



## **MediaBook**

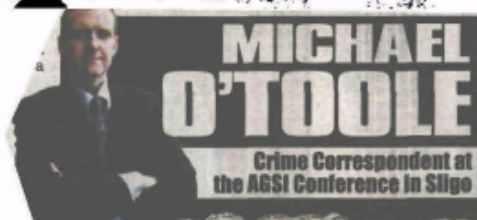
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# READY FOUR TROUBLE

## Brave officers' careers on line over protest



**MICHAEL O'TOOLE**  
 Crime Correspondent at the AGSI Conference in Sligo

**THESE four brave gardai have put their careers on the line — by standing up for their colleagues' rights.**

The experienced sergeants will this afternoon be summoned to Templemore, where they will face a disciplinary process for snubbing Commissioner Martin Callinan and Justice Minister Alan Shatter at the conference of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) in Sligo this week.

The four — Joe Hanley, Ted Hughes, Pat Baldwin and John Foley — now face the prospect of being suspended,

fined and even being reduced back down to the rank of garda for their actions on Monday and Tuesday.

They have been summoned to meet assistant Gard Commissioner Fintan Panning — the head of personnel in the force — for walking out when Mr Callinan and the minister addressed the AGSI conference.

### Clap

The four, all based in the Carlow Kilkenny area, were instructed to mount

the protest by their entire local organisation, who unanimously said they had no confidence in Mr Shatter or Mr Callinan.

But the move left Commissioner Callinan furious and he has now initiated disciplinary proceedings.

Sources told *The Star* that Mr Callinan rang the minister to tell him he was taking action against the sergeants and Mr Shatter approved the move.

A spokeswoman for Mr Shatter last night said he would not be commenting.

However, he did say he was glad he did not bring his wife Carol to the AGSI conference because of the less than courteous welcome he got.

As well as the walkout, other officers refused to clap Mr Shatter before and after he made his speech.

The four sergeants declined to comment

yesterday but the disciplinary action has left their colleagues furious.

One delegate told *The Star*: "There is a massive level of anger at this."

"Members put their lives on the line every day for the people — yet we can't even mount a democratic protest."

And another officer said: "This whole thing is about silencing gardai."

"We won't stand for it and we are behind the

lads every step of the way."

John Redmond, the general secretary of the AGSI, yesterday insisted the organisation would defend the four sergeants to the hilt.

He said: "They are elected to be representatives — they carry out their representative role in addition to working very, very hard for the community."

"I think it is outrageous that they would be threatened with discipline for bringing the views of their membership to delegates at this conference."

"We support the members' right to bring the views of the people that they represent to the attention of conference — that is their job."

"Those brave people did what they were told to do by their membership. They should not be facing the threat of discipline."

But Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan insisted he was unhappy with the walkout.

He said: "It is regrettable...I don't condone for a moment what has happened."

"It should not have happened. It was inappropriate and I have indicated that to the [AGSI] President."

Asked just after the event if he had planned to take any further action, he replied: "I will have a look at that in

the cold light of day.

### Banquet

"These are emotive times. But showing disrespect to the Minister of the day or the Commissioner of the day is not on."

Meanwhile, it emerged last night that the Garda Representative Association (GRA), which caters for rank-and-file gardai, has barred the minister from their conference next month.

Ministers are traditionally invited to conferences — where they speak and are the main guests at a banquet later that night.

But the GRA has decided this year not to invite the minister — and they say he is not welcome.

HAVING each served more than 20 years in the force, here are the four gardai who have put their careers on the line.

**NAME: JOE HANLEY**  
**STATION: Tullow, Co Carlow**  
 A highly respected sergeant who served as a UN officer in 2009.

**NAME: PAT BALDWIN**  
**STATION: Kilkenny city**  
 In 2003, he led the probe into the brutal robbery of a local priest who was tied up in his parochial house.

**NAME: TED HUGHES**  
**STATION: Thomastown, Kilkenny**  
 He played a major role in investigating the murder of local woman Siobhan Stapleton (51) last year.

**NAME: JOHN FOLEY**  
**STATION: Carlow town**  
 He is involved in the local drugs task force and, in 2009, his team smashed a Chinese gang that had a massive cannabis grow house in Carlow.



## MY VIEW...MICHEAL MARTIN

Leader, Fianna Fail

FOR months, Fianna Fail has been warning the Government about a growing crisis of morale within an Garda Síochána.

This week, we are seeing that crisis of morale reach boiling point. This is not good. A bond of trust between the Gardaí and their Minister is an important part of how we run our country.

Instead of understanding the significance of what has happened and realising that this

might be a good moment to stop being so high-handed and dismissive, Alan Shatter thinks it's a good idea to increase the criticism and attack the representatives of every garda, sergeant and inspector in the country. Shatter is causing real and lasting damage. It is time someone took him aside and explained to him that his attitude played a major role in getting him into this mess — he needs to change it and change it quickly.

## MY VIEW...JOHN REDMOND

General Secretary, AGSI

WHAT the boys from the Kilkenny/Carlow branch did, they were mandated to do by their membership.

I think it is outrageous that they would be threatened with discipline for bringing the views of their membership to delegates at this conference.

The people that they represent — remember, sergeants and inspectors within the Garda organisation — are working tirelessly for this country, keeping people safe.

They had no option but to bring those views to conference.

They walked out on the Minister and they walked out on the Commissioner and that's what they were told to do.

They are elected representatives. If they are not going to do what their membership tells them to, they have no business being in the role.

We support the members' right to bring the views of the people that they represent to the attention of the conference — that is their job.

## MICHAEL O'TOOLE

Crime Correspondent

THE four Garda sergeants who walked out on the Commissioner and Minister at the AGSI conference were in a no-win situation.

They were mandated by their colleagues to walk out in protest — how could they have returned to their friends if they failed to fulfil that mandate?

It would be entirely wrong if these four gardai were punished for loyalty, for doing the right thing by their colleagues — and for daring to express an opinion.



SHOWDOWN: Callinan (left) and Shatter; (right) AGSI General Secretary John Redmond speaks yesterday

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## AGSI defends right of its members to stage a walkout

**CONOR LALLY**

Crime Correspondent, in Sligo

The Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors has insisted four of its members who walked out on speeches by Minister for Justice Alan Shatter and **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan at its annual conference this week should not be disciplined.

AGSI general secretary **John Redmond** said it was "outrageous" that any action would be taken against them. He added the association would defend the men via legal means if necessary.

The **AGSI** made its comments after it emerged the men had been summoned to a meeting with senior Garda management at the Garda College in Templemore, Co Tipperary, today.

The four Garda sergeants at the centre of the case face potential sanctions, including verbal warnings, suspension, fines, demotion or dismissal. The men are due to appear today before Assistant Commissioner Fintan Fanning, who is in charge of Garda human resources.

The four are: Sgt Joe Hanly, of Tullow Garda station; Sgt Pat Baldwin, Kilkenny; Sgt Ted Hughes, Thomastown; and Sgt John Foley, Carlow.

Mr Redmond said while the AGSI did not support the walkout, the association believed it was not a disciplinary matter for senior management.

Speaking at the closing session of the conference in Sligo yesterday, Mr Redmond said the men had been mandated by their local branch in the Carlow-Kilkenny division to stage the walkout in protest at recent cuts to Garda resources and remuneration.

The conference yesterday met in closed session to discuss the matter and the AGSI executive also called an emergency meeting on the issue.

"Between those four people they have about 130 years ser-

vice to this country," Mr Redmond said.

"I think it is outrageous that they would be threatened with discipline for bringing the views of their membership to delegates at this conference."

Taking action against the men would represent the "prodding of a hornets' nest" and would do little for relations between Garda sergeants and inspectors and Mr Shatter and Mr Callinan, he said.

Should any move be made to sanction the men it will be seen as contentious because they would be disciplined for actions related to the representation of their colleagues.



**John Redmond:** "outrageous" that any action would be taken over walk-outs



# GRA snubs Shatter as garda row reaches crisis point

## Relations hit an all-time low as walkout sergeants face sanctions

**Tom Brady**  
Security Editor

**THE row between the two main garda representative bodies and Alan Shatter has hit crisis point after the Justice Minister said he was glad his wife had not accompanied him to a conference this week.**

His comments added further fuel to the row between Mr Shatter and gardai up to the rank of inspector.

The rank-and-file Garda Representative Association (GRA) then announced that it would not be inviting Mr Shatter to its annual conference in Westport, Co Mayo, next month.

The GRA said it had not yet decided whether **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan would be invited.

This is the first time that any garda representative group has not invited a justice minister to an annual conference since their formation in the mid-1970s.

When Michael McDowell held the portfolio, he was not invited to address the GRA's conference but he was asked to attend a dinner at the event.

The latest row involving Mr Shatter erupted as four sergeants were threatened with disciplinary action after

they walked out on Mr Callinan at the conference of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (**AGSI**) in Sligo and said they had lost confidence in him.

The four have been summoned to a meeting at the Garda College in Templemore, Co Tipperary, this afternoon.

The leadership of the **AGSI** pledged last night to strongly defend the sergeants if attempts were made to discipline them.

General secretary **John Redmond** said it was outrageous that they should be threatened with "the big stick" for representing the views of their

**Continued on Page 4**

# GRA pulls invite to Shatter as he brings wife into row

## Relations hit an all-time low with four protest sergeants now facing sanctions

Continued from Page 1

colleagues in the Carlow-Kilkenny branch of the association.

Mr Shatter had said he was "pleased" his wife Carol was not with him when he addressed the annual conference of the AGSI in Sligo on Monday evening.

"I am pleased my wife did not accompany me to that event because I don't think their conduct could be described as courteous or reasonable behaviour," he said.

Speaking on RTE Radio, he added: "It is regrettable that they did not engage on pay and conditions issues, and they have done a disservice to their members."

"Unfortunately, there seems to be a confrontational approach adopted by these bodies in addressing these issues rather than engaging in reasonable and constructive discussions."

Four of the delegates walked out when Mr Shatter was about to address the conference and the rest reacted to his speech with silence.

At the time, Mr Shatter said justice ministers could expect that sort of reaction.

However, last night Mr Shatter appeared to change his mind and this has led to a further worsening of relations.

AGSI chief Mr Redmond warned that disciplinary action would not help relations between the association and the commissioner.

Responding to the minister last night, he said he had met Mr Shatter when he arrived at the conference and treated him with the utmost courtesy and respect.

On the way out from the conference, Mr Shatter opted not to speak to him or to other officials

as they were escorting him to the front door.

While they were shaking hands, Mr Shatter told Mr Redmond that he hoped they would have a more mature engagement the next time they met.

Mr Redmond said he replied that he regarded Mr Shatter's comments as unbecoming of a minister.

Fianna Fail justice spokesman Niall Collins called on Mr Shatter to radically change his behaviour to avert a total breakdown in the relationship between the gardai and the Government.

Meanwhile, the 'walkout' sergeants, Joe Hanley, of Tullow station, Pat Baldwin, Kilkenny, Ted Hughes, Thomastown, and John Foley, Carlow, and their representatives will meet the assistant commissioner in charge of human resources, Fintan Fanning.

### 'Abhorrence'

The Templemore meeting is not part of the disciplinary process but will be used to outline what has been described as the "abhorrence" of Commissioner Callinan in relation to the comments from the sergeants about a lack of confidence in him.

The meeting is expected to focus on their walkout as Mr Callinan was about to address the delegates and a subsequent interview with some national media outlets, including the *Irish Independent*, in which they mentioned the motion of "no confidence".

The sergeants said they had been given a mandate by their branch last January to stage walkouts in front of the commissioner and Mr Shatter, and had fulfilled the wishes of their members. Senior sources said last night that a "sensible" approach would

be adopted by the authorities in dealing with the incidents in Sligo.

Under the disciplinary code, there are three possible breaches that could be investigated by the authorities.

Anyone convicted of a minor breach faces a reprimand, caution or admonition.

Conviction of a "less serious" breach carries those penalties plus a fine of up to two weeks' pay, while a "serious" breach can result in those penalties including a stiffer fine and the ultimate sanction of a recommendation to the commissioner for dismissal.

A decision on what action might be taken in this case is also likely to be influenced by the good working relationship between the human resources section at garda headquarters and the association and, in particular, the achievements made in successfully introducing a radical new duty roster for the force.

After the association met in closed session at the conference and a special national executive meeting, Mr Redmond said he hoped that those in senior levels in trade unions would support them in their stance.

"It is not fair and it is not right that people representing those in country stations, or any other station for that matter, to be subject to a threat of discipline for doing what we are supposed to be doing," he added.

He said it was outrageous that in 2013, a hundred years after Jim Larkin, they were at this stage.

Mr Redmond pointed out that under the regulations gardai could be disciplined for failing to meet their mortgage payments.

"We have people in situations who can't put meat on their table

for their children and they have to continue to try and pay down their mortgages.

"We can't strike, we can't represent our views at a national level through unions, we can't negotiate directly with government.

"It is time those things changed," Mr Redmond said.



The four sergeants in the walkout row, clockwise from top left: Pat Baldwin, John Foley, Joe Hanley and Ted Hughes.



Members of the GRA protest at Government Buildings.



# A little perspective please, reaction to walkout is over the top

Dearbhail McDonald

Legal Affairs Editor

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**S**OME see an opportunity in every crisis; others, it seems, see a crisis in every opportunity.

The reaction to the 'walkout' by four members of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) during speeches by Justice Minister Alan Shatter and Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan has been over the top.

It has also led to the prospect of disciplinary action for four mid-ranking gardai with 100 years of service between them.

Raising the temperature of what should have been a lukewarm encounter, Mr Shatter said that he was pleased his wife Carol had not been with him when he addressed the AGSI conference because of the AGSI's lack of courtesy and reasonableness shown to him.

Were the men aggressive or intimidating by walking out on a speech greeted with absolute silence by the remainder of the AGSI delegates?

Did they physically coral the minister into the conference hall or indulge in acts of public disorder?

The walkout requires some context and perspective: four delegates walked out when a minister began to speak.

The Carlow/Kilkenny four had been mandated by their local AGSI branch, last January, to stage the withdrawal.

They also passed a motion of no confidence in the commissioner at the same branch meeting.

Although the AGSI supported the men's decision to walk out - and believes the quartet should not face disciplinary action - the association drew the line at aiming fire at the boss, arguably the real source of contention at this week's annual meeting.

There is no law on the statute

books compelling gardai to act in awe of the Government.

Members of An Garda Síochána are, however, legally and ethically constrained in the dark arts of industrial relations.

They swear an oath when they join the force pledging to uphold the Constitution and the law; are required to remain apolitical and not to engage in any form of industrial action and they can not be part of any trade union.

Under the Garda Síochána Act 2005, officers are prohibited from withdrawing their labour and anyone found guilty of bringing about a strike could be hit with a €50,000 fine, five years in jail or both.

In addition there is an institutional aversion amongst our mostly unarmed force that they will not act against the interests of the State. That doesn't mean that they are not human and many gardai of all ranks are suffering the same problems as many of their fellow citizens shouldering cuts to their pay and pensions.

The financial crisis has strained many relations as witnessed by Croke Park II/Landsdowne I.

And so many Rubicons have been crossed that the threatened path to industrial unrest has become a busy superhighway.

The Irish State has been staggeringly fortunate that its citizens have not - as yet - poured on to the streets in real protest.

Time, energy, goodwill and leverage should not be wasted on managerial and ministerial thin skins.

The real battles still lie before us.



# Dispute between Minister and Garda unions escalates

GRA decides not to invite Shatter to its annual conference in Mayo next month

Four sergeants summoned to meeting today over conference walkout

CONOR LALLY  
and STEPHEN COLLINS

Relations between the Government and the gardaí have hit a new low after the latest row between Minister for Justice Alan Shatter and the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors.

While some of his Cabinet colleagues have reservations about Mr Shatter's abrasive style, most of them strongly back him in the stand-off with the AGSI.

The organisation yesterday accused the Minister of being arrogant and condescending, while he deplored the atmosphere at the AGSI annual conference in Sligo. "I'm pleased my wife didn't accompany me to that event because I don't think their conduct could be described as courteous or reasonable," said Mr Shatter.

AGSI general secretary **John Redmond** insisted he had treat-

ed Mr Shatter with respect at the conference. However, he said the Minister had not spoken to him as he walked him from the hotel after his address, and as they parted outside Mr Shatter told Mr Redmond he hoped the AGSI would engage with him more maturely in the future.

Mr Redmond then told Mr Shatter his behaviour was unbecoming of a Minister.

It also emerged last night that the Garda Representative Association has decided not to invite Mr Shatter to its annual conference in Westport, Co Mayo, next month, saying it had no confidence in him.

While former minister for justice Michael McDowell did not receive an invitation to address the conference during a row over the establishment of the Garda Reserve, he was invited to share a meal with the association and accepted it.

Members of the GRA picket-

ed the Taoiseach's department yesterday in protest at cuts to Garda resources and pay. In the Dáil on Tuesday Enda Kenny had said the Garda representative bodies should not have walked out of the recent Croke Park pay talks.

The GRA represents 11,200 rank-and-file gardaí, while the AGSI represents about 2,000 sergeants and inspectors; a combined membership of just over 13,000 in a total force of 13,400.

'Stop digging' Fianna Fáil justice spokesman Niall Collins said Mr Shatter should "stop digging". He said his "arrogance" in dealing with Garda members had caused a breakdown in relations between gardaí and the Government.

Both Garda associations are engaged in protests over proposed cuts to their pay under the new Croke Park agreement. They are refusing to use their

personal phones, cars and laptops for official duty and are also refusing to make themselves available to work overtime at major events that require a large policing presence.

Senior officers are fearful the worsening relations between most Garda members and Mr Shatter could lead to protracted protest action. Adding to the situation is the vow by the AGSI to take legal action if required to defend four of its members threatened with disciplinary action, up to dismissal, after they walked out of Mr Shatter's and Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan's addresses to delegates at the conference in Sligo.

## Open challenge

Both men are livid at what they see as an open challenge to their authority. Mr Callinan said the walkouts were disrespectful and would not be tolerated. The four sergeants, from the Carlow-Kilkenny division, were mandated by a vote of their members locally to walk out to demonstrate their lack of confidence in both men.

The four have been summoned to the Garda College in Templemore this afternoon to appear before Assistant Commissioner Fintan Fanning, who is in charge of human resources.

In another development last night, Mr Shatter released a statement accusing an "unexpected number of gardaí" of accessing the Pulse computer database to check details of the arrest of Independent TD Clare Daly TD in January on suspicion of drink-driving. She was handcuffed but later cleared of any wrongdoing.



■ Members of the GRA protest over proposed public service cuts outside Government Buildings, Dublin.  
PHOTOGRAPH: GARETH CHANEY/  
COLLINS



# Gardai face discipline for walkout

Valerie Robinson

Southern Correspondent

**F**OUR garda sergeants face disciplinary action after staging walkouts on the Republic's justice minister, Alan Shatter and Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan.

The male officers, all from the Kilkenny Carlow area, have been criticised for leaving a Sligo conference room this week before speeches by the two men.

The four, who were attending the annual conference of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI), said they were mandated to stage the walkouts by colleagues in their division.

However, they angered Garda chiefs by also saying they had no confidence in Mr Callinan.

Mr Shatter yesterday sanctioned action against the sergeants.

If they are found by a disciplinary board to have breached the force's regulations the men could face suspension, fines and even demotion.

The sergeants were last night said to be shocked and worried.

The **garda commissioner** yesterday said the walkouts "should not have happened".

Mr Callinan also revealed he had sought a report into a separate incident where an off-duty garda confronted Taoiseach Enda Kenny when he was canvassing for the Meath East by-election on Monday.

Mr Kenny was meeting the public in a Ratoath supermarket when he was approached by the man who complained about the government decision to cut Garda allowances.

The **AGSI** yesterday held an emergency meeting to discuss the prospect of four of its members being disciplined.



**ACTION:** The Republic's justice minister Alan Shatter and **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan



# GRA mulls snub to Garda Commissioner

by Cormac O'Keeffe

Relations between frontline gardai and the Garda Commissioner have reached a new low after it emerged the largest staff association is considering not inviting Martin

Callinan to their annual conference next month.

Such a decision would be unprecedented and underlines the growing rebellion among members to cuts in pay and allowances in the Croke Park II agreement.

The Garda Representative Association, which represents 11,200 frontline gardai, has already decided not to invite Justice Minister Alan

Shatter to the conference.

While the GRA once before refused to invite a minister — Michael McDowell — to address the conference, it is the first time a minister will not be invited to attend as a guest.

GRA general secretary PJ Stone said the central executive committee would make the decision in relation to the commissioner next week.

"We haven't made a decision to invite the Garda Commissioner to the conference yet," said Mr Stone. "There is, of course, an issue; there's an issue from the membership who are very

angry and very agitated.

"One thing is very clear: In the event of the GRA deciding they are not inviting the Garda Commissioner that's a decision we are entitled to make."

He agreed such a decision would be "absolutely" unprecedented, but added the association had also decided not to invite the minister.

"We have always invited ministers with the exception of [then justice minister] McDowell when we didn't invite him to address conference, but we invited him as our guest.

"On this occasion, we are not inviting the minister one way or the other. It would hardly be plausible to invite a minister that an executive has decided they have no confidence in."

Mr Stone was one of 30 GRA representatives staging a protest outside the Taoiseach's offices on Merion St yesterday.

He said the average garda, on a salary of €40,000, would be €2,500 worse off under Croke Park II, while

a public servant on €65,000 working 9am-5pm would not lose a cent. This was "wrong, unjust, and unfair".

He also commented on reports the Garda Commissioner was considering action against four delegates of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors who walked out during his and Mr Shatter's addresses at their annual conference.

"I think we've gone to a very silly place if people can't protest in a dignified way," said Mr Stone. "They clearly had a mandate to do what they did. I think it's important here that people don't lose the run of themselves in terms of starting to sanction people for taking an action which, in my view, is hardly worthy of great talk or consideration."

He was not referring to the commissioner but to "people" and did not think the walkout was disrespectful to the commissioner.



Members of the central executive committee and divisional representatives of the Garda Representative Association protesting outside the Department of An Taoiseach. From left: Claran O'Neill, Pádraig Kelly, Ultan Sherlock, and Yvonne Hedderman.

Photo: Photocall Ireland



PJ Stone attended protest outside Taoiseach's office.



# Garda Four won't be punished over their cuts protest walkout

By Ken Foy

FOUR highly respected gardai who stormed out of a speech by the Garda Commissioner will not be disciplined following their protest walk-out.

The senior officers from Carlow/Kilkenny are meeting Garda PR guru Assistant Commissioner Fintan Fanning at 4pm today in Garda HQ for crunch talks.

A senior source said that "despite being insubordinate" they will not face internal discipline.

"To suspend or fine those lads would be like putting petrol on top of a flaming fire - the commissioner knows this."

The prospect of disciplinary action against the four sergeants for publicly snubbing a speech by the force's chief had been branded despicable and disgraceful.

And the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) said it was standing "four-square" behind the officers, who have been summoned to a meeting with the Assistant Commissioner over the protest.

The four, from the Carlow/Kilkenny division, staged a walkout when Justice Minister Alan Shatter got up to address the gathering and - in an unprecedented move - again when the **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan took to the podium.

The delegates, who were representing sergeants and inspectors in Kilkenny and Carlow, said they were mandated to do so by their members.

## FUMING

In theory they could face a range of sanctions including fines, suspension and a reduction in rank. But as relations between gardai and the top

brass continues to worsen, it is expected that the matter will be dealt with in less divisive way.

"Of course Martin Callinan is fuming, but the last thing he wants is some ridiculous feud with four senior gardai who have served the force so well," added a source.

Speaking yesterday, Justice Minister Alan Shatter said he was not going to comment in relation to any disciplinary action. "I don't think it is appropriate to do so."

In a veiled swipe he did say that he was pleased that his wife did not accompany him to the event because of the way the four AGSI members who walked out had conducted themselves.

"I don't think their conduct could be described as courteous or reasonable".

Asked about AGSI general secretary describing him as "arrogant" and "condescending", Mr Shatter replied "I can't help the manner in which Mr Redmond consistently misrepresents me or my engagement with the AGSI."

It was not correct, he added, to say that the Garda Representative bodies had been kept out of the Croke Park talks.

## BREAKDOWN

Both bodies had a statutory role and the manner in which discussions took place was one with which they were familiar.

He said both garda bodies had fallen out with successive ministers for justice and seemed to adopt a "confrontational approach" in dealing with issues on these occasions.

Members of the force had to

understand that reforms were implemented by Government in the public interest.

Fianna Fail has called for a "radical change" in behaviour from Mr Shatter in order to "avert a total breakdown in the relationship between the garda and the Government".

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**AGSI: John Redmond**

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**SPEECHES: Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan with Justice Minister Alan Shatter**



# Sergeant slaughter: Garda union hits out at sanctions

by **BRIAN HUTTON**

**THREATENED** disciplinary action against four Garda sergeants for publicly snubbing a speech by the force's chief has been branded despicable and disgraceful.

The Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) said it was standing 'four-square' behind the officers who have been summoned to a meeting with Assistant Commissioner Fintan Fanning this evening over the protest.

It is understood they will be warned that Garda bosses are taking their high-profile demonstration at the annual conference this week 'very, very seriously'.

The four, from the Carlow/Kilkenny division, staged a walk out when Justice Minister Alan Shatter got up to address the gathering and again when the **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan took to the podium.

Both Mr Shatter and Mr Callinan will discuss potential actions after the meeting.

An outraged **AGSI** general secretary **John Redmond** angrily denounced any threatened measures against the members whom he said were simply representing their colleagues.

'We are absolutely four-square behind those members,' he said.

'It is despicable to threaten those hard-working members with discipline for bringing the views of their membership to the attention of the national executive.

'It is a disgraceful way to treat people who are trying to engage with management on the welfare and pay and conditions of members, who are working hard day in and day out in rural Ireland.

Mr Redmond, who distanced himself from remarks by one of the protesters that they had no confi-

dence in the commissioner, said the four sergeants were elected representatives for AGSI and were doing what they had been mandated to.

Rank-and-file gardaí continued to ignore warnings of disciplinary action to hold the latest in their series of protests when about 50 members of the Garda Representative Association demonstrated outside the Taoiseach's offices in Dublin.



# Garda Four will not be punished for snubbing conference speeches

By Ken Foy

FOUR highly respected gardai who stormed out of a speech by the **Garda Commissioner** will not be disciplined following their protest walk-out.

The senior officers from Carlow/Kilkenny are meeting Garda Assistant Commissioner Fintan Fanning, who is in charge of Human Resources, at 4pm today for crunch talks.

A senior source said "despite being insubordinate" they will not face internal discipline.

"To suspend or fine those lads would be like putting petrol on top of a flaming fire - the commissioner knows this."

The Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (**AGSI**) said it was standing "four-square" behind the officers ahead of their meeting.

The four staged a walk-out when Justice Minister Alan Shatter got up to address the gathering and - in an unprecedented move - again when the **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan took to the podium.

The delegates, who were representing sergeants and inspectors in Kilkenny and Carlow, said they were mandated to do so by their members.

In theory they could face a range of sanctions including fines, suspension and a reduction in rank.

But as relations between gardai and the top brass continues to worsen, it is expected that the matter will be dealt with in less

divisive way.

"Of course Martin Callinan is fuming, but the last thing he wants is some ridiculous feud with four senior gardai," added a source.

Speaking yesterday, Justice Minister Alan Shatter said he was not going to comment on any disciplinary action. "I don't think it is appropriate to do so."

In a veiled swipe, he did say that he was pleased that his wife did not accompany him to the event because of the way the four **AGSI** members had conducted themselves.

Asked about **AGSI** general secretary describing him as

"arrogant" and "condescending", Mr Shatter replied "I can't help the manner in which Mr Redmond consistently misrepresents me or my engagement with the **AGSI**."

It was not correct, he added, to say that the Garda Representative bodies had been kept out of the Croke Park talks.

Both bodies had a statutory role and the manner in which discussions took place was one with which they were familiar.

He said both garda bodies had fallen out with successive ministers for justice and seemed to adopt a "confrontational

approach" on these occasions.

Members of the force had to understand that reforms were implemented by Government in the public interest.



**AGSI: John Redmond**



**SPEECHES: Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan with Justice Minister Alan Shatter**



# Callinan condemns inspectors' walkout

Commissioner to examine sergeant and inspector protest during Shatter speech

Report requested into incident involving off-duty garda challenging the Taoiseach

## CONOR LALLY

Crime Correspondent  
in Sligo

Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan has condemned a small number of Garda sergeants and inspectors who walked out during a speech by Minister for Justice Alan Shatter and said he plans to "examine" the protest.

Mr Callinan has also requested a report into an incident in which an off-duty member challenged Taoiseach Enda Kenny while he was campaigning on Monday as part of the Meath East byelection.

### Incident in Ratoath

"I've already sought a report and I'm going to have a look at it when I receive the report," he said of the incident in Ratoath. "People are entitled to consult with their politicians and to challenge them. I'm sure the Taoiseach was well able to deal with that situation but of course I'm going to have a look at it to see if there are any issues there for me to deal with."

Those who walked out during the speech by Mr Shatter at the annual conference of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) in Sligo on Monday night were from the Carlow-Kilkenny Garda division. They also walked out for Mr Callinan's speech yesterday.

They did so after being mandated by their members to express their lack of confidence in both men at the conference, which was due to conclude this afternoon. The commissioner is said to be furious over the matter and about a subsequent interview in which the delegates explained they had no confidence in Mr Shatter.

"It is regrettable that that has happened; I don't condone for a moment that that had happened and it shouldn't have happened," Mr Callinan said.

"It was inappropriate and I have indicated that to the president of the executive."

Regarding the walkout during Mr Shatter's speech, he said he would examine it in "the cold light of day".

"These are emotive times, particularly at the association conferences. But showing disrespect to the Minister of the day and commissioner of the day is not on as far as I'm concerned. I don't expect it from members of sergeant or inspector rank."

### 'Air now cleared'

Mr Callinan also reiterated his warning to AGSI not to send out circulars encouraging its members not to report for overtime duty as part of their protest over proposed pay cuts. However, he believed "the air has now been cleared" on that matter.

AGSI general secretary **John Redmond** has distanced himself from the walkout, saying it was a step too far.

AGSI members yesterday passed a motion calling on Mr Callinan to reintroduce into service the Uzi submachine gun after it was withdrawn two years ago.

Insp Walter Kilcullen from Lucan Garda station in Co Dublin said he believed the withdrawal of the weapons was akin to asking gardai on traffic duties to return their motorbikes.

### Powerful weapon

Furthermore, he believed the fact Det Garda Adrian Donohoe did not have a more powerful weapon than the Sig pistol he was carrying at the time of his murder in Co Louth in January may have been the difference between being shot dead or surviving.

"Maybe that night, if he had an Uzi submachine gun what happened may not have happened," Insp Kilcullen told delegates. "The appearance of the

Uzi submachine gun is more intimidating and powerful than a Sig handgun."

**"It is regrettable that that has happened; I don't condone [it] for a moment"**  
Commissioner Martin Callinan on the walkout



## Shatter runs the gauntlet

Claims that they had been victimised and singled out for special treatment failed to impress. But there was no doubting the rebellious atmosphere at the annual gathering of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors. Members gave the silent treatment to Minister for Justice Alan Shatter and sought support and understanding from Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan. Opposition to changes in working conditions and allowances dominated the conference. The situation is volatile and will require careful handling.

Mr Shatter's decision to lecture his hosts on their Croke Park negotiating tactics and obstructive behaviour was guaranteed to annoy. The leadership of both Garda associations had done their members a serious disservice, he insisted. They appeared to believe that by behaving as some sort of protest movement, they were acting in the best interests of the force. Had they remained at the talks, he said, they could have secured benefits for their members.

With a frosty reception guaranteed, the Minister may have felt confrontation and straight talking was the best approach. That way, there was less chance of future misunderstandings. Some members walked out in protest while others sat in silence. The degree of alienation between the association and the Minister came

into stark focus when he was accused of "telling lies" about station closures.

While Mr Shatter was dealing with sergeants and inspectors, the Taoiseach was being upbraided on the hustings by an off-duty garda. Again, a sense of unfairness came through. The garda complained he wasn't responsible for the economic crash, but was being asked to pay for it. A similar position has been adopted by other frontline groups. But demands for absolute exemptions are untenable. Savings of €1 billion are required over three years and all public servants should make a contribution. Otherwise, a deal will not hold. As Mr Kenny asked the protesting garda: "Who do you think is going to pay for the services?"

Claims of victimhood go down well at association meetings but the reality is that gardaí are relatively well paid compared to their colleagues overseas and public servants at home. Their concern that Mr Callinan tends to "take the Government side" over policing issues and reform of the force is wrong-headed. It is Mr Callinan's duty to ensure that limited manpower and resources are used in the most effective fashion. In regard to the closure of stations, he is following independent advice from the Garda Inspectorate that supports a freeing-up of manpower in this way. He is not, and should not become, a mouthpiece for representative bodies. To clear the air, a fundamental review of the role of the Garda Síochána should be undertaken.



# TOP COP DENIES UZIS ARE NEEDED

But senior gardai disagree with boss at AGSI conference

By MICHAEL O'TOOLE

Crime Correspondent

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**MIDDLE-RANKING** gardai yesterday demanded that detectives be reissued with Uzi submachine guns — with one officer claiming it could have saved Adrian Donohoe's life.

But that drew an angry response from **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan, who insisted the presence of an Uzi on the January night when the detective was killed by robbers would not have made the slightest difference.

Officers are furious that the firearm, first used by gardai in 1967, was withdrawn last year — and, as *The Star* revealed on Monday, believe it leaves them outgunned in the war on crime.

## Attack

Now the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (**AGSI**), which is holding its annual conference in Sligo town, has passed a motion demanding that **Garda Commissioner** Martin Callinan reintroduce the Uzi.

Inspector Walter Kilcullen, based at Lucan in west Dublin, said officers on high-risk operations now have to rely on pistols which are not as intimidating.

**Inspector Kilcullen suggested Det Gda Donohoe (41) may have survived a gun attack during a botched credit union robbery in Lordship, Co Louth, in January if he had an Uzi.**

"Maybe that night, if he had an Uzi submachine gun, what happened might not have hap-

pened," he said.

**Inspector Kilcullen, a senior member of the AGSI, said the Uzi had served the force well.**

Taking them away from officers over the past two years was like telling traffic police to return their motorbikes and use Segways instead, he told delegates.

## Facts

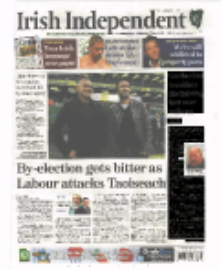
"The visual appearance of an Uzi submachine gun is more intimidating and powerful than a Sig handgun," he added.

**But the Commissioner criticised claims that an Uzi could have save Det Gda Donohoe's life.**

He said anyone "equipped with the salient facts" will realise that an Uzi "would not have made the slightest bit of difference".



**FACE-OFF:** John Redmond, AGSI General Secretary, with Commissioner Martin Callinan (front), at the AGSI Conference in Sligo yesterday; (inset above) Adrian Donohoe and (right) *The Star* reporting the story on Monday



# Garda chief considers disciplining four over walkout

**Tom Brady**  
Security Editor

FOUR garda supervisors face the threat of disciplinary action after walking out of a conference as Commissioner Martin Callinan was about to address delegates.

The unprecedented action by the four yesterday afternoon followed a similar protest on Monday night as the conference of the Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors (AGSI) was about to be addressed by Justice Minister Alan Shatter.

Mr Callinan last night strongly condemned their actions and said they were disrespectful to the minister and commissioner of the day.

"It is regrettable that these walkouts happened. I do not condone them and they should not have happened", he said.

He said he had indicated his feelings to the president of the AGSI, whose annual conference was taking place in Sligo.

The commissioner said he would now examine what had taken place to determine if there had been a breach of discipline, but said their actions had been very disrespectful.

Shortly afterwards, the association general secretary **John Redmond** distanced his representative body from the walkouts and said the comments of one of the protesters that they had no confidence in the commissioner was a step too far.

The four men who walked out are all sergeants and are delegates from the Carlow/Kilkenny division of the association.

**Continued on Page 4**

# Four face sanctions after walking out on garda chief at conference

Continued from Page 1

Spokesman Joe Hanley is based in Tullow, Pat Baldwin in Kilkenny city, Ted Hughes in Thomastown and John Foley in Carlow.

Mr Hanley said they had been mandated to take the action at an extraordinary general meeting of their branch last January.

He said they had no confidence in the minister or in the commissioner.

He said they had lost confidence in the commissioner because he had failed to back his members from rank and file up to sergeant and inspector.

It was a serious step to take, he admitted, and said it was not a personal reflection on the commissioner.

Mr Hanley acknowledged they had embarked on an extreme form of action and said it had not been an easy thing to do.

But they had been mandated to show the feelings of members on the ground and somebody had to take a stand.

"We were given a mandate by our branch and we had to follow their wishes," he added.

Earlier, the commissioner rejected suggestions that he had not led from the front and said he had pushed strongly for the promotion of 82 sergeants and 34 inspectors, which had now been agreed and was about to come on stream.

That was an example of the support he was providing, he said, and he was also pushing for an updating of the garda fleet management.

He told delegates that communities around the country had now come to expect and rely upon the levels of both professionalism and dedication shown by them and by the members they supervised. "We must retain that strong commitment to our communities and not embark on a road which would jeopardise that relationship," he added.

## Spending

He pointed out that the garda force was not immune from the financial environment or the reductions to public spending.

"The public we serve expect and deserve our utmost commitment and we need to continue to be professional in the way in which we carry ourselves while conducting a very important role in society," he said.

National executive member Larry Brady said morale in the force was at an all-time low and gardai now had to think about going into work. "This does not augur well for the future," he added.



L-r: Joe Hanley, Pat Baldwin, Ted Hughes and John Foley, all members of the Carlow/Kilkenny Branch of AGSI, who face disciplinary action after their walk out. ALAN DOWLEY



Martin Callinan: condemned action



Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan (front) and John Redmond, the AGSI General Secretary, at the AGSI conference in the Clarion Hotel, Sligo. JAMES CONNOLLY / PICSELL8