenth day of May, one thousand nine hundred and eighteen.

EDWARD SHORTT,

Psalm 137.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

Upon the willows in the midst thereof, we hanged up our harps.

For there they that led us captive required of us songs, and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying; Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem;

Who said, rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

O daughter of Babylon, that art to be destroyed; happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock.

AINSI SOIT-IL.

The VOICE OF LABOUR

Edited by GATHAL O'SHANNON.

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THE FIRST ROUND.

(As Passed by Censor.)

The efforts of the nation to defeat Conscription have for the moment—but only for the moment—succeeded. The Proclamation of Lord French indicates that the British War Cabinet has been compelled to alter its tactics. It has turned to the old policy, worn thin by frequent use, of attempting to divide the nation.

The kidnapping of the popular leaders on the charge of treasonable communication with Germany is obviously designed to prejudice the friends of Ireland in America, Australia, Canada, France, and Russia—not to speak of the growing number of sympathisers with Ireland's cause amongst the democratic forces in Britain itself.

The arrest and deportation of our fellow-countrymen is but another incident in the war against Ireland. We accept it as such, and recognise the additional evidence that such action provides in support of our indictment of England's Imperial despotism.

With the object of lulling the nation into a sleep of security, the Proclamation makes pretence of withdrawing the menace of Conscription while promising that steps are to be taken "to facilitate and encourage Voluntary Enlistment."

To us as representing Labour in Ireland such a plot is even more dastardly than the open compulsion by military force now temporarily discarded. It must be countered by all the ingenuity and resolution at our command.

The attempt will be made to divide the forces of Labour into rival sections—those engaged in essential industry from those engaged in non-essential industry, skilled men from unskilled, tradesmen from labourers, married from single, older men from younger. Men will be invited to undergo medical examination so that those obviously unfit for the rigours of military life may be tempted to seek medical exemption, thus freeing them to act the part of "scabs," to take the jobs of dismissed men.

The experience gained by the War Office and so-called "National Service" Department. The tactics that failed in England will be avoided in Ireland, those that succeeded there will be repeated and im-

proved upon. We too must seek to profit by the failures of our comrades across the water. Our struggle will be hard, our suffering may be great and prolonged. But our resolution is firm, and we are buoyed up with the knowledge that our fight is for the right of Ireland to determine her own destiny without pressure, open or concealed, military or economic, from any outside authority whatsoever.

In this struggle Ireland's Cause is Labour's Cause; an Irish working class free from the shackles of militarism will mean an Ireland freed from Imperial domination. This is a cause worth a struggle; our victory will be hailed in days to come by the peoples of the world with joy and gratitude, that this small nation repelled the might of scientific barbarism by the undaunted spirit of a people determined to be free.

The National Will.

Everywhere the politicians who would be statesmen are putting forward suggestions which, they think, will furnish solutions for what is called the Irish question. In all these suggestions there is a common fallacy that rules even the best of them out of court so far as the people of Ireland are concerned. Each and every one of them is based on the assumption that Ireland is a question. Now Ireland is not a question, but a nation. As a nation Ireland demands just the same right of self-determination as is claimed for other nations in Europe, no more and no less. Until that right is not only recognised but exercised in Ireland by the people, Ireland will remain as she is now, waiting, hoping, watching, but never surrendering, never bending her will to another's, never lowering her flag.

General Smuts, we see, proposes that the Imperial Conference of the British Empire should determine Ireland's place, not indeed in the world, but in the British Empire. General Smuts might as well have kept this statesmanlike proposal to himself, for the very Ulster Orangemen, in whose interests he makes it, have already replied to him that they will not put themselves in the hands of the colonials, and General Smuts might in decency have refrained from insulting the Irish people by referring to Ireland as a pathological problem and a disease. Not for four generations have the people of Ireland been as sound, as healthy, as sane and as serious as they are to-day. There are no hysterical symptoms in Ireland, and the people are as sound in their body politic and their public mind as they are strong in national will and brave in national heart.

Mr. George Barnes, who, by the way, has been challenged to produce his evidence of German plots in Ireland, has put forward a different proposition. Mr. Barnes would, we take it, have Ireland's destiny be determined by a jury of neutral States and the United States of America. What Imperial authority he has for this proposal we do not know. To-day, perhaps, we do not care for Mr. Barnes and his friends in the British Cabinet have created a new situation since he spoke in this strain. But we can at least challenge

him to prove the sincerity of his words by his action. Let Mr. Barnes submit the case for the Empire to a jury of neutrals, let the Irish people submit the case for Ireland freely and without any limitation or restriction and then let the whole Irish people, by free and equal plebiscite, uninfluenced by any exterior force or power, say whether they shall abide or not abide by the decision of that jury. Is Mr. Barnes willing?

Frankly, we do not believe he is. Furthermore, we do not see how in the circumstances that have arisen since last week, the Irish people are free to choose. But free they must be, and to be free to choose they must have the counsel and the guidance of each and every element in the country. To-day they cannot have that counsel and guidance and until they have it they cannot exercise the power of choosing and rejecting which is theirs by right.

Both General Smuts and Mr. Barnes are anxious to lay this Irish ghost before the Peace Conference assemblies. From our point of view we can see no reason for any such hurry, though we can see how justified it is from the Imperial standpoint. But we are quite content for the present with the status quo, and we believe the people of Ireland are of the same mind. Arrest, deport, execute as you may, gentlemen of Empire, Ireland still remains, Ireland shall remain, and Ireland shall conquer. It is absolute self-determination or nothing. You can deprive us of the one, you cannot force upon us anything that will take the place of the other.

Trades Councils.

We referred some time ago to the formation of new Trades Councils and the functions these bodies ought to perform in the organised Labour movement. Since then other Councils have been launched, and some thought, but not much, has been given to what we said. A Trades Council has been formed in Athlone and the National Teachers, we are glad to see, are taking steps to form another in Kilkenny; or rather, to re-establish one that ceased to have an existence some years ago.

We hope these new Councils will learn from the experience of the past and become efficient central organs of activity in their localities. We do not think that the old method of simply having representatives from affiliated societies and choosing an executive by haphazard should be followed by the new bodies. But it is all-important that representation be based upon strength of membership, and we trust that we shall hear nothing of the under-representation of big bodies of organised workers. Furthermore, we hope that the executives will be organised on the departmental system, and that each member of an executive will be put in charge of a department and be responsible for the efficient working of that department. In this way responsibility and the power of management will be developed, and the new Councils will be saved from the slough of despond, the mere talking shop, into which too many of the older Councils have fallen.

LABOUR IN IRELAND.

KYNOCH, ARKLOW, LTD.—LIARS UNLIMITED.

The commination service for Ash Wednesday, which lies unread in the Anglican Prayer Book, curses with lurid damnations those who keep back by fraud the hire of the labourers. These curses may now be applied to that branch of the Birmingham-Chamberlain-Wimborne combine at Arklow.

It was on 13th February last that the Transport Workers' Union made application for the 12½ per cent. bonus which had been paid to the labourers in every munitions works in Great Britain from the date of the award.

Kynoch's replied on that day by the letter here reproduced—a letter entirely contrary to the terms of the Munitions Act, and one which renders them liable to penalties thereunder. Here it is:—

Kynoch, Arklow, Ltd.,
13th Feb., 1918.
12750.

Dear Sir,—We are in receipt of your letter of 11th inst., and beg to inform you that we have already informed your local secretary that we do not intend, under any circumstances whatever, to recognise your Union.—Yours faithfully,

For Kynoch, Arklow, Ltd.,
P. J. GORMAN,
Chief Clerk.

The Secretary,
Irish Transport and General
Workers' Union, Liberty Hall,
Dublin.

That is what we call a straightforward letter. No quibbling or equivocation. "We do not intend, under any circumstances whatever, to recognise your Union."

Up to date, Kynoch have kept their word and likewise the 12½ per cent. bonus all these months, due to the thousand labouring men in their service.

With infinite patience the staff of the Transport Union have corresponded with the Ministry of Munitions and all its numerous departments and with the Ministry of Labour, of which G. H. Roberts, English Labour M.P., is head, and the result is nil, except that copies of certain letters, which we have seen, were sent to Liberty Hall "for information."

We find that on 12th April Kynochs, Birmingham, wrote the Ministry of Munitions by the hand of Mr. Jowett, stating that the 12½ per cent. bonus was being paid to fitters, carpenters, tin-smiths and plumbers. "No application has been made for this advance from any other group of men at that factory."

That is lie No. 1.

Mr. Jowett, no doubt, relying on information supplied from Arklow, goes on to say: "The workpeople at Arklow are represented by their trade unions, which we fully recognise."

That is lie No. 2.

Now, Jowett, you may be as pure in heart and holy in life as the late pastor of Carr's Lane Chapel, but you have been made the instrument of two whoppers.

What are you going to do about them? Will you allow them to remain on record?

We have a word to say to the gentleman with the Dutch or Deutcher name, who writes from the Chief Industrial Commissioner's Department of the Ministry of Labour. Don't take letters like Mr. Jowett's at their face value, or ever assume that Kynochs have changed their spots since the cordite business of the nineties. Now that we have given you facts—facts that can be tested and proved—get a move on. A thousand men have been deprived during the past three months, of more than £2,500. Don't let Mr. G. H. Roberts come under the commination curse.

Jack White.

The friends of Jack White, now a prisoner in London, are raising a fund for his dependants. At the S.P.I. meeting on Friday, 17th inst., £2 6s. was raised. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary, Room 3, Liberty Hall, cheques and p.o.'s being made payable to P. Murphy, Liverpool.

Civil Servants' Advance.

Dublin branch Assistant Clerks' Association has decided to take a referendum vote of its members on the question of affiliating with the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party.

Competition.

We hear of undesirable competition among unions in the distributive trade, and transfers of membership from one to the other. Many unions mean weakness, not strength.

Murphy's Heart Throbs.

A draperess writes to Murphy's organ complaining of long hours in Talbot Street, and the "Evening Herald" asks: "Have you a heart?"

Strange as it may seem, there are people in Clonskea who have hearts. They, judges, stock-brokers and women of wealth and fashion, want to know what has become of the conductors and drivers dismissed by Murphy some months ago.

The conductor's duties are humble and matter of fact, but men who have grown grey in Murphy's service have earned the respect of their travelling public, which asks Murphy: "Have you a heart?"

No-Answer.

If the draperess wants to abolish long hours, let her join the I.D.A.A., Cavendish Row, and the kind people who dislike Bewley and his confederate tea-room traffickers can direct their assistants to join the Hotel and Restaurant section of the Transport Union.

Derry Butchers' Assistants.

The newly formed Derry Butchers' Association, now a branch of the N.A.U.I., is moving for a change and reduction in working hours. The demand is modest, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. for four days a week, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursdays, and 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturdays, with an hour for dinner each day and an hour additional for tea on Saturdays. Notice expires on May 16th. We hear nothing about an advance in wages, but we do know the butchers' assistants in Derry are scandalously underpaid.

"Freedom."

The London anarchist monthly, "Freedom," has in its May issue, an article, "Why Ireland Revolts," and editorial notes on "Ireland Ablaze." As reproduction would probably be forbidden, we forbear quotation.

Abrahams Sacrifice Isaacs.

"The Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of Ireland are deeply anxious to facilitate in every way the release of the younger clergy of the Church of Ireland for service as chaplains at the front, or in the R.A.M.C. or in other branches of the service."

From "Forward."

"We used to hear about Ireland's dependence on Britain. It could not feed itself, or rule itself, or exist without the aid of Britain. Now we depend for our maintenance on the crumbs that fall from the rich Irishman's table."

ENGLISH LABOUR PARTY AND IRELAND.

The agenda of the Labour Conference on Reconstruction, to be held in London on 26th June, contains this resolution, submitted by the Executive:—

"IRELAND.

"That the Conference unhesitatingly recognises the claim of the people of Ireland to Home Rule, and to self-determination in all exclusively Irish affairs; it protests against the stubborn resistance to a democratic reorganisation of Irish Government maintained by those who, alike in Ireland and Great Britain, are striving to keep minorities dominant; and it demands that a wide and generous measure of Home Rule, on the lines indicated by the proceedings of the Irish Convention, should be immediately passed into law and put in operation."

The National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants has given notice to amend it to read: "That the Conference unhesitatingly recognises the claim of the people of Ireland to self-determination, and it demands that a wide and generous measure of Home Rule should be immediately passed into law and put in operation."

Resolutions.

The following bodies have adopted resolutions against the conscription of Ireland:—

Trades Councils:—Tadmorden (6,500 members), Guildford (2,000), Kettering (2,300), Poplar (over 10,000), Weymouth (2,000).

Unions:—Lanarkshire Miners' Union (40,000).

Rushden and District Trades and Labour Council (8,500 members) declares, "That this council considers the Government's proposal to force conscription upon the Irish people, the greatest crime that has been committed since the Germans invaded Belgium. Further, we call upon Mr. Lloyd George and the Government to resign forthwith and strongly urge the formation of a Government in accordance with the principles and objects of the Labour Party."

Last week we acknowledged resolutions from Labour organisations representing over 129,000 British workers.

THE RURAL REVIVAL.

TRANSPORT UNION'S GREAT WORK.

The agricultural labourers the country over are awake to their needs and their duties. In Central Ulster they are organised in the N.A.U.L., in North-East Ulster in the Workers' Union, from Louth to Kerry the Transport Union is active. The dry bones of the old land and labour organisations are stirring and sedulous efforts are being made by J.P.'s and D.C.'s to keep these moribund organisations on safe lines and to preserve the souls of the rural workers from that form of mammon worship that demand hard cash for honest work.

Co. Dublin farmers and the Transport Union continue negotiations in settlement of the minor details of their agreement, but the fear of a general strike is past, at least so far as the industrial issue is concerned.

Balbriggan, where Mr. Brady is secretary, has been the scene of great work. New members are flocking to the Union and the branch is now 500 strong. Skerries, Lusk, Swords and all North County Dublin are daily strengthening the position of the Union. Last Tuesday, William O'Brien, T. Farren, and Cathal O'Shannon addressed a great rally in Kingstown Town Hall, and the South County will not fall far behind. The roadmen's recent victories have given an example which the organised agricultural workers will profit by.

Kildare is being strenuously prepared for a county wages movement on the lines of that which has won in Dublin. The Wages Board, in its wisdom, decided that a Kildare man was worth 2s. 6d. a week less than a Dublin County worker. This arbitrary distinction must be swept away and wages lifted to the level of decency.

Naas, Newbridge (100 new members), Maynooth, Kildare and other centres of the Union are engaged in a campaign to enrol every worker in the county in the I.T. & G.W.U., so that when demands are presented to the farmers there will be the unanimous consent and determination of the men behind their officials.

Meantime, while the land army is being rallied, demands are being made on the carriers, whose men want 33s. in lieu of 24s. per week, and on the County Council, on behalf of the roadmen, who want 33s. instead of 27s.

Throughout all Ireland, the Transport Workers' Union, the former dread of everyone who had twenty shillings in a stocking, is recognised as the peaceful but powerful agent of the new social order. Wherever it is set up it gives a new hope and spirit of initiative to the workers and gives them too the first taste of "prosperity" the toilers on the land have known since the plantation of feudalism.

Remarkable work is being done by P. Coates at Waterford, where, in the week ending 11th inst., 129 new members were enrolled, and in the first two days of last week 105 members joined, from every grade of labour. By August Bank Holiday,

day, when the Trade Union Congress assembles, Waterford will be blackleg-proof.

In the South-West, Mr. M. J. O'Connor continues his great work, which we hope he will deal with in these pages. Alderman Lynch has established the I.T.W.U. in Achill. Everywhere the One Big Union advances. Eighty-nine branches are now in existence and several local unions are negotiating amalgamation.

NEWS ITEMS.

British Objectors to Military Service.

The number of men who have resisted the Military Service Acts is 5,369.

The number of men who have been court-martialled is 4,807.

3,581 have been court-martialled once.

605 have been court-martialled twice.

474 have been court-martialled three times.

140 have been court-martialled four times.

7 have been court-martialled five times.

332 have been discharged on medical grounds; 54 of them Absolutists, released since Lord Curzon's statement.

282 have accepted combatant or non-combatant or Friends' ambulance unit service.

20 have died since arrest. 1,148 are in prison, and the remainder are working under the Home Office scheme in various capacities.

Dublin's Folly.

Since the Liverpool Corporation acquired the trams they have yielded over £920,000 to the rates.

Shipping.

During the first three months of this year 1,123,150 tonnage was sunk, of which 687,576 was British. New construction was 320,280 tons.

British Casualties for week ending April 27th, 18,665; for week ending May 5th, 36,397.

Shop Assistants.

Dublin branch will meet in future every Tuesday evening at the Rooms, 7 College Street.

Irish National Council meets on 16th June in the same place at 11 a.m.

Nemo.

If you can't come into the open we can only call you a scurfilous scoundrel.

Tribune.

The "Galway Express" is wrong in styling Stephen Gwynne "M.E.P." "M.P." is quite sufficient, and may be interpreted Ministerial Parrot or Moral Prostitute, at discretion.

No Water Power in Ireland?

According to a writer in the "Manchester Guardian," the British Aluminium Company, which wishes to corner the water power of two counties in Scotland, ships its raw material from Ireland.

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"A.E." AZUS LUCHT OIBRE.

Na gnórticí, nó ríon-eolúí, do bí i réim ran oirítear na céadta blian ó roim, do bíod tráct acu ar an oirítear atá roim ríon dia-da agus eagna éleactac-roim eolur ar neite neanóda ríonruí agus áro-leasur um gnó a' imeacta an gnát-raosail. Tuigean "A.E." an dá ceann acu. I' ríonruí do-ran dia agus anam na chuinne do ríonóalán; i' ríonruí do, fór, ríonruí do, déanam po'n doiman—ar móó áluinn oútráctac ríonruí. Tuigean an méro rin ó n-a leabair, "The National Being," (Maunipel): tá cur nua de rin do'ér teact amac, I' 80. A luac. Tá reallraimnact agus ríonruíactac le n-aírú i n-gac uile roim de; tá eaintc bunadórac le fáil ar gac leactac de có maic céadna. Tá móo-ordeamaic agus cáilreic na n-aonact ag an Ruiréalac ríon amac.

An Oúchas Dá-ríonruí.

Óar le n-a lán i' ionann an "Stac" agus ríonruíact móo. Ceapann "A.E." gur gléar de gléaranna an Oll-Spíonruí atá ann; gur ríonruí áilleact agus ollraic agus áro-beacta éasruil a beic i' bperóm i n-gac ball de. I' ruo ríonruíactac an ríonruíact, an t-áro-oúcar, óar leir. Má bíonn olcar a' ríonruíact a' beacta san fáil le móo ar gac ríonruíactac an gnát-stac ríonruíact go léir i' cionntac leir rin. Ní bíonruí ag dul leir an bperóm-oúcar. Bíonruí a' n-a'aró an oí ríonruí. Ní bíonn ar ríonruíacta óar oirítear, ná léir-braicac-oúcar dá éleactú agus de gnát.

Saoirseacht agus Ionannas.

Saoirseacht agus neam-ríonruíactac i neitib intleactacac ríonruíactac, ionannar agus aonact i ruoab económica: rin atá ag teapóal uainn, rin atá de óualzar oirann de ríon, de réir "A.E." i' bheas mar cuimeann ré ríon ar "amrtokeacta" i' n-imeacta na meannan agus ar "oemokreacta" i' gcúrraí na gnát-ríonruí. Deapruigean ré an oian-gac atá leir an dá oirú rin, teapóalann ré an ríonruíactac atá eactonruí: i' gcac luic raotair có maic le óaone eile.

Bíobla Lucht Saochair.

Bíobla luic raotair, bíobla luic ríonruíactac, i' ead an leabair ro ar beactac. Cuimeann ré ácar ar an ríonruíactac, ríonruíactacann ré an t-anam, teapóalann ré an ríonruíactac an áro-gnóta ran traosail coitianta. Táim cinnce go mbéad séamur ó Consaile ar don eagna leir an Ruiréalac fá an iomac ríon. Go deimn, a lán dá bpuil ran "National Being" cuimeann ré teapóal séamur i' gcúrraíactac: aríonruíactac cinn dá bun-oirítearactac anruí agus úir-bhí ríonruíactac ionta.

Saolachas.

Óu maic an maictear do luic raotair na héreann "The National Being" do ríonruíactac go ríonruíactac, agus an teapóal do cur i' n-gnóim i n-gac ríonruíactac oírb é. I' bheas mar ríonruíactac cinn gnóimactac an leabair céadna. Agus tá neart saolacair ann, có maic le míon ar a ríonruíactac i' ríonruíactac an t-rean-ríonruíactac do cur i' bperóm agus i' n-éireactac ra traosail atá

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PROSPEROUS ULSTER.

The Richhill (Co. Armagh) Branch of
the National Amalgamated Furnishing
Trades Association, tells the following
tale:—

A struggle for the recognition of the
principle of collective bargaining and the
right to organise has been going on in
Richhill, Co. Armagh, for the last nine
weeks. Ninety workers of both sexes
have been idle, simply because they refuse
to be handled individually by their em-
ployers.

These same employers had built up in
Richhill the very worst conditions of em-
ployment known in the furniture trade in
the United Kingdom, which is saying a
great deal. The following will give an
idea of the type of employer the Richhill
cult produces.

Workers had to buy oil for the lamps
to light the workshops. The polishers
had to purchase from the employer all
polishes, oils, brushes, rags, etc., for all
of which their wages were deducted each
week. No overtime rates were paid. The
employers fixed the prices and times of
jobs without any consultation whatever
with the workpeople. After the first week
of apprenticeship each boy or girl had to
fill in a complete work or time sheet.

A woman, because she was without
material (which the employer failed to
get), was deprived of her week's wages.
The father of one of the workers was fired
out of his house and garden simply be-
cause the son had gone to another shop
for better wages.

These should be enough to commend to
our fellow trade unionists the appeal we
make for financial support for some 90
workpeople, who say they will not give up
the Union, even though the employers
offer double the wages they, as a united
body, are demanding.

These workers see that in wanting the
break-up of the Union, the employers de-
sire to get into their old villainous and
sweating position again, in order to con-
tinue to enrich themselves completely at
the expense of the men and women
workers.

Irish Trade Unionists are specially ap-
pealed to for help, because certain em-
ployers in Belfast and Dublin have ad-
vised Richhill employers not to recognise
the Union.

But all Trade Unionists, anyhow, ought
to support these 90 workers in their great
effort to abolish piecework, the abolition
of all illegal charges against their wages,
and other improvements, and what is of
high import—the right to organise and
to bargain for improved conditions
through their Trade Union.

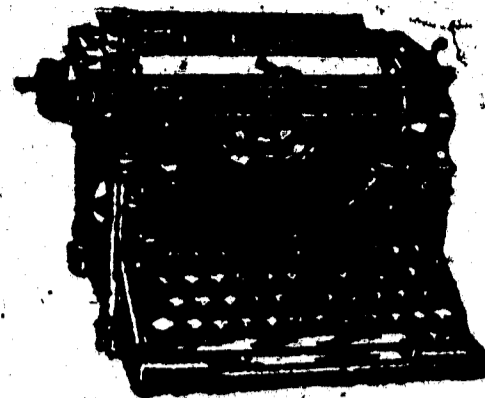
The Furnishing Trades Association has
paid the workpeople a weekly sum from
the first week of their membership, nine
weeks, but we desire to supplement this
by a small sum in addition each week.
A good response will show to these new
T.U. recruits that their more seasoned
brothers and sisters are willing to back
up their splendid effort.

All remittances to be made payable to
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Before the Jail Door Closed TADHG BARRY

Wrote this Article for THE VOICE OF LABOUR.

The Vineyard & the Labourer's Wage.

[This is sound though stimulating work on an every-day problem of Labour organisation. We hope Tadhg will soon be free again to carry on the war. Pending his release, the workers of Ireland must buy up and read his book, "Gael Poems," 1/3, post free, from the Art Depot.—Editor, "Voice of Labour."]

One of the questions which have arisen out of the trades disputes of recent times is the relative value of skilled and unskilled labour. Or rather more often the discussion has taken the form of criticism of the demands of unskilled workers for wages which approached that of the tradesman in money value. This idea of an unskilled worker's pay being as a matter of course much less than a tradesman is a survival of the antiquated system of apprenticeship with its big fee, indentures and timed period without which the knowledge, or rather the right to knowledge, was denied and the trade made a close borough for a favoured few.

The Value of the Labour

also was reckoned as that of the article or material produced without any reference to the wear or tear of the worker, even as a human machine. Consequently the value of unskilled labour was in the very inverse ratio to the energy required for its fulfilment. Capital allowed certain values to be placed on time, training and mental acquirement, where the cost of such made a high money value return the only incentive to its pursuit. Where the pursuit became common, such as that of the clerical work attendant on commerce, the value went down while the status of the position remained high. Thus the clerk had to dress better than the tradesman on half the latter's wages. The unskilled worker with the wages of the clerk had no appearance to keep up and dressed and lived more in keeping with the amount allowed—not to himself, but to his family, his appearance and home comfort being in accordance with the number dependent on his earnings. The clerk's appearance had to be maintained irrespective of his family and a shabby gentility abroad and

Hunger at Home,

resulted. The labourer was in this respect much better off as the manual labour at least brought restful sleep to a tired frame, whilst the mental labour, with its attendant worries, multiplied by the worry of the accumulated debts coincident with shabby gentility, added a sleepless night to a worrying day. In neither case was the full value of the

share in the production of profit given by the employer, but instead of the share value proper, the labour market was manipulated to make the worker, pensioner or pickman, bargain for the right to be allowed, not to earn his share value, but a pittance commensurate with his employer's opinion of his usefulness in the production of a profit.

Sweated Labour

was the delight of Capitalism whose responsibility to the family of the slave-earner was removed under the guise of giving the slave his freedom, the reality being that it was the capitalist who secured the more freedom as he was free of the charge of the upkeep of the slave and his family. No employer would keep a horse if he could hire one, when needed, cheaper and with less personal responsibility than by ownership. So with a worker. The inrush of European labour into the States made the hired slave (called a freeman) cheaper than the owned slave with a family. So the freed slaves were engaged at really less cost than when they had to be with their families, kept and clothed, groomed and doctored. So it has been with capital and labour right along the line, and the slave has been taught to look upon his freedom to receive coin instead of the necessaries of life as an advance. The skilled wage slave, because of the difficulty and trouble of securing his status, was harder to procure and so fetched a better price, and learning to know his value, organised to keep up the market value even when the market was over-supplied. The unskilled worker was

Too Easily Procured

to get a market value until a tradition of superiority had been secured for the skilled variety. Even the latter variety at times was not in receipt of the necessaries of life, such as were given to the mediaeval slave (and the modern draught horse). The idea of the freed slave, skilled and unskilled, being, not the securing of the value of his labour in the production of profits, but of the highest value which the employer chose to allow him in the labour market. The spread of education has made both skilled and unskilled realise that something is radically wrong with a system which gives the children of the capitalist a college education while the children of the labourer go barefoot to school. We have got so far that the State has secured that the children will be fed. But we are still far from a proper realisation of the value of labour in the production of wealth. Capital has an admitted value while nationalisation of industry becomes a fact in peace as it has actually, if blunderingly, become in war. While admitting the present necessity of capital and its consequent value, let us realise the

greater necessity of labour and its real value and we will begin to realise that not alone are we slaves but that we are worse than slaves, inasmuch that while the slave dreams of freedom we have only

Dreamt of More Crumbs

from our master's table. If we realise this we shall not have, as I have heard, workers criticising each others demands as going too far. The master would like us to continue to look on a "five bob" advance as five bob more to spend, not as a crumb knocked off his table by the wind of the labour upheaval, which is caused by the war of one set of capitalists against another, to the destruction and consequent scarcity of the slaves who fight at their masters' bidding. The slaves who are wracked in war are given some of the privileges of their predecessors who were wracked in the slave states. They are nursed, fed, clothed, aye, and their families are seen to after a fashion. Why not this be done for the wage-slave of industry? It only needs organisation to secure, but the wage slave's mind does not realise his power. He almost believes the capitalists' threat to shut down (despite the nervous dismay of the capitalist at the success of Ireland's one-day strike). As if it was out of pure philanthropy that capital was being expended instead of for the production of profit, which means increased Capital. We have to recognise that the good of mankind demands not more Capital so much as more Labour.

The Proper Share

of labour's production must be redirected from the production of capital at the expense of labour to the production of more labour (viz., by short hours, redistribution of energy, etc.). It must also win back the privileges given up to secure the right to choose employment and employer. We must secure that the family of the wage slave must be as much a charge on industry in freedom as they were in slavery. Until that is secured either through the State or through the individual capitalist we are not finished with our task, but must get on with the war against Capital for the recovery of our lost provinces. This is the value we must put on labour, skilled and unskilled, and recognise that if distinction is to be drawn between, it must not be on the lines of money value as purchasing power, but on the lines of the relative value of labour in the production of the profits, such relative values to be assessed, not in dollars, but in energy. This will be for some day in the near future, when Labour rules. In the meantime, get on with the war.

TADHG BARRY.