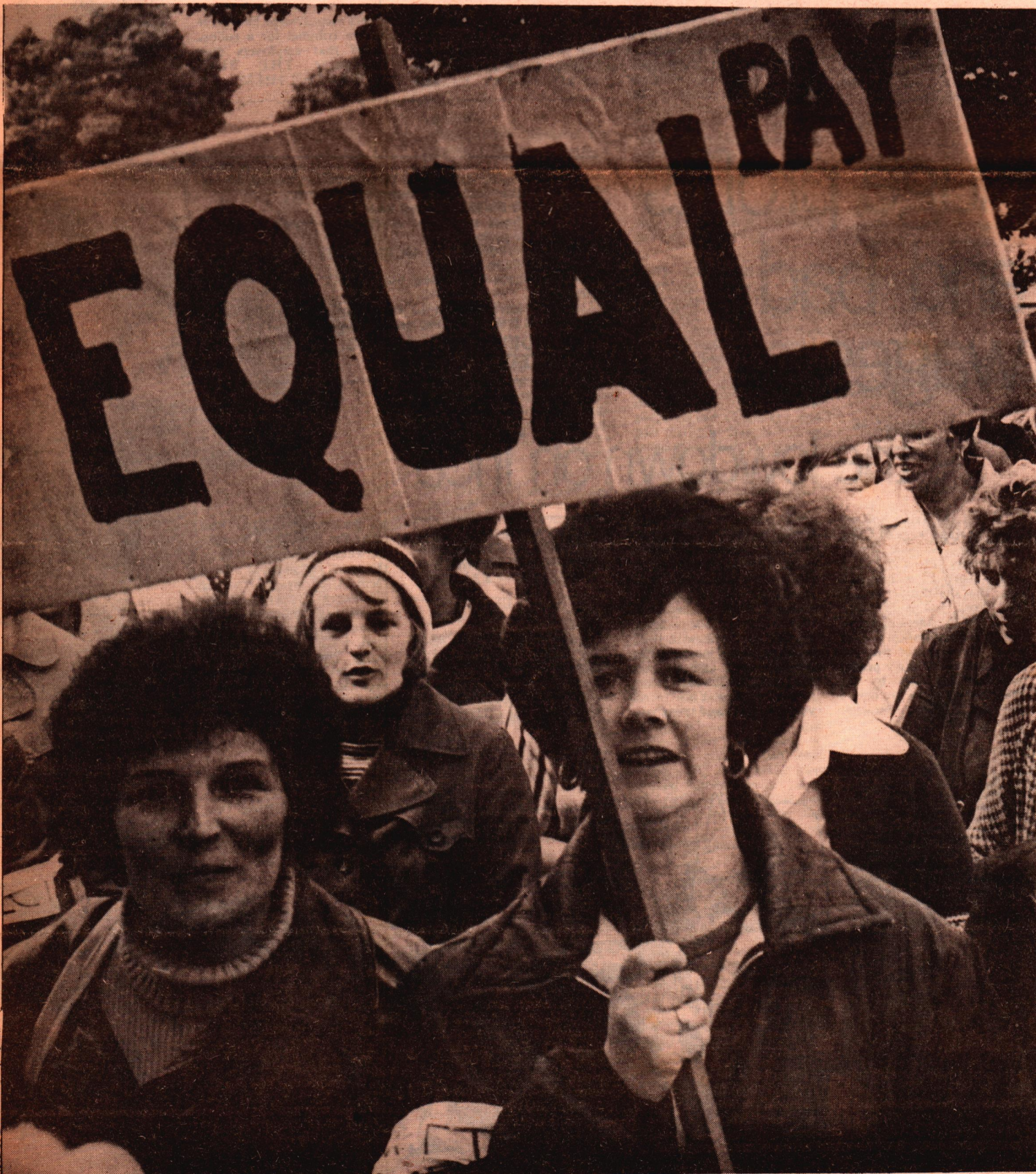


## TRICO WOMEN— KEEP FIGHTING!



**THE WOMEN** at Trico are fighting for Equal Pay. They want to earn the same wages as the men who work alongside them doing the same work.

They have now been on official strike for fifteen long weeks.

**IF THEY WIN**, it will be a boost to women workers up and down the country who are fighting for equal pay.

**IF THEY LOSE**, the campaign for equal pay will be set back by years.

The Industrial Tribunal has rejected their claim. The women say they will only make a negotiated settlement on the basis of full equal pay. They have boycotted the tribunal. They know its pro-employer record, and they hold it in contempt.

This strike has become a very important trial of strength. Every day that passes is vital, eating into the massive profits and reserves of the firm. That is why everyone who supports the just claim of the women at Trico must get moving.

See back page for campaign ideas and strike committee address.

**History of the strike—centre pages**

# TRICO'S LONG

'I didn't realise we had so much support'

## Equal Pay Act is full of snags and snares



THE EQUAL PAY ACT was finally passed in 1970. The final version was a compromise—but the employers still thought it was too expensive.

The Act allowed five years for employers to implement equal pay. The five years were spent devising schemes to avoid it. As soon as the law was planned, the employers pulled out all the stops, employing armies of lawyers to find loopholes in the law.

An article published in the Sunday Times in 1971 gives some idea of the crooked methods used by employers to avoid equal pay:

- \* calling the same job different names for men and women—'shop assistants' are women, while men are 'trainee managers' and so on.
- \* extra premiums for night work, or 'dirty' or 'heavy' work—which of course women don't do

\* payment over the odds for overtime—women do a lot less overtime than men

\* service payments—for age, length of service, etc—this works against women who may break service through pregnancy

\* regrading women into the lowest grade.

All these ruses were left unchallenged by the government—whether Tory or Labour.

Often the unions were little better.

The Act stated that by 1973 women's pay should be 90 per cent of men's wages—but the government refused to enforce this.

In 1974 the Labour government pulled another punch. Common Market regulations wanted to impose fines on employers who didn't give women equal pay. Michael Foot backed down to the

employers' threats—and opposed it.

Just like Barbara Castle before him—he was more worried about what the employers thought than the interests of women workers.

It's not surprising that the tribunals are now nearly always finding against equal

pay. They've been loaded against women from the very beginning.

More and more women are finding that. They—like the women at Trico—are realising there's only one way to get equal pay—hitting the employers where it hurts and fighting for it.

compromises would be impossible.

The only way to get equal pay is to strike for it.

In the first six months of the Equal Pay Act, the Industrial Tribunal has ruled on 110 claims. Only 31 of them have been allowed.

The Trico case is the first one where management have gone to the tribunal for a ruling, proof that employers now recognise THE BIAS WORKS FOR THEM.



## interview with a striker

PEGGY LONG is a widow, who work to support herself. She is a trade union member at Trico. With her mates she has been on strike for fifteen weeks.

'I've worked here for eleven years altogether. That means I've made a lot of money for this firm. I have no security. When this strike is over what I'll remember will be the hardship... how I survived on £10 a week strike pay and hardship money.'

'But I've also learnt a lot, noticed a lot of things since I've been on strike. Like this morning I heard on the radio about how women get less benefits than men, even when they pay the same stamp.'

'I never realised such things before. Normally you don't even have time to think about things, you take them for granted.'

'I also didn't realise there were so many organisations supporting women's equality

til I was on strike and I've seen all of you down here.

'I just can't understand those few women who are still working in there. They won't come out.'

'But they won't turn down equal pay when we've won it for them.'

'And I think its terrible for the women whose husbands are scabbing and going inside every morning. If I had a husband and he worked here and he didn't support me I wouldn't speak to him.'

'If the men had all come out at the beginning, this strike would have been won very quickly. We supported the men when they came out on wage claim and it was all over quickly.'

'Me, I believe in the union. Either you're a good trade unionist or you're a bad one. You can't be half way.'

'How can you teach your children to stand up for what is right if you haven't got the back-bone to do it yourself?'

## Huge profits and bad wages

### - the lowdown on Trico

IN 1974 1,881 Trico workers got an average wage of £35 a week. One Trico shareholder got profits of £39,734 a week—nearly £2 million in a year. That shareholder lives in New York and is Mr R J Oshei, the President of Trico-Products Corporation of New York. He does not work at Brentford, and the profits produced for him by the Brentford workers are only a tiny part of his total income.

Of course the defenders of capitalists like Mr O argue that he deserves £39,754 a week. They say he put up the capital and without him there would be no jobs for the workers. Who do they think they're kidding? The company started in 1932 with £100 worth of 'assets' most of which was 'goodwill' and not even hard cash. 'Goodwill' is having friends in New York to sell your products and using your

The managing director of Trico is called Sidney Atkins. The personnel manager's name is Slidders.

These are the tactics they have used.

- They have employed mercenary drivers to smash through the picket line.
- They have filled their car trunks with components and smuggled them in.
- They have advertised the strikers' jobs in the local press.
- They have written to every striker, offering police protection if they want to cross the picket line.

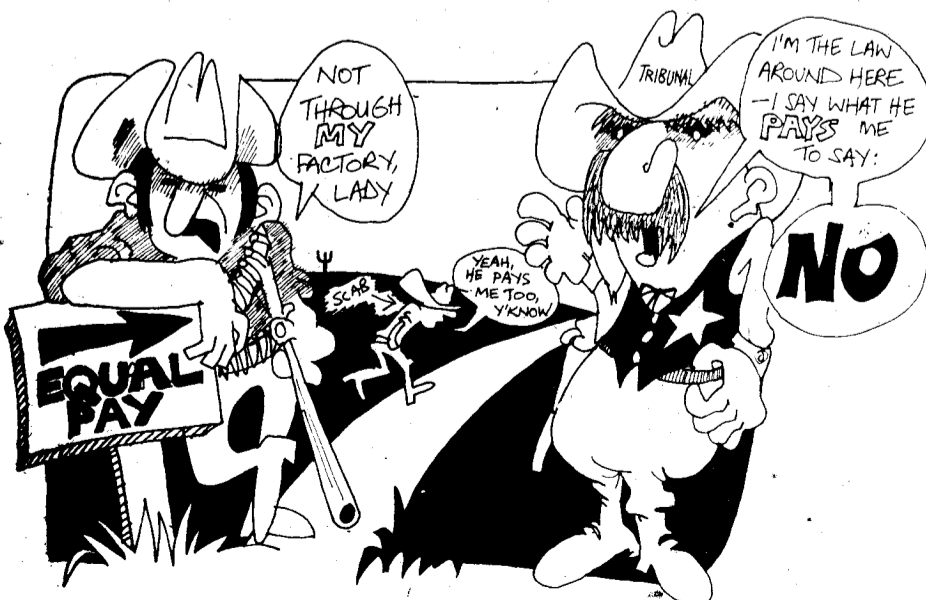
SLIDDERS AND ATKINS, RATS INCORPORATED.

TRICO 1974:  
PROFITS — £1,792,016  
PAY FOR MANAGING DIRECTOR — £11,797

name to get credit from a bank.

Trico has grown from being worth £100 in 1932 to over £8 million in 1976. It's a good bargain for Mr Oshei—£8 million out of about £50 without lifting a finger.

It's the workers at Trico who make the profits. They make the windscreen wipers, they do the work involved in selling them. After paying for all the machinery and supplies the wipers they produce are worth 50 per cent more than they are paid. So in 1974, instead of being paid £35 a week (average) they could have got over £50—but the rest went to Mr Oshei. Each worker paid Mr Oshei over £900 in 1974.



# HOT SUMMER



## The Days of the Strike



Picture: Angela Phillips (IFL)

### 24 May 1976

After years of unsuccessful negotiations for equal pay, the women workers of Trico come out of their factory onto a nearby playing field to hear a report from their union district secretary, Roger Butler. He tells them the company still refuses to budge an inch.

Some women leave the meeting to return to work. But some stay where they are, saying they will keep outside the gates until they get equal pay.

When the others hear, all but a few come out to join them. They march through Brentford.

### Three Days Later

The Southall District Committee of the AUEW, the women's union, votes to support them.

Picketing begins right away, at first only in the daytime, but later right round the clock.

Shop steward Eileen Ward declares, 'They can't stop us now'.

### 15 June

The AUEW National Executive Committee declares the strike official.

But male AUEW members continue to cross the picket line, in spite of all appeals to them.

Throughout the month of June, in some of the hottest and driest weather ever recorded in London, the women strikers keep up their picket lines, at two entrances to the factory.

Mass strike meetings are held weekly under a shelter in the playing field nearby.

A strike committee is formed and begins to gather support from local trade unionists. A strike committee member says to Womens Voice,

*'At first there was a kind of disbelief about it all—that we'd need to collect money, to organise. We had to take it into our own hands... at first we suffered from a lack of confidence.'*

Money and support begin to role in at first from local trade union branches and shop stewards committees, then from all round the country.

Daily tussles with scabs, in a few cases their own husbands, make the women more determined. Some male workers join them on strike. Others come out briefly, but drift back. On one occasion some male workers climb over the boundary fence and rush at the strike meeting, so the meeting is abandoned.

### The first week of July.

Two nights running, the company uses convoys of lorries provided by haulage firms to smash through the picket lines.

The women strikers begin to realise that without the active support of the hundreds of non-production workers still reporting to work each day, this could be a long drawn-out battle. The fact that many Trico workers are not in the union, and some who are trade unionists are prepared to be scabs, obviously weakens their position.

They put their hopes on blacking of Trico goods

throughout the motor industry, and send out delegations to seek support.

They dig in on the pavements, chairs, a settee, primus stoves and sleeping bags are much in evidence.

They approach the workers at the small Trico plant in Northampton, and later several of these women join the union.

A strike bulletin begins to appear regularly with news of the strike. It also carries tales of the industrial tribunal's rulings in earlier cases. One bulletin asks, 'What's oppressed and rare as a dodo?—A successful applicant to the tribunal!'

### Friday 9 July

Delegation to the Kent miners returns with cheque for £200, and the promise of a weekly levy as long as the strike lasts.

### Monday 5 July

The women decide to support the union's refusal to attend the Industrial Tribunal because four out of five applicants to the Tribunal for Equal Pay have been turned down. The Tribunal has shown itself to be pro-employer.

The strike committee continues to meet daily, Monday to Friday, 11am to 3pm.

### Early hours of Sunday morning, 11 July

A convoy of 17 mainly unmarked lorries and 15 private cars carrying scab labour forces its way through the picket line with the active help of the police. Some number plates on the lorries illegally covered, but the police turned a blind eye, and halt traffic in Boston Manor Road to assist the picket-busters.

Mass meetings are moved to inside a nearby church hall.

### 19 July - Monday morning.

Bill McLaughlin, Divisional Organiser reports to mass meeting that company had made the women two offers well short of equal pay. Strikers vote unanimously to reject the offers.

Strike bulletin No 4 says 'Women on strike are faced with having to overcome particular difficulties. We have two jobs—one running the strike and the other at home, where we are still expected to care for the children, cook, wash and clean. But our strike has proved that women can unite and fight for their rights and that we can overcome the tradition of women accepting an inferior role.'

### Friday 23 July

400 people pack into the Park Hotel in Hanwell for a benefit social. Sadly the takings were stolen but a collection after the theft raised £125. Trico management are not the only ones who steal from us it seems.

### Early hours of a dry and chilly morning, Tuesday 27 July.

Three times previously scab convoys had broken through the picket line. At 2.00am the fourth convoy of mercenary cowboys rolled up with headlights blazing. But 70 pickets confronted them...

kept on their toes by the feeling that this was going to be the night.

'They headed for the hills with their tails between their legs' reported strike bulletin No 5.

But two days later they return with their friends in blue...

### Thursday 29 July, in the early hours

Five coachloads of policemen and women force two convoys of three lorries each through the picket line. The police act provocatively and with force. They block off the road, allowing the lorries to race away through red traffic lights, but preventing cars full of pickets from following them.

Three pickets are arrested. One car driven by strikers does manage to follow the convoy up the motorway. Attempts are made to force them off the road. Then they are chased out of their cars by the scab drivers.

The haulage firms involved in this operation are declared blacked and receive a visit from the strikers. Protests are made to local MPs about the police action.

Mass meetings now show the women more angry and determined to win justice, no matter what tactics and violence Trico engages in.

### August

Trico finally go before the Industrial Tribunal, with their fancy lawyers.

### 23 August morning.

A mass picket is held at the main gate.

### 24 August.

True to form, the Tribunal finds against the women's claim.

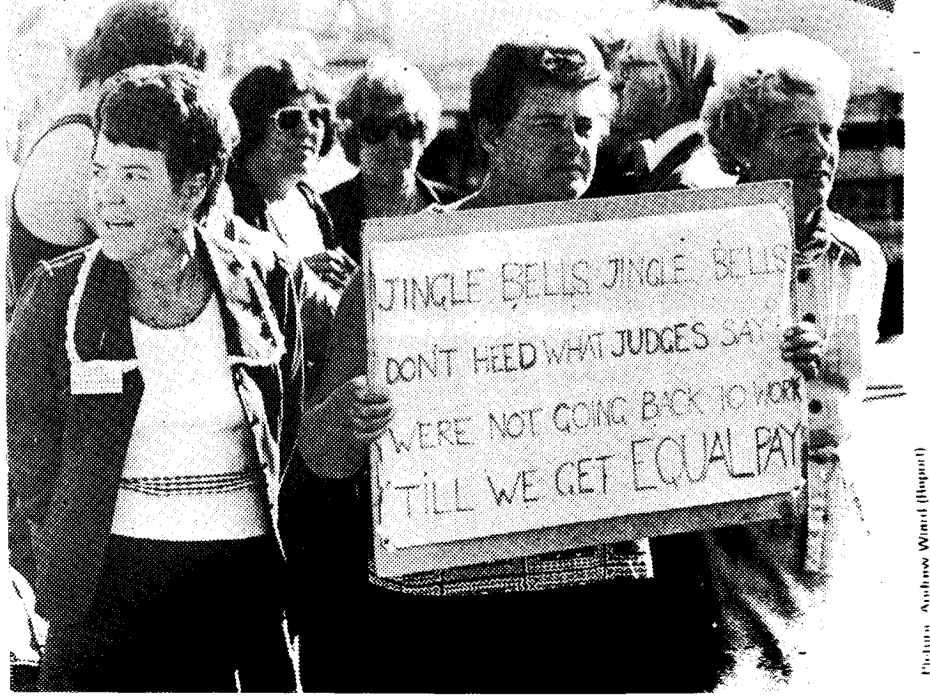
But the women have already decided to ignore the finding. It is no more than they anticipated. Their leaders point out that this is now a historic struggle, being watched by women workers all over the country. They declare their determination to fight on.



Picture: C...



Picture: Andrew Ward (Report)



Picture: Andrew Ward (Report)

# THE ROAD TO EQUAL PAY

**EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING** to help the strike at Trico, and to step up the campaign for equal pay for all women workers.

• **ORGANISE A REGULAR COLLECTION** where you work. Either go round the different offices or collect in the canteen. Try to commit everyone to a regular sum each week. You can use the official collection sheets which explain what the strike is about. Try to make the collection on pay-day—you're more likely to get money. Collection sheets are available from the Trico Strike Committee or phone Margaret Renn on 01-739 9772.

• **ORGANISE A DELEGATION** from your workplace to support the picket line. The women are on picket duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so they can always do with help—especially at night.

• **ORGANISE A STREET MEETING** this Saturday your area. Recent meetings in London have raised quite a lot of money for the strikers. What you need is a megaphone, a couple of placards with slogans, collection tins, leaflets explaining what the strike is about and copies of Women's Voice. You need only be about six people. Each woman takes her turn to speak—even people who are nervous can say a few sentences, there has to be a first time for everybody! Try reading the front page of this special, for instance. While someone is speaking, the others give out leaflets and collect money. Make sure you get a good pitch, and try to keep it up for an hour.

• **ORGANISE A PUBLIC MEETING:** Call a meeting to support the Trico strikers and spread the campaign for equal pay. Meetings should be organised now in every town. Get local women to speak, particularly women who have already fought for equal pay. Put an ad for the meeting in Socialist Worker and Women's Voice, and print posters and leaflets. Publicise it as widely as possible. Leaflet local factories, nurseries, anywhere where women workers meet and invite them along to the meeting.

• **SELL WOMENS VOICE:** Take this issue of Women's Voice to every woman you know who will support the Trico women, to women who have already been involved in equal pay strikes, to women in factories and offices locally who may find that they also have a battle for equal pay to win.

IF YOU ARE IN, or know anyone who is in the AUEW (Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers), make sure a resolution is moved at the next branch meeting to support the Trico women, sending them a donation or collection, agreeing to campaign locally for equal pay for women engineers, and promising to give full support to women who fight for equal pay in the area.

Trico windscreen wipers are used on cars, buses, lorries, trains and aircraft.

To support the strike, workers in all the car plants have backed Trico wipers. But they also need to be blacked in repair shops and depots. Visit any repair shops in your area and ask them to black Trico blades. You might then have to write to the Strike Committee to ask them to send an official letter for blacking to the trade union branch.

• **SEND DONATIONS TO** the Trico Strike Committee, Southall AUEW District, 1 Woodlands Road, Southall Middx. Or take them to the picket line at Trico, Great West Road, Brentford, London.



## Glasgow Women Win...

### They Made Their Union Fight!

Between January and May this year TASS members in Glasgow took on four equal pay fights. None of the women got less than £6 increase on top of the £6 wage limit.

In all four disputes the women were determined to win and prepared to take industrial action. In virtually every dispute they won the backing and support of the male trade unionists that worked behind them.

But perhaps the most crucial factor in their victories was the attitude of the local Glasgow division of TASS.

Valves had only joined the union last year. They began selective lightning strikes. This led to male members of TASS being suspended for refusing to do the women's work and the entire TASS workforce went on strike. After getting support on the picket line from the men on the shop floor, from other local factories and from the Glasgow Right to Work Campaign, TASS workers forced management to cave in. One significant feature of this strike was the mass picket

organised by the Glasgow District Committee of TASS who contacted all the local factories. The Glasgow Right to Work Committee toured the Hillington estate with loud hailer.

Following the success of the other TASS dispute a similar dispute at Reid's Linwood was quickly settled! All equal pay disputes would be settled as quickly if the entire union machinery behaved as unions are supposed to do, and took the fight for equal pay as seriously.

They took the demand for equal pay seriously. They looked around the Glasgow district for the factories where women's pay was poor and gave official backing to the action of the women themselves. It was a District campaign and the victory of one strike gave strength to another.

At Magnetic and Electrical Alloys (MEA) in Hamilton the women won a £7-14 wage increase. Big wage differences existed between them and the women workers at another BICC owned plant (Telcon) a few miles away. The Telcon workers gave financial and moral support to the MEA strikers. The strikers also had the backing of the shop floor workers who refused to handle any goods that got through the picket line.

At Wheway Watson on the Hillington Industrial Estate, Glasgow, women workers won a £7 increase. The women picketed every day and turned back most of the deliveries to the factory. Some men on the shop floor were laid off because they refused to handle blacked goods. Wheway Watson's make pit gear and the fact that TASS gained the support of the NUM ensured the victory. Now women at Wheway Watson's have parity with men on the shop-floor.

The strike at Cockburn, Valves, also on Hillington Estate, was the longest and most bitter of the disputes. 42 AUEW/TASS members were on strike for eighteen weeks and won rises of between £11 and £14.30. The women's grade was totally abolished.

The women at Cockburn

## Jeavons: Out for Victory

100 women at Jeavons Engineering, in Staffordshire are on strike for equal pay.

The women have been on strike now for three weeks and they say they won't go back until they have won.

At the moment they are on a low semiskilled rate and want to be upgraded to get the same wages as the men who are classed as skilled.

Half of the men have been laid off because of shortages caused by the women's action. Despite the fact that they are in the same union, the TGWU, the only way they are supporting the women is by refusing to load or unload.

Money is running short, and they have started collections in local factories. They need more help, so organise collections for them.

Send messages of support and money to:

Jeavons Engineering Strike Committee, c/o Mrs Bryan, 4 Walker Street, Tipton Staffs

## VICTORY TO THE WOMEN AT TRICO! EQUAL PAY NOW!

Womens Voice Public meeting Monday September 13th, 7.45pm At Ealing Town Hall, Uxbridge Road, Ealing.



10p each (plus 9p postage for one copy, 17p postage for five, 32p postage for ten.) Money with orders to Right to Work Office, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

This is a special issue of Womens Voice. The next issue will be back to normal, out in the first week of October, eight pages, at a new price — 7p! Costs of printing have unfortunately gone up.

### Subscribe to Womens Voice

75p for 6 copies, £1.50 per year. Fill in this form and return to 8 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

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