**This précis of the minutes of the Jute & Flax Union for the lead into WWII was indexed by Meghann Thow, an undergraduate student at Dundee University on placement with Dundee City Archives in 2011.**

**Minutes of Dundee Jute & Flax Committee Meetings 1937-1940**

**1937**

**June**

* **29th-** Holiday Payment: Reply from Employees Association regarding repayment of workers during Dundee Holiday Week. Reply stated that the employers “find it impossible to agree” to the request of said payments.
* **29th-** Mae Clark and Thomas Cathro elected as representatives of the union in the Trade Board Advisory Committee. It was decided to elect both male and female representatives after the committee agreed there should be no restrictions based on sex in this matter.
* **29th-** Secretary reported on proceedings at Geneva of the International Labour Office regarding the 40 hour working week. Motion received a two-thirds majority in favour of it so it was adopted in Britain, although subject to British legislative action.
* **29th-** Secretary reported on the meeting called by the Lord Provost regarding the importing of Indian cloth and yarn. It was decided to ask the President of the Board of Trade to meet with a deputation composed of representatives from the Council, the Association of Jute Manufacturers and the Dundee Jute Trade Union.
* **29th-** Mr Thomas Cathro brought up the matter of the meetings of the Protestant League in City Square and asked if anything could be done to stop said meetings as they were causing “very great discontent.” Meeting decided to voice matter at next meeting of the Trade and Labour Council.

**July**

* **16th-** Communist Leaflets: Questions were raised concerning the distribution of leaflets by the Communist Party at factory gates. Secretary stated that this was probably a result of information being learned about the rejected Holidays With Pay Bill.
* **16th-** Movement of Spanish children to Britain, as a result of the Civil War, first mentioned here. Question of finance for these children raised, Mr Devine suggested that the Council should be notified of this union having already spent £20 for this cause. Mr Cathro suggested the union should adopt as many of the children as was deemed fit. Miss Clarke seconded this motion. It was decided not to write to the Dundee Trades and Labour Party. Mr Soutar suggested adopting 2 children- secretary was instructed to find out if the union had the power to use funds for this purpose.
* **16th-** Haworth Dispute Trial: Committee decided to write to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, and Dundee Members of Parliament regarding the imprisonment of 2 trade unionists as a result of this trial. They demanded the immediate release of these men as they deemed the imprisonment of the “courageous” men unfair.
* **16th-** Holidays with Pay: Letter read from Scottish Trade Union Congress regarding the holidays with pay issue. Letter presented the union with 4 questions which the secretary was instructed to answer in his reply.
* **16th-** Women’s Conference: Letter received from Scottish Trade Union Congress intimating that the 11th Annual Conference of Unions Enrolling Women Workers was to be held in Dundee on Saturday 16th October 1937. They asked for resolutions no later than the 25th August.
* **16th-** Indian Jute Competition: Reports were given by the secretary and chairman on the meetings held to discuss the matter of Indian jute competition. The minister replied to the reports stating that careful consideration would be given to the matter put before him.

**August**

* **4th-** Indian Jute Competition: Letter read to meeting received from Mr Johnston, MP, on the question of jute competition from India. Was decided on receipt of this letter that a debate may have to be held in the Autumn Session of the House of Commons.
* **4th-** Preliminary Agenda British Trade Union Congress: Discussion arose as to the agenda with the view of making amendments to it. Mr Devine stated that there wasn’t the time to go through each point and so it was agreed to make amendments only to numbers 28 and 14- those deemed most important. Secretary was instructed to call a special meeting of this committee once he had received the final draft of the agenda.
* **4th-** Annual Conference of Unions Involving Women Workers: Meeting agreed any resolutions on this matter to be considered had to be submitted before the meeting of this committee to be held on 18th August.
* **4th-** Cheque for £100 for Calcutta Jute Strikes: Letter read from Mr Joshi acknowledging the receipt of a cheque for £100 in aid of Calcutta Jute Strikes in April 1937. Mr Joshi stated that he was unsure who to give the money to and so was instructed by the committee to deposit it in the bank pending further instructions.
* **4th-** Scottish Council of Trade Unions: Annual meeting to be held on 25th August 1937. Mr Devine moved that this committee be represented at the meeting. Miss Steel moved that all committee members who can manage should attend. This was agreed to.
* **11th-** Sports Classes for Young Workers: Discussion took place as to what could be done for the provision of sports classes for young workers. It was suggested that facilities might be arranged for instruction in swimming and gymnastics. Mr Cathro volunteered to give instruction in these two activities and Miss Clark stated that she would help with the swimming classes. It was agreed that enquiries would be made into the use of a gymnasium and swimming baths. It was further agreed that leaflets would be handed out to get an idea of level of interest.
* **11th-** Contribution Scales for Young Workers: Discussion took place as to the introduction of a new scale of contributions for workers aged 14-16. It was agreed that an optional scale of 2s per week be introduced for workers aged 14-16. It was also agreed that the new scale would not prevent the worker from paying in higher contributions so as to access longer benefits. **(Rules Revision Committee)**
* **18th-** Sports Classes: Reply read from Mr Dowell allowing use of gymnasium at a rate of £35 per season on Monday nights 7pm-10pm (price did not include instructors’ fees.) Reply read from Mr Cuthill allowing use of “first-class swimming pool” and a ladies pool at 4/ for a “12 times ticket.” A circular was produced stating that both a swimming and gymnastics club would be formed if people signed up.
* **18th-** Adoption of Spanish Children: Opinions from Misses Lawson & Co, Union Solicitors, on the matter were given. They stated that it would be beyond the power of the committee to do so.
* **18th-** Haworth Miners: Acknowledgement from House of Commons of receipt of request to release Haworth miners presented to meeting.
* **24th-** Secretary reported that there had been a strike at Lower Dens Works of night-shift workers who wanted the same wages as all other workers. Meeting adjourned early to visit the works and gain a better understanding of what happened. **(Rules Revision Committee)**

**September**

* **1st-** Dens Works Strike: Report was given as to strike situation at Dens Works. It was reported that there was a possibility of some of the male workers returning to work. The spinners had decided to restart work but it had been decided by the employers that either all of the workers restarted or none of them would be allowed back.
* **8th-** Dens Works Strike: Strikes ended on 2nd September 1937 with workers returning to work on that date at 9pm.
* **8th-** Committee decided to instruct the Jute & Flax & Hemp Trade Board to delete wages paid on job and instead make it so that rates of wages were priced on amount of work done.
* **8th-** 40 hour working week: Conference regarding this to be held in Manchester on 20th September 1937. After discussions and votes, it was decided that this committee would be represented at the conference through sending 1 delegate- the secretary was thus appointed.
* **15th-** £100 cheque to India: As cheque was received after Calcutta strikes had ended and as nothing could be decided regarding the use of the money, it was resolved that the cheque should be reclaimed by the committee.
* **15th-** Strike at Seafield Works: Secretary reported on said workers strike resulting from a cut in wages. Union negotiated with Mr Peter Jack and rate of wages was increased to previous rate.
* **28th-** Haworth Miners:Agreed to deposit £20 in the Haworth Prisoners’ Dependants Aid Fund.
* **28th-** League of Nations Appeal: Circular received from League of Nations Union appealing for financial assistance. It was decided to let matter “lie on table” for time being.
* **28th-** Swimming and gymnastics clubs: Secretary reported that gymnastics club cannot be formed as the gymnasium cannot be obtained. The swimming club could be formed at a membership fee of 1/6 for ladies and 2/- for gents. Baths close at 8pm November-March and 8.15 pm April-October.

**October**

* **1st-** India Jute Trade-Possible Agreement: Lord Provost had called a meeting of representatives from Jute Trade Unions, employers, and the Town Council. It was agreed to write to Mr Ellis, Secretary for Scotland, asking his assistance. Miss Clark moved inviting two other jute unions to join future meetings-motion carried. **(Special Committee of Union)**
* **13th-** Plea for financial assistance from Dundee Trades & Labour Council for socialist crusade work- decided to let matter lie on table for time being.
* **13th-** Indian Jute Trade: Letter presented stating the refusal of the Secretary of Scotland to meet a deputation on the Indian jute import question.
* **13th-** Holidays with Pay Bill: Secretary raised the question of giving evidence before the Commission of Enquiry in favour of this bill-agreed.
* **28th-** Bakers Union: Mr David Douglas from the Dundee Bakers Union was in attendance in order to discuss the matter of unemployment amongst non-union firms due to a lack of business. He was informed that union members would be advised to purchase bakery goods from these firms.
* **28th-** Holidays with Pay: It was suggested that two members of this union act as representatives at the proposed meeting of the Committee of Enquiry regarding the issue of holidays with pay. After discussion and the taking of votes, it was decided that only Mr Cathro would represent the meeting and give evidence for the matter.
* **28th-** Secretary reported that there was a probability of a new Workmen’s Compensation Bill being put forward. It was agreed that copies of the proposal be kept so that any amendments to the proposal could be discussed.

**November**

* **10th-** It was suggested that from now on, one of the members of the union should attend the meetings of the Trades and Labour Council and report back to the meetings of this committee on any developments made. It was agreed that one delegate should be sent and asked to write up a report after every meeting of the council to give to this committee.
* **10th-** Holidays with Pay: It was unanimously agreed that the chairman (Mr Doyle) be a delegate, along with the secretary and Mr Cathro, to the issue of holidays with pay.
* **24th-** Letter read from British Trade Union Congress regarding the organisation of young people. A reply was sent in which was mentioned the introduction of the new scale for persons aged 14-16, and also the introduction of the sports club.
* **24th-** Racism Issues: Miss Prain asked Mr Sime what he had meant when at Road Hall on 21st October 1937 he had stated that “it would require a white man to organise the jute workers in Calcutta.” She said that it seemed as if Mr Sime was stating that “the coloured man was not equal to a white person.” After discussion it was agreed that this statement, which Mr Sime had apparently made on previous occasions, was not to be interpreted as any negative reflection on the Indians.
* **24th-** It was agreed that the British Trade Union Council should be asked for any information they have regarding the organisation of the jute workers in Bengal and, if possible, the names and addresses of the secretaries.
* **24th-** £100 sent to Bombay: Assistant Secretary reported that as of yet, no communication had been received from Mr Joshi regarding the return of the £100 cheque. It was agreed that another letter be sent to him.
* **24th-** Complaint of Cleaners at Seafield Works: Assistant Secretary reported on complaints from the cleaners at Seafield Works who claimed they were having 7 shillings deducted from their pay each time they worked overtime. On interviewing the managers, officials found that the cleaners were earning time and a half for their overtime (the correct rate) but were having money deducted because they were instructed to work until 7pm but were often found to finish their work and 6:10pm. The secretary spoke to the complainers and advised them to make sure every machine was cleaned thoroughly to make sure they took until 7pm to complete their work.

**1938**

**January**

* **11th-** Secretary and Mr Cathro appointed to represent this committee at a Special Meeting of the International Federation of ? Association to be held in Blackpool on 27th & 28th January 1938 regarding the 40 hour working week.
* **11th-** £100 to Bombay: Letters received from Mr Joshi along with a cheque for £99 5s 1d.
* **11th-** Spanish & Chinese Situations: It was decided to give a donation to help out these countries in their current situations (Spanish Civil War and Chinese post-Japanese attack). Mrs Devine moved that circulars be drawn up for appealing for help for starving Spanish and Chinese children. All donated goods to be sent through the Scottish Cooperative Society.
* **18th-** Special Meeting of Committee: Mr Cathro opened discussions on 40 hour working week, holidays with pay, and increase in wages owing to increase in living costs. Mr Kenneth thought it was about time to put in a request for increased wages due to the increase in living costs. It was agreed to arrange a joint meeting with the Tenters and Calendars Workers Union to discuss the above 3 points.
* **25th-** A letter from the Scottish Trade Union Congress was read stating that a ‘Weekend School’ was to be held in Stirling at the Golden Lion Hotel on the 12th & 13th March 1938 for female trade unionists. It was agreed that this union should be represented. It was also agreed that any female members wishing to attend should let the secretary know.

**February**

* **1st-** Jute Imports: Secretary read a letter received from Florence Horsburgh MP intimating that a resolution on the matter of jute imports was to be made in a meeting of the House of Commons on 2nd February 1938. It was agreed that this committee be represented in the House of Commons in order that they may take part in the discussion before any resolutions were made. It was agreed that the secretary (Mr Sime) would attend the meeting and report back. **(Rules Revision Committee)**
* **1st-** New Rule: A new rule was created regarding the appointment and duties of the assistant secretary.
* **22nd-** Meeting of Peace Council: It was agreed that this committee be represented at the up-and-coming meeting of the Scottish Peace Council in Edinburgh to discuss air raid precautions.
* **22nd-** Protest to PM: It was agreed to send a letter of protest to the Prime Minister regarding the Government’s attitude to fascism, the which caused Mr Eden, Foreign Secretary, to resign.

**March**

* **8th-** Holidays with Pay: Request sent to Employers Association regarding holidays with pay. Matter is to be placed before the Employers Sub-Committee. If a meeting is arranged, it was agreed to send 5 representatives from this committee.
* **8th-** AGM on ‘Indian Jute Workers Being Supported in their Claims and Struggles:’ List of demands such as 40 hour working week and wage increases allowed Dundee workers to form a common front with the Indian workers. Decided to send ‘all possible aid to Indian workers.’
* **8th-** It was agreed that in order to ‘safeguard the interests of the union members, immediate steps must be taken to improve the organisation in order to allow closer and more regular contact between the executive and the members, and for the dealing more effectively with the many grievances affecting the different sections of workers in the industry.’ The meeting decided that the Executive Committee would take up the question of improving union organisation asap and would report any progress to a special meeting of the general membership.
* **16th-** Special Meeting: Meeting was held to go over resolutions made regarding the preliminary agenda of the up-and-coming Scottish Trade Union Congress. It was agreed to support the proposed amendments to the standing orders except no.15. It was also agreed to support motions 1-6 of the General Council and motions 8, 23, 29, 30, 36, 37 and 39-60 of the Affiliated Societies. It was agreed to send in an addendum proposing that female factory inspectors have some experience of working in the factories (Motion 3-Factory Inspectors.) Motion 44 (Forth Road Bridge)- agreed that this should also include a Tay Road Bridge at Dundee. Motion 28 (Japan Boycott)- leave over until final agenda was issued.
* **22nd-** It was agreed that all committee members who were able would attend a special meeting held in the Labour Halls on the 3rd April 1938 to discuss air raid precautions, the war situation, and the Government crisis.
* **30th-** It was decided that if a member was getting unemployment benefit that equalled less than full wages, then the difference would be paid in benefit from the union funds under rule 27. **(Rules Revision Committee)**

**April**

* **19th-** 40 hour working week: Secretary reported that a meeting of the Standing Committee was to be held on 25th April in Salford to discuss the 40 hour working week.
* **19th-** National Emergency Conference on Spain: Meeting intimated for 23rd April in London. Agreed that this committee be represented but it could not be decided on who to send. Mr Kenneth and the Assistant Secretary each received 4 votes but the chairman refused to cast deciding vote as not all the committee members had voted.

**May**

* **17th-** Spanish Situation: Letter read from the Glasgow and Edinburgh Trade Councils regarding a conference to be held on 21st May in St Andrews Halls, Glasgow, to discuss the Spanish situation in terms of non-intervention and the supply of arms for the Government Forces. It was agreed that this committee be represented at the meeting. It was agreed to send the Chairman and Mr Soutar to the conference.

**June**

* **21st-** Letter read from Dundee Tenters Society suggesting the appointment of a joint committee of the unions after the proposal of employers of a 10% wage reduction. Matter was left over to the next meeting.
* **21st-** Decided to discuss matter of 10% wage reduction at adjourned AGM on 30th June and to decide on whether any action is to be taken.
* **21st-** Holidays with Pay: Letter was read from the Secretary of the Employees Association stating that further consideration had been given to the matter of holidays with pay and that the request could not be met.
* **21st-** Spanish Situation: It was agreed to send a letter to the PM, Foreign Secretary, Dundee MPs, Miss Horsburgh and Mr Foot protesting against the bombing of British ships arising from the Spanish situation. It was also agreed to send another letter to the PM and Foreign Secretary protesting against the shooting down of the civilian population in Trinidad.

**July**

* **5th-** New Rules: It was agreed that the new rules (those discussed by the Rules Revision Committee) would come into operation on 1st September 1938.
* **19th-** Spanish Situation: Agreed to send £50 to Spain for food supplies on request of Scottish Trade Union Congress.

**August**

* **16th-** It was agreed to send a letter of protest to both the City Council and the Scottish Secretary against the ban of meetings in the city square.
* **30th-** Wage Increase: It was agreed that the wage increase of 10% for all workers earning a minimum wage should be put before the 3 union committees for their agreement.
* **30th-** New Rules: Start of operation of new rules was agreed to be put off until 3rd September 1938.

**September**

* **13th-** NCLC: Letter was read from the National Council of Labour Colleges, Dundee Branch, who offered to hold special classes for trade unions provided the unions supply the facilities for said classes free of charge. Matter was left over for the present.
* **13th-** Special Textile Conference: Said conference was being held to discuss and press on the government the issue of the 40 hour working week. It was agreed to send the secretary and assistant secretary to the conference as delegates.
* **13th-** Anti-war demonstration: To be held in City Square on Sunday 18th September. Mr Douglas, chairman, was asked to be one of the speakers.
* **27th-** Wage Increase: Intimation was put before meeting of a meeting of the Jute Trade Board to be held on the 8th November to consider the proposal of this committee of a 10% increase on all minimum rates.

**October**

* **11th-** NCLC (Dundee Branch): It was decided to write a letter asking about the lectures which were planned for the proposed special class to see if any would be suitable for this committee’s members. It was also agreed to send a donation of £1-1/ to said council.
* **11th-** 40 hour working week and holidays with pay: It was agreed to get 24 copies of the memorandum which was presented to the Minister of Labour regarding the 40 hour working week and also copies of the minister’s reply to said memorandum. These were to be distributed to the committee members. It was also agreed that the secretary should meet with the Secretary of the Trade Boards Advisory Council whilst in London regarding the ‘Holidays with Pay’ proposals. It was agreed that a notice of motion be sent to the Jute Trade Board for ‘Payment for Holidays’ under the title ‘The Holidays with Pay Act 1938.’
* **11th-** Working Conditions in Heathfield Works: Mr Rodgers stated that Heathfield Works had 2 spinners who were each working 4 frames of 96 spindles. It was agreed to leave the matter to be investigated by the officials.
* **25th-** NCLC (Dundee Branch): List of lectures had been received and was read out. It was decided that the lecture on ‘Trade Unionism’ be arranged for Wednesday 9th and Sunday 13th November 1938 for Lower Hall.

**November**

* **8th-** National &International Situation: Mr Mackenzie moved that this committee is extremely worried about the stand the government has taken regarding the Spanish situation. He stated the belief that government are intending to “notify the Anglo-Stations agreement,” an act which is “practically a death sentence on the Spanish people.” He also put forward the belief that the government are going to impose conscription in Britain. Finally, he voiced his fear about the lack of air-raid protection-“a menace to the whole working class who can’t afford to protect themselves from high explosive bombs.” He urged that an emergency conference be held to discuss how to make the working class aware of the dangers they face, and that by doing so the working class would “sweep the National Government from office and put in power a Labour Government. It was agreed to send a resolution to the British and Scottish Trade Union Congress.
* **8th-** Complaint from Wallace Craigie Works: Complaint was read from workers at said works regarding the male toilets. It was also stated that there are no windows in the female toilets. It was agreed to notify the factory inspectors.
* **8th-** Wage Increase of 10%: Proposal defeated at Jute Trade Board meeting on 8th November.
* **8th-** Holidays with Pay: Some employers gave voluntary offer of holidays with pay at Jute & Flax Board meeting on 7th November.
* **14th-** Wage Increase: After learning that Dundee Powerloom Union had made a request for a 10% wage increase, it was agreed to re-request a 10% wage increase for all workers. **(Special Meeting of Committee)**
* **22nd-** Wage Increase: Letter read from Association of Jute Spinners and Manufacturers refusing the wage increase of 10%.
* **22nd-** Anti-Jewish Movement: It was agreed to send a letter of protest against the anti-Jewish movement of the German government to PM Chamberlain, Miss Horsburgh and Mr Foot (MPs for Dundee), the German Ambassador for Britain, and also the Daily Herald.

**December**

* **6th-** Letter sent to Mr Ellis, MP, regarding an increase of the amount of Old Age Pensions to £1 per week.
* **19th-** Holidays with Pay: Jute Trade Board met in Edinburgh on 12th December to discuss this matter. A Voluntary Holiday Payment Scheme, similar to that for flax and hemp, was agreed to.

**1939**

**January**

* **10th-** After receiving a circular from the Spanish Food Ship Committee (under the auspices of Dundee Trades and Labour Council) regarding the matter of such a committee being set up in each trade union, this committee decided they would set up said committee. Mr Doyle was appointed as the representative of the new committee to the central committee.
* **15th-** Special meeting to discuss Holidays with Pay: It was agreed to send a representative to London to gain any information available regarding trades which have holiday payment. Secretary and assistant secretary were appointed.
* **17th-** Special meeting to discuss Holidays with Pay: Secretary reported on information gained in London-the London Glass Bottle Manufacturers Association have a voluntary agreement with the associated union and all piece workers are granted 1 week paid holiday for every 12 months they work. It was decided to appeal for the same grounds for textile workers and that time taken off for illness or suspension should not be included in the calculations for holidays. It was also suggested that they holiday pay be an average of the earnings of piece workers during the previous 12 months.
* **20th-** Special Meeting: It was agreed to send a letter to the PM regarding the Spanish situation stating that members of this union “express their solidarity with the heroic Spanish people” in their fight against fascism, and that they “denounce your…betrayal of the Spanish people.” The letter demanded that arms and food be sent to Republican Spain, and that steps be taken to withdraw foreign troops from the country.

**February**

* **7th-** 40 hour working week: Read press report on Working Agreement arrived at by all members of the Indian Jute Association-“working hours shall not be less than 40 or more than 54 per week with special exceptions. Operative not later than 15th March 1939 to last 5 years.
* **12th-** Holidays with Pay: Result of ballot vote taken on following proposals of employers was announced:

1. Males on time or piecework- the Trade Board rate of payment for their age.
2. Spinners, shifting mistresses and orra spinners- 28/-, no matter how much higher their wages may be.
3. All female pieceworkers-28/-, irrespective of their earnings.
4. Females aged 18 years and over- 25/-.
5. Females under 18 years-minimum time rate for their age.
6. All these payments are conditional on a full year’s work of 2400 hours.
7. If off work due to illness, accidents, short-time working, or waiting for work, the total hours lost will be taken into account and thereby reduce the sum due as Holiday Pay.

This committee did not agree with these terms. 90.6% of voters voted against them.

* **28th-** It was agreed to send a letter of protest to PM Chamberlain “on recognition of General Franco as de facto head of the Spanish Government.”

**March**

* **21st-** Wage Increase: Letter sent to the secretary of the Jute Trade Board proposing a 15% increase on all minimum rates of wages.

**April**

* **4th-** Letter sent to Home Secretary regarding the reported request of the Employers Association that Section 71 of the Factories Act 1937 be made non-applicable to young workers in the jute trade. This committee is against this proposal as it would result in said young persons being allowed to work over 44 hours a week.

**May**

* **2nd-** Juveniles working over 44 hour: Committee believes44 hours per week must remain the maximum for juveniles. In regard to letter sent to Home Office, an enquiry into the matter has been arranged for 23rd May. Mr Doyle, the secretary, assistant secretary and Mrs Devine were appointed as representatives at the enquiry.
* **2nd-** Conscription: It was agreed to send letters asking for support against conscription to PM Chamberlain, MP Attlee, Mr Middleton-Labour Party, MP Dingle Foot, and MP Horsburgh. It was also agreed to send the committee’s resolution on the matter to the Scottish Trade Union Congress.
* **23rd-** Holidays with Pay: It was agreed to draft the scheme put forward by employers and see how things go. **(Special Meeting of Committee)**
* **30th-** Conscription: Committee received a circular from the Scottish Trade Union Congress regarding the National Campaign Against Conscription. Circular also contained a petition form with a request for signatures.
* **30th-** Letter sent to Jute Employers Association on behalf of the Yarn Dressers and Assistants requesting that the wages of the yarn dressers be “based upon a minimum of £3 per week of 48 hours” and the assistants wages upon “a minimum of 46/- per week of 48 hours.”
* **30th-** Juvenile working hours enquiry: Reports showed that delegates from this committee had put forward a strong case at the enquiry against employers’ wishes to exempt young workers from Section 71 of the Factories Act.
* **30th-** Holidays with Pay: Assistant Secretary reported that at the meeting held regarding this matter 29th May, the following conditions were put forward by the employers: “Holidays with pay will be granted if the Workers’ Side guarantee to apply to the Trade Board for any rise of wages they may feel entitled to within the next twelve months. This would not apply to mere individual adjustments of wages in special cases which could be dealt with between the unions and the Employers Association. This would not apply in the case of hostilities in which this country is involved.” It was agreed to call a special meeting of the committee to discuss this.

**June**

* **6th-** Special Meeting-Holidays with Pay: It was reported that after discussion with employers, their proposals as to rates of holiday pay had still not changed-they still only wanted to offer minimum rates. It was agreed to arrange another special meeting on 15th June. It was also agreed to enter into amalgamation talks on the matter with Forfar, Kirriemuir and Arbroath Jute and Flax Unions. It was also agreed to set up a negotiating committee.
* **13th-** Holidays with Pay: Secretary reported on meeting with employers’ representatives. Representatives said it was a question of accept the employers’ proposals or nothing. The secretary suggested accept rates of pay and after forthcoming holiday, press for higher rates of holiday payment. This was agreed to.
* **27th-** Irish workers coming to Dundee: Letter received from Textile Operatives Society of Ireland asking particulars regarding wages and cost of lodgings.
* **27th-** 44 hours work for young people: It was reported that machines were being sped up in Manhattan Works in order that the same amount of work can be done by the young workers in the shorter space of 44 hours per week.

**July**

* **11th-** Amalgamations: It was decided to send letters to all unions in the jute and flax trades requesting amalgamation.
* **11th-** Increased wages for juveniles: It was agreed to send a notice of motion for all juvenile wages to be increased by 25%.
* **13th-**Juvenile Strikes: Strike at Manhattan Works- they want a wage increase of 48 hours pay for 44 hours work. Employers were then told of this committee’s proposal of a 25% wage increase for juveniles. Workers all returned to work in the end except maybe 2 or 3.

**August**

* **1st-** Amalgamation: Reply read from Dundee Mill & Factory Operations Union regarding the matter of amalgamating. They stated that their rules “do not permit entrance into any such scheme.”
* **1st-** China Campaign Committee: Circular received from said committee (based in London) requesting support in the protest against sending war materials to Japan. This committee agreed to support the protest and so sent a letter to Mr Attlee.
* **1st-** Juvenile Working Hours: Home Secretary had refused request of employers to have young workers in the flax trade exempt from Section 71 of the Factories Act.
* **1st-** Payment of Young Workers: Committee decided to send letters to all firms asking for young workers’ wages to be increased to the level that would be getting paid for 48 hours of work for doing 44 hours of work.
* **11th-** Strikes at Walton, Caldrum and Angus Works: Walton- Strikes a result of injuries sustained by workers whilst cleaning machinery. Managers were instructed that no machinery should be cleaned whilst it is still in motion. Angus- Workers wanted a 100% wage increase and the cessation of blowing down the frames (dismantling out-of-use frames so that enemies could not use them for manufacturing war materials.) Caldrum- Strike was due to a delay in the Trade Board’s increase of wage rates. A telegram was sent to the Ministry of Labour on the matter. A reply was received stating that the jute minimum rate variations would be effective as of 21st August, and notices communicating this would be dispatched to the mills on 16th August. **(Special Meeting of Committee)**
* **15th-** Mr Ross moved and Mrs Geddes seconded that it be requested that the date of the wage increase as put forward in the telegram from the Ministry of Labour be moved from the 21st to the 18th August. This was agreed to.
* **15th-** Amalgamation: Replies from textile unions regarding this matter were read: Kirriemuir-consideration being given to the matter. Arbroath-against.
* **18th-** Date of wage increase: Employers Association refused to make date of wage increase any earlier- date was now 25th August, payable from 2nd September. **(Special Meeting of Committee)**
* **18th-** Strike Action: Circular to be sent to all members with a new rule regarding strike action-workers are not to strike unless instructed to do so by this committee. **(Special Meeting of Committee)**
* **22nd-** Amalgamation replies: Forfar Factory Workers’ Union-matter is to lie over until their next General Meeting. Dundee Mill & Factory Operatives Union- “not to take any part in the matter.”

**September**

* **1st-** A sub-committee was formed to deal with the matter of membership of members who were being evacuated with their children.
* **4th-** Wage Increase: It was reported that Messrs Marshall & Brush were not to pay the wage increase. Letter sent to firm regarding the matter was read along with their “ambiguous” reply.
* **4th-** Women’s wages: Letter was sent to the Secretary of the Employers’ Association requesting the same rate of wages be paid to men and women who are performing the same class of work.”
* **4th-** A committee was set up to deal with the matter of women taking over men’s work. It was felt that the women who took over the work of men who had been called up should be paid the same rates as the men were.
* **8th-** Meeting of sub-committee on matter of evacuation of women and children: Meeting was held to discuss the proposal that female members who had been evacuated should be excused from paying contributions. Agreed. It was also agreed that a rate of 1/6 per hour be paid to any man undertaking duties associated with air raid precautions, e.g. fire wardens. It was agreed to write to the Employers’ Association regarding this.
* **17th-** Increased rate for overtime: Request was made at Lower Dens Work for time and a half for all overtime. This request was refused. Mr Sime to put in notice of motion to Flax Trade Board for time and a half for all overtime.
* **17th-** Strike at Caldrum Works: Strike of female spinners who want same pay as male spinners.
* **17th-** Wage Increase: Mr Gilchrist moved, Mr Palmer seconded, request a 15% increase on all wages. Agreed.

**October**

* **1st-** Wage Increase: Reply from Employers Association regarding the proposed 15% wage increase stated that the matter should be placed before the Jute Trade Board. It was agreed that a special meeting be held to place the matter before the board.
* **5th-** Special Committee on ‘Future well-being and organisation of the union’ (first meeting): Business of meeting was to “consider the future well-being of the union and its members” as regards the following points:

1. Organisation
2. Future policy in view of the changing industrial conditions.
3. Affiliations or amalgamations
4. Membership. Relationship of the members and the union’s activities.
5. Political fund.
6. Expenditure on leaflets and the ‘guide.’
7. Provision being made for the officials in their retirement.
8. Management of committee members-is the current committee too large?

In terms of the matter of provision being made for retired officials, Mrs Devine stated that this matter had been discussed several times and it was thought that officials were well-paid enough to make provisions for themselves for their later years.

* **8th-** Notice of motion to be sent to Flax and Hemp Trade Board for time and a half payment for all overtime working.
* **8th-** It was agreed to send request to Flax Spinners and Manufacturers Association for 15% increase on wages.
* **15th-** Motion sent to Flax and Hemp Trade Board requesting that any overtime worked on Sundays and Public Holidays be paid at double time, and any overtime worked on any other day be paid at time and a half.
* **15th-** Mr McKenzie put forward the following resolution to be presented to the General Meeting: “This General Meeting of members of the Jute & Flax Workers’ Union gives attention to the worsening of their wages and working conditions since the commencement of the war. We believe that this is largely due to the policy of the National Government and the big employers whom it represents utilising the war to increase profits at the expense of the living standards of the workers. In view of this, we declare it our duty in the interests of the jute and flax workers to take whatever action this meeting may decide necessary and, in confirmation with no other unions, if possible, send our demands for:

1. An immediate wage increase of 25%.
2. Maintenance of 48 hour working week.
3. An end to the efforts of the employers to force operatives to work with bad material without extra payment.

In the event of the employers refusing to grant this request, the EC recommend a ballot vote of members be taken on immediate strike action.”

* **29th-** Vote was taken on matter of striking if points laid out in resolution of 15th October were refused by employers. 83.24% voted for strike.
* **29th-** Committee decided to send a letter of protest to local MPs, the PM, the Labour Party, and the Trade Union Congress regarding the intended curfew which the Government was contemplating introducing under “Emergency Orders.” A sub-committee was appointed to draw up a leaflet of protest.

**November**

* **5th-** Mr Fullerton reported on the latest meeting of the Scottish Peace Council at which a 7 head policy was drawn up on the immediate cessation of the war and formation of a peace policy. The 7 heads were as follows:

1. Immediate armistice between Britain, France and Germany.
2. A conference be held for the peaceful settlement of the conflict.
3. Restoration of full democratic rights to all peoples.
4. The granting of democratic rights to the subject peoples of the British Empire.
5. A measure of self-government for Scotland.
6. A measure to improve the standard of living of the British people.
7. An immediate programme of social [improvement] covering housing, old age pensions…and general improvement in social amenities.

* **5th-** Letter received from National Federation of Building Trades Operatives (Dundee Branch) regarding the unsatisfactory provision of air raid shelters in Dundee mills and factories. It was agreed to accept their offer of help.
* **5th-** Old Age Pensions: It was decided to send a resolution regarding the increase of old age pensions to the PM, Minister of Health and Dundee MPs.
* **12th-** Women working night-shift: Employers had asked the Home Office for permission to have women employed as night-shift workers, but the matter was abandoned on its refusal due to it being “not feasible.”
* **12th-** Air Raid Protection: A deputation from the National Federation of Building Trades was heard on the matter of air raid protection in Dundee’s mills and factories. It was stated that the Home Office regulations were not being complied with especially at Ashton Works and Baltic Works.
* **12th-** Report was given on Flax Trade Board meeting: 10% wage increase obtained in two instalments of 5%. First instalment payable from 18th November, second from 13th January 1940.
* **19th-** Letter of protest to be sent to the Scottish Trade Union Congress and the Trades and Labour Parties regarding the banning of meetings of trades unions and the demanding of withdrawal of all cooperation with the government as demanded by the British Trade Union Congress.
* **26th-** Caldrum Works Weavers’ Complaint: Complaint had been made to management of bad material and in spite of this, no improvements had been made.

**December**

* **3rd-** Change of pay day: Letter sent to secretary of Employers’ Association requesting payment of wages to take place on Fridays instead of Saturdays during the course of the war for the convenience of the workers. Meeting to be arranged to deal with this request.
* **10th-** Change of pay day: Letter from Mr Cathro regarding this matter received. It stated that while his committee can see no advantage of changing pay day to Friday, they have agreed to meet with this union to discuss the matter.
* **17th-** Change of pay day: Mr Doyle raised views of Councillor Mrs Lily Miller regarding this matter. She feels that changing pay day to a Friday is risky as men would visit public houses with the money before going home. It was decided to send a letter of protest to her.
* **17th-** Report given of complaint of female batchers at Manhattan Works regarding the matter that their piece rates are lower than those at Caldrum Works. Matter was taken up with Jute Industries Head Office and same rate as Caldrum workers to be paid.
* **24th-** Raw jute shortage: It was agreed to write to Dr Burgin, Minister of Supply, and Mr Brown, Minister of Labour, on the threatened shortage and its effect upon Dundee’s population. A delegation will attend to amplify the report on the situation. It was agreed to ask the General Foundation of Trade Unions or the British Trade Union Congress for their cooperation on the matter.

**1940**

**January**

* **7th-** Change of pay-day: Reply received from Employers Association after meeting held to discuss this matter. They will meet this committee again if desired but do not favour the proposal.
* **7th-** Jute Shortage: Assistant Secretary reported that when in London he took the opportunity to interview BTU Congress member on the matter. No reply received from Minister of Supply or from Minister of Labour-agreed to send a reminder to both. Correspondence on possible shortage with Dundee MPs, Scottish Council Textile Trade Unions, National Union of Bleachers & Dyers, and Ministry of Supplies was read.
* **14th-** Jute Shortage: Replies received from Ministry of Supply and Ministry of Labour- “Does not appear to be any immediate danger of shortage.”
* **14th-** Problems at various factories:
* Employees at Ryehill Works had not been paid the recent 5% wage increase.
* Victoria Spinning Company and Queen Victoria Works were working juveniles 48 hours per week.
* Baxter Brothers were working juveniles 45 hours per week.
* Mrs Cassidy reported that she was given a man’s work to do (attending 2 breakers and 4 balling machines) but had only been paid 30-/ (a man’s wage was £2:11/-.) This was at Alex Henderson and Son’s Old Mill.

All problems were to be investigated.

* **21st-** Holidays with Pay during War: Letter received from Dundee Power Loom Tenters Secretary suggesting an amendment to the holidays with pay scheme to allow the sum to be paid to those men who had been called up for military service during the war period. It was agreed to accept the proposal.
* **30th-** It was agreed to send a letter to the secretary of Jute Spinners and Manufacturers, and also to the Flax Spinners Association on the question of black-outs and better ventilation in the mills and factories.
* **30th-** Miss Prain reported that she had been approached by a representative of the Allied Trades asking for this committee’s cooperation in their attempt to obtain a wage increase for A.R.P. workers in the mills. It was agreed to instruct Miss Prain to tell the Allied Trades to contact this union.
* **30th-** It was agreed to send a letter of protest to Sir John Simon, MP and Chancellor of the Exchequer, against the introduction of a Means Test on the Contributory Old Age Pensions, and also against the increase of insured persons’ contributions.

**February**

* **6th-** Ventilation in Factories: Letter received from Home Office sent by British Trade Union Congress regarding ventilation regulations for factories (as was requested by this committee on 30th January 1940.)
* **6th-** Acknowledgement of receipt was received from the PM, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Miss Horsburgh regarding this committee’s petition against the introduction of the Means Test and increased contributions for old age pensions and insurance.
* **6th-** Ventilation in Factories: It was agreed to send a letter to the Jute Employers Association regarding ventilation in mills and factories during a ‘black out’ period.
* **6th-** War Attitudes: It was decided to send a letter to the Dundee Trades and Labour Council containing a resolution to be moved at the next council meeting. The resolution spoke of this committee’s “very grave alarm” towards political and industrial attitudes of the leaders of the working class movement in joining with the National Government “to carry on the war at the expense and to the detriment of the people of this country.” The resolution also spoke of this committee’s decision to “declare our peace aims to the people” by immediately allying themselves “with the forces striving for peace.” This committee declared “our wholehearted support to the Scottish Peace Council and decide to affiliate thereto.”
* **6th-** Resolutions to be sent to the Scottish Trade Union Congress:

1. Equal pay to women doing same work as men.
2. Workmen’s Compensation- protest against any means test being applied.
3. Campaign on Organisation.

* **13th-** Holidays with Pay: Secretary of Employers Association received this committee’s letter of 21st January regarding holiday pay for men who had been called up. Matter is to be brought before Employers Committee.
* **13th-** It was decided to send a letter to the Chief Factory Inspector regarding the application by Messrs Jute Industries to employ women to work a “two-shift system.” The letter called on the inspector to press the objections of this committee towards this proposal.
* **13th-** Holiday pay for men called up is to be granted. This resulted from the meeting with employers’ representatives.
* **13th-** Strike at Bowbridge Works: A weavers strike occurred at Bowbridge Works as a result of the speeding up of looms.
* **27th-** Strikes: Assistant secretary reported on the strikes of young workers aged 14-16 years at Manhattan Works on 23rd February and the terms of settlement. He also reported on the strike that occurred at Buist Spinning Company Stobswell Works on the question of overtime payment. Matter still under consideration by Employers Association.
* **27th-** Interview was held with Managing Director of Taybank Works regarding “Holidays with Pay” scheme. Matter to be taken up with directors in Glasgow.
* **27th-** Following resolution to be sent to the secretaries of the British Trade Union Congress, the Labour Party and the Scottish Trade Union Council: “That this E.C. of the Jute and Workers Union view with alarm the attempt of the press to influence the public opinion in favour of support for the Finnish voting class and against the Soviet Union. We call upon the B.T.U.C. and Labour Party to stop their campaign against the Soviet Union and to oppose the Government in declaring war on the first Workers’ Country, namely the Soviet Union.”

**March**

* **19th-** Letter signed by 23 members enclosing a resolution “deploring the action” of this EC passing a resolution condemning the Daily Herald for its attitude against the USSR, and also condemning the aggression of the Soviet Union in Finland. It was agreed to deal with this matter at the AGM if it arose.
* **21st-** It was agreed that Messrs Sime, Ferguson and Doyle attend a meeting with employers regarding the matter of same wages being paid to female high speed spinners as is paid to males. **(Special Meeting of Committee)**
* **21st-** Mrs Higgins moved, Mrs Sweeney seconded, write a letter to the Home Office protesting against any proposal or suggestion of 2-shift systems being allowed due to so many married women being employed in the jute and flax trades.
* **21st-** Mr Doyle moved, Miss Inglis seconded, send letter of protest to London against the banning of trade unions and the imprisonment of trade union officials.
* **26th-** Mr Doyle reported on meeting held with employers regarding female high-speed spinners doing the same work as men at Caldrum Works but for lower wages. Employers refused the request for increased female wages as they claimed spinning “was not a man’s job, spinning had always been a woman’s job.”
* **26th-** It was agreed to send a letter of protest to the Minister of Health against the Military Authorities obtaining new houses in Dundee to the detriment of workers who had been waiting for years.

**April**

* **16th-** Military occupation of corporation houses: Committee received a letter from Mr Dingle Foot, MP-he is going to take it up with the War Office.
* **16th-** Wage Increase: It was agreed on the motion of Mr Bilely to send a request for a 10% wage increase to the Rope, Twine and Net Trade Board.
* **23rd-** It was agreed to send a letter of protest to both the Dundee Trades and Labour Council and the Scottish Divisional and National Labour Parties condemning the actions of the former in their withdrawing Mr Menon as Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Dundee. It was also agreed to ask that a Special Conference be held immediately to allow Mr Menon to state his position.
* **30th-** School Hours: It was reported that children who were 12 years old had to attend Blackness School from 8am-10am every day. It was agreed to write objecting to the early start and request a return to the original hours.
* **30th-** Letter was sent to Jute Employers Association requesting permission to appoint “works delegates” throughout Dundee for the mills and factories. Employers reply stated that this request “could not be acceded to as all matters in dispute have always had the ready consideration of the sub-committee.” It was agreed to hold a meeting with the employers to put the matter before them more fully.

**May**

* **8th-** Mr Menon Situation: Mr Menon gave an explanation of the situation and events that had taken place since October 1938 when he was asked by this committee if he would become a candidate for Dundee if requested. He visited Dundee and, despite having been given no advice or warnings regarding his views and speeches, was reprimanded for his articles in the Daily Worker regarding Indian conditions. He wrote to the Dundee Labour Party twice on the situation but received no reply. When asked if he would still become a candidate if the Dundee Trades and Labour Party reversed their decision, he answered ‘yes.’ It was agreed to get in touch with the chairman and secretary of the DTLP and inform them of this committee’s view on the matter and request a reason for their actions. It was also agreed to send a deputation to London to meet the Labour Party National Executive on the matter.
* **12th-** Resolution was drawn up against the revoking of Mr Menon as Labour candidate for Dundee and was sent to:

1. Secretary, Dundee Trades and Labour Party
2. Secretary, The Labour Party, London
3. Secretary, Scottish Divisional Labour Party
4. Secretary, 3rd Ward Labour Party, Lochee
5. Secretary, Dundee Branch, N.U.R.
6. Hector McNeil, Labour Candidate

* **28th-** Mr Menon situation: It was agreed to write to the National Labour Party E.C. asking that “a deputation should be heard from Union E.C. if and when an enquiry is held at Dundee.”
* **28th-** 10% wage increase: It was reported that the Flax and Hemp Trade Board was to hold a meeting on 4th June to consider this committee’s request for a 10% increase on all minimum rates.

**June**

* **5th-** It was agreed to send a telegram to the Minister of Labour asking him to meet a delegation of this committee on the matter of war supplies and working conditions in the mills and factories.
* **11th-** Manhattan Works: A report was given on the weavers working at Manhattan Works-both day and night shift workers. It was agreed that officials should call at the works the next morning to gain full details on working conditions and wages.

**July**

* **9th-** 10%: Notice of motion to make request for 10% wage increase was put forward by Mr George Palmer. It was agreed to obtain the approval of the joint-board on the matter.
* **10th-** Wage Increase: Mr Palmer moved a request for a 10% wage increase to be sent to the Jute Trade Board, the Flax Trade Board, and the Rope Trade Board. Mr Mckenzie moved the request be for a 12.5% wage increase- agreed.
* **12th-** Deputation by Minister of Labour on 16th July: Mr Bibby moved that the delegates who attend this deputation should be instructed to inform the Minister of Labour that “if jute trade is not a war industry, jute employers should be compelled to pay double-time for working on statutory or customary holidays.” Agreed.
* **12th-** Unemployed jute workers: It was agreed that unemployed jute workers should have the opportunity of working on munitions work.
* **17th-** It was agreed to send a letter of protest to the Employers Association regarding deductions in wages for any time stopped due to air raids.

**August**

* **6th-** Air Raids: It was agreed to write to the Minister of Labour regarding time lost during air raid alarms. It was agreed to ask if workers could continue to be paid while waiting during raid. It was also agreed to send a letter to Dundee Town Council requesting that further and adequate numbers of air raid shelters be erected throughout the city.
* **7th-** The following resolutions were agreed to be sent to the BTU Congress:

1. Payment for waiting time during air raids.
2. Reduction of waiting period for unemployment benefit from 3 to 2 days.
3. Unemployment benefits and holidays.

* **20th-** It was agreed to send letters of protest to the British Trade Union Congress and the Minister of Labour regarding the following matters:

1. Staggering of summer holidays.
2. Non-payment of extra wages for holiday working.
3. Relaxation of working hours of juveniles without prior consultation with unions.

* **20th-** It was reported that the air raid siren could not be heard at Havercroft Works and that no air raid shelter had been provided in the area.

**September**

* **1st-** Wage Increase: It was agreed to put forward a request for a wage increase of 12% for all workers involved in the jute trade.
* **1st-** It was agreed to send a letter of protest to the Military Authorities regarding the failure to sound the air raid alarms when planes are in the area.
* **8th-** Assistant secretary reported that letters of protest had been sent to the Prime Minister, Minister if Supply, Minister of Labour, Board of Trade, and both the Dundee MPs regarding the order sent to the London jute mills from the British Government for 50 million sandbags. Dundee had received no share of this order whatsoever.
* **9th-** Report was given on meeting with jute employers regarding this committee’s claim for payment of lost time during air raids. The employers were stating that workers should work overtime to make up for lost time. The delegates present at the meeting had approved of this and asked this committee to endorse their decision. It was agreed not to agree to the employers’ proposals of working overtime after 5:30 during the week and noon on Saturdays. It was also agreed to request that 50% of wages for all time lost be paid to workers.
* **15th-** It was reported that employers were refusing to consider the proposal of workers being paid for 50% of all time lost due to air raids. It was agreed to accept the employers’ offer of 4 hours’ worth of wages for all time lost for the present, but if the time lost should become greater then to meet with employers again.
* **15th-** Wage Increase: Increase of 12.5% agreed to at meeting of Workers’ Side of Jute Trade Board.