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THE SOCIALIST PAPER

ISSUE 243

DURING THE Dublin West By-election Fianna Fail candidate Brian Lenihan said he opposed water charges. He even brought out a leaflet stating that if elected he would have the "power" to influence Fianna Fail to end them.

On the day after the election, Fianna Fail leader Bertie Ahern stated, "there is no question of water charges being abolished!" so much for election promises.

JOE HIGGINS' campaign in the Dublin West By-election has put the issue of double taxation, local charges firmly onto the political agenda. The Parties who brought in charges now know how angry PAYE workers feel.

now be stepped up to achieve abolition of the charges. This can be done by building an even bigger and better their clinics or any othcampaign.

This means building up an even stronger movement of mass non payment. A tax that can't be collected cannot be sustained.

• Build the cam-

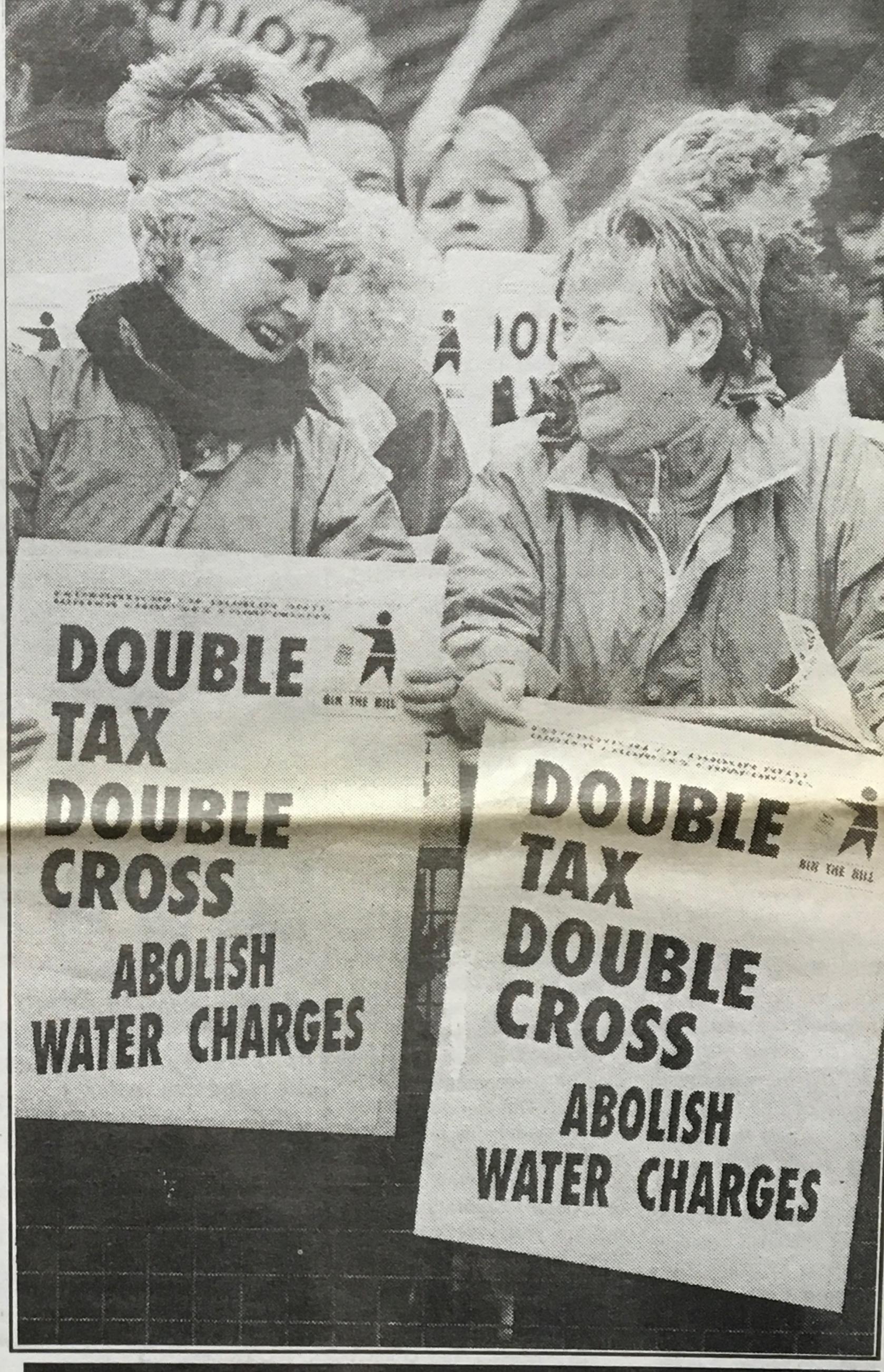
The campaign must paign membership and activities in every area, step up pressure on the politicians through lobbies and protests at er opportunity to let them know how people feel.

• Strong, active campaigns will be needed in every area if the Councils have the bottle to try water dis-

connections. Stop them with peaceful people power as was done in 1994.

• An end to dragging people before the courts. Rebuild the mass protests at future court cases to force the Councils into dropping their heavy handed tactics and bullying of working class people.

Fine Gael's Jim Mitchell says water charges and local taxes are a means of giving people more democracy at local level! Maybe he could explain why the same politicians who gave us double taxes at local level also cancelled the local elections due this year and put them back until mid 1998?



Inside Militant this month.

• Joe Higgins rocks the political establishment.

Pages 3,4, and 5.

- Workers in struggle. Pages 7 and 8.
- Water charges reports. Page 2
- North Elections. Page 6



ADVLIDIT WATER GITARUED NVW;

TAKE THEM ON IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

THE POLITICAL establishment that brought in

the water charges can be beaten. That's the lesson

of the Dublin West By-election and that lesson must

form the basis for the discussion at the anti water

charges conference to be held in Dublin on 19th

May. The potential for this conference is tremen-

dous. It is vital that as many activists from Dublin

but particularly from around the country come

MAY 19TH CONFERENCE

along and participate.

Having established a po-

litical bridge head in Dublin

West, now the national

charges must pull together a

which is likely in early 1997.

that preparations should ur-

gently be made, so that com-

ing quickly after the confer-

ence, there is an agreed na-

tional slate of candidates,

fighting primarily on the is-

sue of service charges and

stituencies in which anti ser-

vice charge campaigns have

a tradition and where there

are people with proven

records as fighters for work-

ing class people. Like in

Dublin West, such candi-

dates individually could tap

into the huge anger and mood

for change that currently ex-

ists. But collectively, as a

unified national slate taking

on the political establish-

There are at least ten con-

taxation.

4519805

Militant Labour believes

"YOU DIDN'T axe the double tax, now watch your vote collapse". They thought this was an idle threat. They thought the water charges issue would die! They are now wide awake and fearful, and so they should be.

In the Dublin West Byelection Fianna Fail's vote slumped by 25%. Labour's collapsed by a staggering 80%. The tactic of standing in the election to strengthen the anti water charges campaign has worked spectacularly. The councils and politicians have been knocked back, now we must go all out for the complete abolition of double taxation.

In November the councils will vote once again on water charges. Between now and then we must make life unbearable for the politicians. We must use our successes to bring more people into non payment and into actual membership of the campaign. Finally we must be ready to respond with a massive show of strength and decisive action if they try to disconnect anyone's water supply.

By Kevin

McLoughlin South Dublin Militant Labour

Now is the time to increase political pressure. A general ship from 12,000 to 20,000 achieve our goal. 1997. Local elections are due in 1998. We can pose a choice in front of all TDs and councillors - get rid of water charges or run the likely risk of losing your cosy political career. We are able \\$\$ to say that because of the powerful political influence we were able to wield in the Dublin West By-election and they are rattled.

In every area between now and November campaign members should phone the politicians continuously. There should be protests at their clinics and their meetings. We can make these careerist, weak kneed poli-

ticians buckle.

The anti water charges conference due in May is crucial. From it we can enlarge the campaign if we can get the message across that if people remain united and active, we can successfully defy the Courts and maintain water supplies. Then we can broaden the numbers not paying, boost the memberactivists in each area.

In the fear of losing seats it is quite likely that these parties will come up with some form of alternative to water charges before a general election. But our demand is clear - we want an abolition of double taxation service charges. The bigger the campaign is, the more pressure we can mount to

election is likely early in and increase the numbers of MILLIONAIRES WATER TAX FOR PAYE

Co-Ordinating Committee, Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns

ment, the impact could be enormous.

Militant Labour is already committed to standing in a

The Dublin West By-elec-

By Clare Daly

movement against service national electoral strategy for the general election

number of areas. But we would warmly welcome the prospect of other candidates standing and through a national slate would fully cooperate and assist as much as possible.

tion posed a unique opportunity to hit back against water charges, the coming general election poses a chance to bury service charges and in doing so hurt the political establishment badly. A challenge on a national scale to the sell out political parties would undoubtedly act as a great focal point around which young people, community and union activists and left wing people can unite and fight.

"BY ENCOURAGING people not to pay water charges, they in effect are causing cut backs in services and putting council jobs at risk", or put another way "the Anti Water Charges Campaign is made up of selfish begrudgers who'll do anything to avoid paying their way". Either way these are the type of lies that will come your way as the battle hots up over the next months.

The truth behind service charges and the cash crisis in the councils is as usual completely different.

People in the country have always had a problem with local authority rates or charges. It's simple to see why, workers pay enormous sums of money in tax but have never got adequate or corresponding services back in return. Instead the fact that tax payers money is used to subsidise the antics of the rich and well to do adds insult to the injury.

The bottom line is, if the tax paid by the PAYE sector was put aside to provide services and facilities for workers, the unemployed and their families, then there would be enough money to dramatically improve all current services and the water charges would be completely unnecessary. The problem is what central govern-

ment does with our taxes. Local rates were abolished in 1977. The Government then increased the general level of taxation and committed themselves to give grants to local councils in accordance to what they would have raised through local rates. In other words PAYE workers paid for their local services through the increase in their income tax bill.

The problem is that since

By Emmet Farrell Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns

1984 the government hasn't maintained this domestic rate grant at the promised level but in fact have withheld the money. As a result the councils became cash starved.

By 1993 it was estimated that the government owed £50 million to Dublin County Council. No doubt this money was used to fund the likes of the Beef Tribunal! Now only 7% of Dublin Corporation's £250 million yearly budget comes from the Government's domestic rate support grant. In fact they want to phase out this grant altogether.

The councils and councillors rather than take on the Government and demand that the withheld money be paid, are trying to make PAYE workers pay again for water, refuse collecting, sewerage, car parking etc. If they get away with it the list will be endless.

PAYE taxes have gone up by £175 million on average each year over the past decade. PAYE workers pay 85% of all income tax! At the same time there was £2,000 million in unpaid taxes in 1994. Money owed to us by the rich. Of course no serious action was taken to get it.

We say:

*Abolishall local service charges.

Restore the Rate Support Grant to a level that will fund local services. ·For massive investment to improve and develop new and better facilities and services.

*End the rip off. Make the rich pay their fair share of tax.

FORUM An anti-drug newspaper has been launched in Tallaght called The Shrew, it will be delivered free throughout the Dublin area. The organisers hope it will be supported by

THE FIRST forum of the Dublin city wide campaign on drug abuse, in Liberty Hall on 9th March, was attended by about 500 people. About forty communities were represented, along with trade unions and the voluntary sector.

Both the workshops and the plenary session agreed that the drugs crisis is the product of poverty and mass unemployment, particularly for youth and noted that the political establishment ignored the crisis until drug related crime began to impact in the wealthier middle class areas.

Speakers described the nightmare which exists for addicts seeking treatment and their families. Of going from institution to institution, each of which has a waiting list of up to six or twelve months. By the time many addicts got a place it was too late, they are dead, sometimes by suicide. Mothers told of buying methadone on the black market and administering it to their addict children themselves.

The Forum highlighted the lack of urgency in the legal BEFORE process for bringing big dealers to justice. Community activists told of how their local Gardai claimed they hadn't the resources to go after the big dealers, but yet when the same communities got organised the Gardai had the resources to harass anti drugs activists.

People demanded that poli-

PEOPLE IN the Drumcairn,

Kilcarrig and Kilmartin Es-

tates in Tallaght have set up

a 24 hour patrol to try and

stop drug dealing in their

estates.

By Jacqueline Clarke South Dublin Militant Labour

ticians and the Gardai be made accountable to communities for how they used their time and resources.

Speaker after speaker demanded a co-ordinated national policy and adequate resources to deal with the crisis, in the long and short term. But how anti drugs budget amounts to a

Banners have been put up on

houses proclaiming the start

of a "Drug Free Area". Tents

have been set up near main

roads, with women on patrol

during the day, and joined

paltry £10m over two years? That's less than one tenth of the £120m worth of drugs seized in one haul at Urlingford earlier this year. The Minister for Health's promise to improve treatment for addicts depends on getting 200 GPs

adone maintenance programs. Is it surprising that only twenty are now involved when GPs are paid fifty pence per week to treat 15 to 24 year serious is a government whose olds? In Dublin last year 92% of those receiving treatment

involved in locally based meth-

were between 15 and 39 years.

donations. The editor is Joe Anderson who can be con-

tacted at A7 Avonbeg Court, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Fax

The city wide campaign is an important step forward. For the first time communities and trade unions have come together to fight back against the drugs epidemic. It will take a massive campaign to make the political establishment provide anything like the resources needed. Only by building the campaign in every working class estate in Dublin and making the drugs crisis an issue in the next election will we get those resources.



Taking on drug dealers in Tallaght

by men in the evening to keep an eye on green areas and the homes of known pushers.

The strategy is to discourage people coming into the estates for drugs and to let the pushers know they are

being watched. Local people want the pushers out of their estates, either by starving them of business or persuading Dublin Corporation to evict them.

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tions. The v ment fi Plans ar and act workfor

But of be cons manoeur (includi The Dublin West election campaign organised by Militant Labour and supporters of the Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaign had a real impact on ordinary people. DERMOT CONNOLLY reports on some of the lessons of the campaign and on some of the meetings held in the course of it.

Dublin West Campaign captures By-election working peoples' imagination

THE ELECTION campaign run by Militant Labour and members of the Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns in Dublin West wasn't the richest campaign, it didn't have the most expensive and glossy printed material and posters, but it most certainly had the most enthusiasm, the only young people, including the "mainly young" (obviously me) as one newspaper reported, and it was by far the most effective.

A By-election enables the big parties to concentrate their considerable resources into one area. In addition the parties in government are able to use the machinery of government to support their campaign. In effect this meant that we had to take on the full might of the political establishment. This we did, and no one doubts that we came out on top, even if we didn't manage to win the seat.

The key to our campaign was that we had a very good candidate, with a proven record as a socialist Councillor and fighter for working class people.

We also had the issue of water charges and the fact that we had been building a campaign on this for two years before the By-election. There were 4,000 signed up members of the campaign in Dublin West, which we regarded as the basis for our core vote along with the vote we knew Joe Higgins would receive due to his record as a Councillor in Mulhuddart.

We knew from the start that we couldn't compete with the big parties in terms of money, posters and access to the media. Our strategy was based on winning the political arguments on the doorsteps, and mobilising our support on the water charges.

To achieve this meant visiting all of the 4,000 campaign members as well as a general canvass of 26,000 houses.

The other key element in our campaign was the organisation of public debates throughout the constituency, inviting all the candidates to come and put their position on water charges.

We began the campaign with a public rally and a one day conference of Militant Labour. Both of these were a great success. They enabled us to prepare our forces politically for the campaign and to build up a good positive mood to get stuck in and do the business.

The next stage was to visit the 4,000 campaign members. We explained how their vote would be the crucial baseline to help us win, asked them for small donations, to put posters in their windows, and to work in the campaign if they could. The response was magnificent, and really helped to boost our confidence that we could take on the big parties.

It helped us to mobilise workers for the campaign. this enabled us to canvas every home in Dublin West. There was not one single area where we did not get a friendly response. This is in contrast to other canvassers who were virtually run out of certain areas.

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We organised public meetings on the water charges in Mulhuddart/ Blanchardstown, in Castleknock, in Lucan, in Clondalkin and in Palmerstown. Over 500 attended these meetings. Fianna Fail first tried to disrupt the meetings, then said they opposed the charges. Labour and Fine Gael failed to show. (This didn't stop the Fine Gael candidate from challenging Joe Higgins to debate with him!). We

believe the debates played a key role in exposing the establishment politicians and helping to build the mood on the water charges question. On election day our task was to get

our committed voters out. Between 6.00pm and 9.00pm we knocked on the doors of every person who had promised to vote for us. In one polling station, at Hartstown in Mulhuddart, only 13% had voted by 6.00pm. By 9.00pm it was up to 49%, down to the fact that we went in and got our voters to come out.

Whatever problems we encountered, due to lack of money and sometimes the inexperience of our supporters, were well overcome by the enthusiasm and conviction of our campaigners. We would like to thank them

for the tremendous hard work put in and their patience and good humour which was required at times. We would like to thank Mick Lally of Glenroe

fame for coming out to help Joe Higgins once again, all those who gave financial support, and finally all those who voted for Joe Higgins.



Lack of control over horses is but one factor of how working class communities feel abandoned

WHORIDARIO POLITICIANS?

IT WAS an electric meeting, about 100 people mainly from the Moorfield estate in Neilstown, North Clondalkin crammed into the local community centre to discuss what to do about the problem of horses in their estate.

The meeting was called by residents after Militant Labour members suggested doing so to them during the Dublin West By-election. I attended the meeting along with Joe Higgins, the Militant Labour candidate.

We started the meeting off by making some suggestions on what could be done and then asked people for their views, and we most certainly got them! As with many such meetings, everybody wanted to speak at once. The main problem in the area was that a piece of vacant ground was being used to keep horses on by the people who owned them.

We asked if people would accept this if the area was properly fenced off and kept clean. This idea met with a very definite no, although most people were in favour of land being provided somewhere in North Clondalkin and a club set up for these youngsters who wanted to keep horses.

The meeting in reality simply exploded with anger,

"why is our estate not kept clean, what is the litter warden doing, if I didn't do my job, I'd be sacked, where are the politicians, are you from Moorfield, what do you know about our area, what do you mean, if we want something done, we have got to get organised and do it ourselves, what are you going to do?", are just some of the questions fired from all sides at myself, vainly trying to chair the meeting, and Joe Higgins.

It seemed that myself and Joe were the only "politicians" available, and for a section of the meeting that was the opportunity to vent their anger and outrage at the way areas in North Clondalkin have been abandoned by the politicians, and starved of jobs investment, facilities and services.

However by the end of the meeting we had got agreement to set up a committee to discuss what the problems were, and to report back to a further meeting on what to about them. People thanked us for being the only people prepared to listen and to do something. I thought it was one of the best meetings I was ever at and Militant Labour is determined to get stuck in to areas like North Clondalkin and to assist local people in getting organised and making their voices heard.

Where are our rights?

THE MEETING was set up for 11pm, because they worked shifts and we had a public meeting earlier in the evening. They were there bang on time, thirteen workers from a small margarine manufacturing plant faced with a threat to lay off three staff and the removal of traditional overtime with paltry compensation.

They contacted Joe Higgins as most of them lived in the Mulhuddart / Blanchardstown area. Joe arranged for myself, Militant Labour's industrial organiser and Martin Walsh, a Packard shop steward to attend the meeting. Three hours later, at two in the morning, myself and Martin set back off on the motor way to the south side. Both of us have been around the trade union movement for a while, but we were staggered by what we heard from these workers.

They earn between £183 and £189 a week for shift work. They were offered a 5% wage increase for the loss of

overtime. A "voluntary" redundancy package of £500 plus the statutory half a weeks pay per year of service was offered to those with ten years service, £1,000 plus statutory for fifteen years, and £1,500 for over twenty years!

When the workers refused these insults they were told three people would be laid off with nothing in compensation. All of the production workers came to the meeting with two exceptions, the shop steward and his deputy! Their union, SIPTU was in favour of the company's offer, as nothing could be done according to the union official.

The workers wanted to know what were their legal rights and entitlements, could they go on strike? (they had been told they couldn't walk out if people were laid off).

Unfortunately, we had to explain to them that they had very little legal rights. All they were legally entitled to was a half a week per year if they were made redundant. And yes, they could be

laid off for up to a year, and that under the Industrial Relations Act they had to have a ballot before taking strike action. We recommended to them to have a meeting with their official the next day, to work out demands on compensation for loss of overtime, a decent redundancy deal, and demand the issues be taken to the Labour Court to stall on layoffs.

We also advised them to have an immediate ballot for strike action and to replace their shop stewards. We could see the disappointment in their faces, we had no magical solutions to offer. A small group of workers in a dead end plant, part of a Belgian multinational who would shut it without a second thought, inept shop stewards and a union official who didn't want to know. This is the reality for many workers in the 1990s. The workers later settled for a slightly better offer from the company. A number of them joined the campaigning work for Joe Higgins. We have to get rid of this rotten system.

Liz, a young Dunnes Stores worker and student speaks to Militant about how she saw the campaign.

"I FIRST came across Militant Labour when I was on strike in Dunnes Stores last summer. Before that I had studied about socialism and society in college but since the strike and the Joe Higgins election campaign socialist ideas now seem totally relevant to me.

"Going out and doing something, getting organised is making more and more sense to me, mainly because of where I come from, my background and experiences like the strike and looking at my community. It's tragic and sickening when you look at the fact that suicide rates among young people in working class areas like Mulhuddart where I'm from, are rising.

"Margaret Heffernan and people like her in the well off parts of Castleknock don't live in the real world, they are born into a cosy set up where they'll never have to worry about money or their future. Because they have a few 96Ds in the driveway doesn't make them any better or more intelligent than the rest of us.

"I think that's the way it is, some are born into privilege, others have to work for everything they have and that's a difficult situation to change but to me, the reaction of people during the election campaign now makes me think that it is realistic to break the mould of exploitation and privilege.

"I joined Militant Labour during the campaign and soon after, just before polling day, we had a meeting in the Blakestown resource centre, there were members of Militant Labour and local activists who had been involved. Joe was speaking about after the election, how we had laid the basis for the building of a new left in Ireland, it was unnerving - there was such a solid mood, like it was historic.

"I think the campaign was brilliant, it really opened my eyes about the attitudes of people in my area. I doubt it came as a surprise to anyone the vote that Joe got, because he's always the first one there, whether it's against the dump, new roads or the water charges he always gets stuck in with the community.

"The result was incredible, now big parties and everyone in society is forced to take working class people as a force seriously. Nearly a hundred years later the ideas that people like James Connolly fought for are now on the agenda.

"I'm in college as well as working in Dunnes Stores. From talking to friends in college and work they seem really interested in what I'm doing and what Militant Labour and socialism is about. After the count, instead of getting a slagging about protesting and all that, loads of people were saying they had watched the count and were really impressed.

"Young people are definitely looking for something, some form of fightback or protest, I would have joined Militant Labour ages ago, that's another reason the Byelection was so good, because now more people know that there are some people who are willing to stand up and be counted."

Joe Higgins campaign Joe Higgins campaign Joe Higgins campaign

THE HEADLINE in the Sunday Tribune posed the question, "The End of Politics?". This headline probably best sums up the sense of shock and disbelief among the main political parties and the political commentators after the Dublin West By-election.

The Militant Labour / Anti Water Charges candidate Joe Higgins won 23.7% of the first preference vote, only 252 votes behind Brian Lenihan of Fianna Fail. After all the preference votes had been counted, Fianna Fail scraped home with 11,752 votes to 11,384 for Joe Higgins.

Major blow

On every single front Dublin West was a major blow to the political establishment. The combined vote of all the parties represented in the Dail was less than 50% of the votes cast. Fianna Fail saw its vote fall to 24.6%, down from the low of 31% it received in the last general election.

Fine Gael's vote fell slightly, but also from a very low 14.4% in the general election. The PDs came in behind Sinn Fein. Labour's vote collapsed to 3.7%, an absolute disaster from the 22.6% they held at the general election.

The low turn out, at 43% was also in a sense a protest vote against the political establishment in the big local authority estates throughout the constituency. There is a very angry mood in these areas of high unemployment and poverty. People feel abandoned by the parties, and feel their vote doesn't count, doesn't change anything.

One young person in North

By Dermot Connolly North Dublin Militant Labour

Clondalkin interviewed in the Evening Herald, summed up this mood by saying "why should we vote for these politicians, who drive through our areas in big limos when there is an election? They don't care about us."

In contrast to this rejection of the main parties, the vote for Joe Higgins was a huge endorsement of his record as a fighter for working people, and a campaign that caught the imagination of hard pressed PAYE workers on the issue of water charges.

Where Joe Higgins was most known for his record as a councillor for the last five years, in

The key factor in Joe Higgins' widespread support was not simply that he opposed water charges, but his record as an uncompromising fighter for ordinary people

> the Mulhuddart area, he received a staggering 57% of the first preference vote.

> Where people felt there was a candidate who provided a real alternative, and an issue worth voting on, it was possible not only to overcome the general sense of apathy towards the "politicians", but to actually mobilise people not just to vote, but to put posters in their windows, billboards on the sides of their homes, to drop leaflets, and to

canvass for votes among their neighbours, friends and workmates.

The establishment political parties, even in their present state of shock, are incapable of understanding the real significance of Joe Higgins' vote. They now accept that the water charges is a major issue, but even so, don't understand why.

Water to drink

"Many of the people who kicked up a stink on the doorsteps about water charges probably spend more money on Ballygowan in a month than they are being asked for by the council for a year's supply of water and all the other local services".

This is what one bemused and unnamed TD had to say in the Sunday Tribune.

What this failed to understand is how people feel about the tax amnesties for the rich, the Beef Tribunal and other scandals, the general level of taxes on workers and being asked to pay for local services twice.

In the same way, the attempt to put Joe Higgins' success down to a "single issue" campaign completely missed the point. Joe Higgins didn't "discover" the issue of water charges on the day the By-election was called. His campaign in the election was part of a campaign that has been ongoing for over two years on this issue.

It was his record in initiating that campaign, and playing a leading role in building it into the biggest campaign of ordinary working people seen in Dublin for years, that convinced people that this was no "fly by night politician" exploiting an issue to get elected.

Enthusiasm

People understood and enthusiastically supported the anti water charges campaign simple message, use your vote to register a protest on the charges as part of the campaign for their abolition.

The key factor in Joe Higgins' widespread support was not simply that he opposed water charges, but his record as an uncompromising fighter for ordinary people. Joe Higgins' success was a victory for a new

type of politics, based on organising with working class people on the issues that concern The only small consolation

for the establishment was that Joe Higgins didn't win the seat. This was due to a

Trade Unions.

flukey combination of factors, and not any brilliant strategy to win transfers by Fianna Fail, as they try to claim. Joe Higgins received a reasonably good transfer from

the Labour and Sinn Fein candidates.

The key vote was the transfer from Tomas McGiolla of the Workers Party. A third of his to Joe Higgins. This was the election. Joe Higgins' vote is er issues in

vote was non transferable, and from the balance, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael actually got more votes than Joe Higgins. This was down to the refusal of the Workers Party to agree to a vote transfer pact when asked to do to at the start of the campaign

Joe Higgins' vote is firmly rooted in a wide cross section of those who make up the working class of today in Dublin West.

by Militant Labour.

But the Workers Party went even further, with their canvassers urging people not to transfer

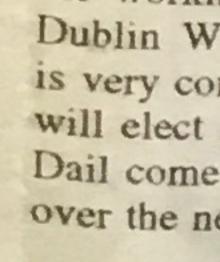
vital factor which allowed Fianna Fail to snatch a victory against the odds.

Try as they might, the main political parties will find no comfort in the idea that this

The people who voted for Joe Higgins in Castleknock, Lucan, Palmerstown are PAYE workers, who most likely voted for Labour in the last

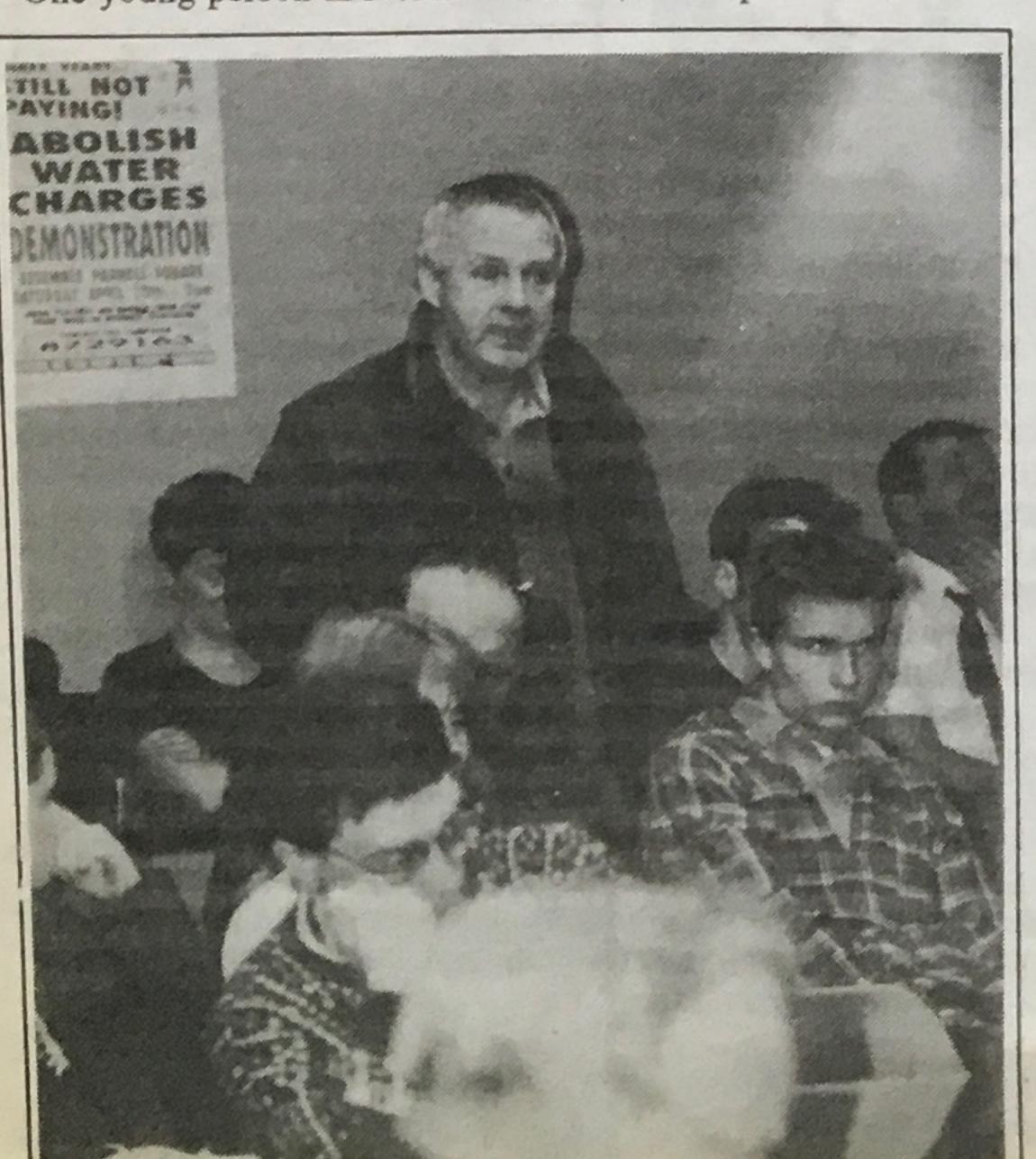
was a one off protest vote in a By-election. They delude themselves if they think Joe Higgins got a never to be repeated vote from the middle classes due to the water charges is-

Joe Higgins with B firmly roo section of the worki

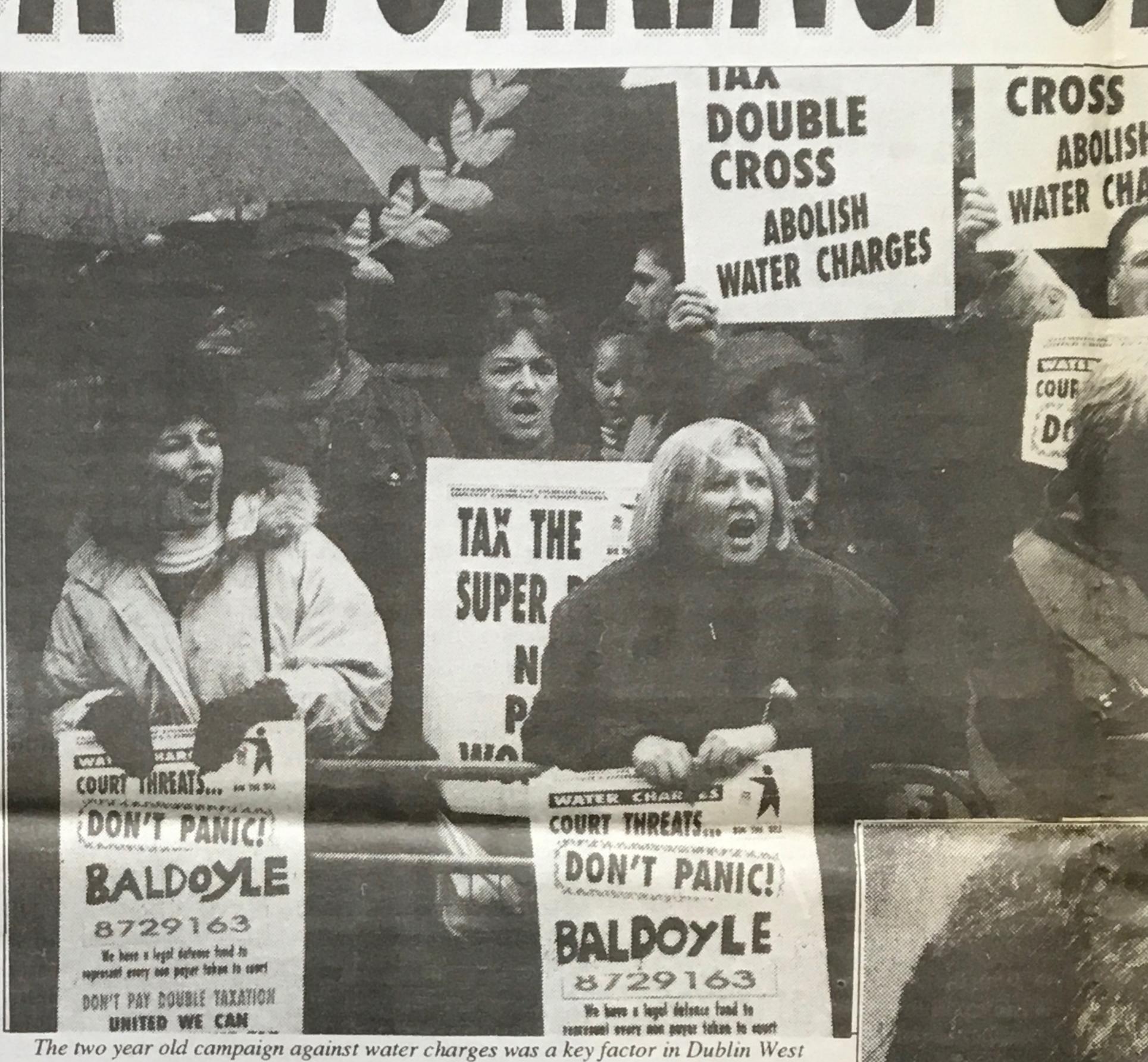


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Speakers have their say at Dublin meeting



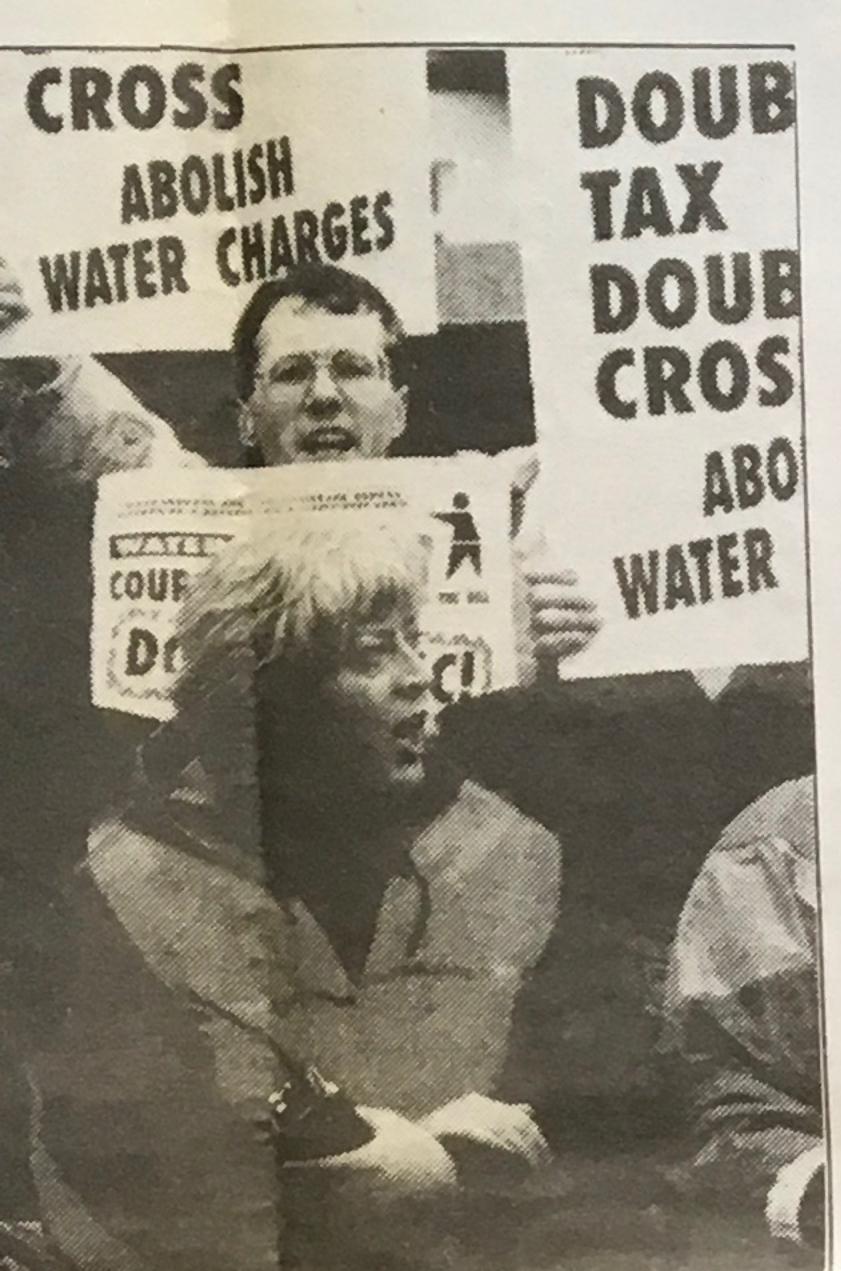
"In the local pub, the barman was using the public address system to slag me off, saying I was a Joe Higgins man. I wish there was more people in the pub because I am a Joe Higgins man, and proud of it. At long last we have someone who is prepared to fight."

Tommy McGuinness, anti-water charges activist from Lucan in Dublin West.

"I was delighted, that the establishment was shaken up" Noel Murphy Secretary Cork Council of

"I feel Joe Higgins deserved the support that he got in the election, especially because of the support that Militant Labour have given our strike." Martina Ryan, Early Learning Centre.

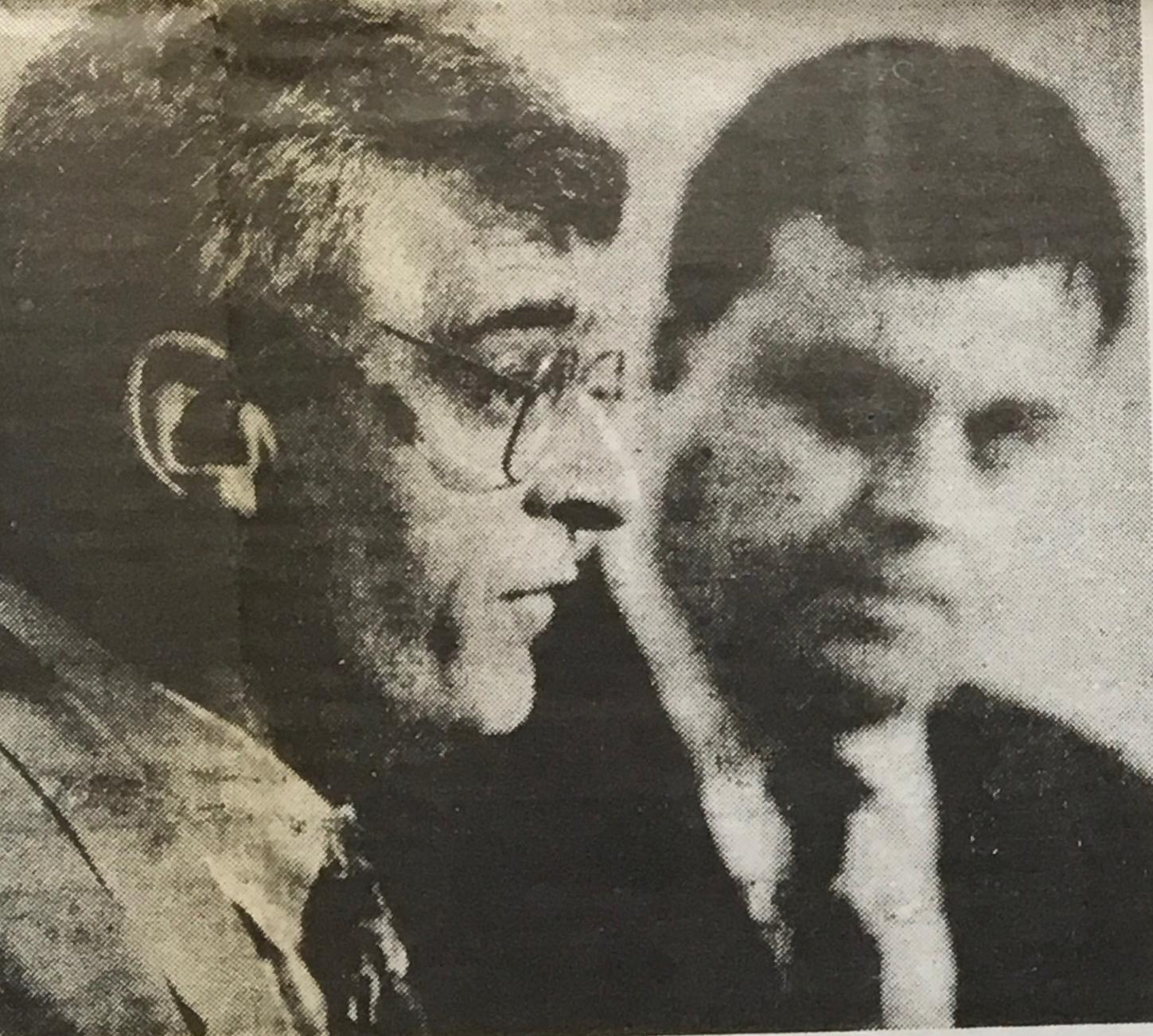
Joe Higgins campaign Joe Higgins campaign Joe Higgins campaign



"The by-election result and the anti-water charges campaign gives me grounds for hope. Dublin West was a victory for ordinary people. Although Militant Labour was the heart of the campaign, it also involved a cross section of ordinary people."

Colm Breathnach, Councillor in Dunlaoghaire/ Rathdown, Dublin.

"Joe Higgins success is part of a process taking place around the country. It represents a big breakthrough in the task of building an alternative to the parties in the government and the right wing trade union leaders." Councillor Seamus Healy, South Tipperary Workers and Unemployed Group.



Joe Higgins with Brian Lenihan very much in the background

ich allowed Finatch a victory might, the main es will find no

e idea that this protest vote in a lection. They dethemselves if think Joe Higgins never to be reed vote from the dle classes due to water charges is-

he people who vot-Higgins in Castlen, Palmerstown are ers, who most like-Labour in the last e Higgins' vote is er issues in Dublin West.

firmly rooted in a wide cross section of those who make up the working class of today in Dublin West. Militant Labour is very confident that this vote will elect Joe Higgins into the Dail come the general election over the next year or so.

Redouble efforts

We will never take the support of working class people for granted. We will be redoubling our efforts along with the Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns to secure the abolition of the hated water charges, as well as taking up and campaigning on all the oth-

The Dublin West by election has been a watershed. It is not the "end of politics", unless what is meant by that is the politics of the establishment parties where everyone is agreed on everything and nobody stands for anything, where politics is a matter of promising everything at election time and cynically throwing these promises in the bin the next

Dublin West is the start of a new type of politics, "real" politics based on the realities of life for working people, the unemployed, the young and the need to mobilise, organise and fight for real change and the ideas of socialism.

Hacks and hecklers

ALL THE candidates in the Dublin West By-election were invited to the Hartstown House on Monday 25th to explain their position on the charges. 160 people attended the meeting.

The toughest job of the evening fell to Clare Daly as chair of the meeting organised by the Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns.

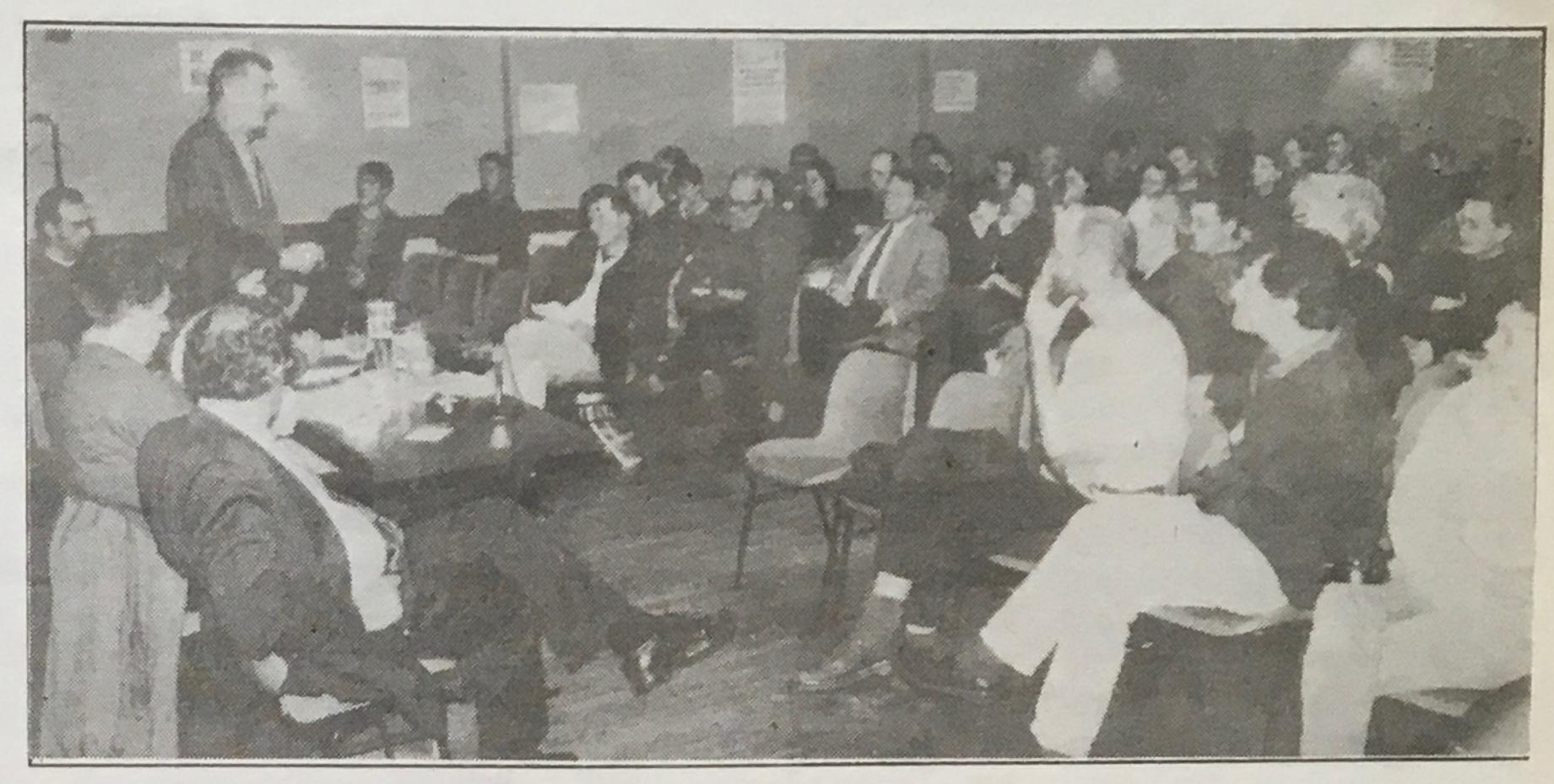
I wish I could say that it was nice to see a few new faces but these newcomers were politicians who never cared about the issue until votes were at stake and some Fianna Fail hacks who came to disrupt the meeting.

The ringleader of the hecklers was Ray Burke who represented Brian Lenihan at the beginning of the meeting. Ray Burke started his disruption as soon as Joe Higgins began to speak but to the people's delight Clare threatened to have him removed if he didn't control himself.

Brian Lenihan did arrive later to tell people that he was totally opposed to water charges! The reaction to that was "Why don't you represent us in court for free - you're a barrister?"

The message went back to the political parties loud and clear. The people of Mulhuddart/Clonsilla will no longer accept the type of politics where anything is promised for a vote. They have worked with Joe Higgins on the issue of water charges (and many more issues) and have seen what can be achieved by a different type of politics.

* Others present were: representatives from The Workers Party, a representative from Sinn Fein and Sean Lyons (independent). * Notable absentces: Anybody from the Labour Party and Fine Gael.



Over 100 people listen to Joe Higgins at the post election rally in the ATGWU Hall in Dublin

Time to OUT TO

Over 100 people attended a rally on the need to build a new left organised by Militant Labour after the Dublin West by-election. The rally in the ATGWU premises in Dublin was a resounding suc-

With one or two exceptions, speaker after speaker noted the significance of the breakthrough posed by the Dublin West by-election and the opportunities now posed for rebuilding the left.

The speakers from the platform were Joe Higgins, Militant Labour councillor, Tommy McGuinness from the Federation of Dublin Anti Water Charges Campaigns, Councillor Seamus Healy of the South Tipperary Workers and Unemployed Group, Denis Keane, a member of the executive of the CPSU, and councillor Colm Breathnach, an ex-member of Democratic Left.

Denis Keane explained the background to the present dispute by civil servants in the CPSU. Tommy McGuinness gave a very good report on the response he got while campaigning in Dublin West on the water Charges. The three councillors on the platform put forward their views on how to build on the By-election breakthrough.

Councillor Seamus Healy spoke about how the South Tipperary Workers and Unemployed Group came out of the big tax marches in the early 1980's, and from activists on

Clonmel Trades Council. In 1994 they stood five candidates forthe Clonmel Urban District Council elections and won four seats.

Councillor Colm Breathnach said there was a small but growing number of people from Democratic Left who saw no future for socialist politics in that party, and wanted to play a role in building a new left.

The speakers explained why a new left was needed. Labour and Democratic Left had joined the establishment, working class communities felt abandoned, a credible force who could put the socialist alternative back on the agenda was urgently required.

These points were enthusiastically endorsed by speakers from the floor, representing organisations like the Communist Party, Socialist Democracy, Socialist Workers Party (with some reservations) and by individuals from no political grouping.

Left co-operation

Mick O'Reilly, Southern Regional Secretary of the ATG-WU, said he fully supported the idea of left unity, and it was the official policy of the ATGWU to encourage and support co operation among those on the left. He stressed, along with many other speakers, the need for the left to co-operate within the trade union movement to take on the right wing consensus behind so called "social partnership".

He explained that there were people in ICTU now pushing for

mandatory and binding third party intervention, which would be a real threat to the right to withdraw labour.

The general ideas endorsed by the rally were the need for left cooperation in campaigning on key issues that affect workers, the need to involve ordinary working class people in such campaigns, and in particular to learn the lessons of the past, when sectarian in-fighting wrecked attempts at left unity.

Militant Labour fully supports these view points. We stand for genuine and honest co-operation on the left, putting the interests of working class people and the workers' movement in general before the interest of small left groupings.

We stand for a campaigning left alliance, but also one that will challenge the capitalists in all areas, including elections.

We believe an alliance is the best way to start, rather than trying to build a party or federation at this stage. An alliance would allow groupings or individuals to affiliate on the basis of common agreement on particular issues, while still maintaining the right to different viewpoints and programmes in general.

The meeting was a very good start and showed a real potential for developing a genuine socialist alternative to fill the huge political vacuum which is there given the rejection of the right-wing parties, and the sellout of the former left parties now in government.

MILITARI LABOUR TO STAND IN NORTH ELECTIONS

THE CUMBERSOME Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations, etc) Bill proposes May 30th elections in the North will be held under a constituency list system, supplemented by a regional list system.

Ninety people will be elected to a forum from the eighteen Westminster constituencies and the other twenty allocated from the ten parties with the highest aggregate vote across the North.

Following popular outrage the Tories were forced to drop their original list of fifteen parties deemed 'eligible' to contest May 30th. The revised list allows for thirty parties, groups and individuals. This again is proscriptive. Moreover, the 'one vote for one party' procedure, unlike the usual PR system, stacks the outcome in favour of the big sectarian parties.

Amendments can be made to the package right up until 7th May but the core proposals are unlikely to alter considerably. Costing at least £1 million, the elections are a pointless, expensive farce construed primarily as a sop to Unionists who want to By Niall Mulholland Belfast Militant Labour

forestall negotiations. Everyone knows, within one to two percentage points, what the outcome for each main party will be before the event.

Obstinate sectarian politicians frittered away the peace process for months until hardliners in the IRA blew it apart with the Canary Wharf bombing. Thousands upon thousands of working class people throughout Ireland, in marches, rallies and protests, illustrated their refusal to be dragged back to the killings and sectarian stalemate of the Troubles.

A deep mood for an end to all paramilitary campaigns and against the stranglehold of sectarian Tory parties developed. This severely hampered the actions of the IRA and has so far helped maintain the Loyalist ceasefire.



Politicians were frog-marched into devising ways of breathing new life into the peace process.

Negotiations, beginning on 10th June, can quickly breakdown. Both the SDLP and Sinn Fein are unlikely to sit in the forum. Unionists may walk out of negotiations in retaliation. Hard-liners in the paramilitaries might want to derail the process with provocative outrages.

Especially difficult is the situation facing Republicans

who know that acceptance of the Mitchell conditions and full involvement in talks mean eventual dissolution of the IRA. The Adams wing wants to pursue 'constitutional politics' and its alliance with right wing nationalists and the US administration but is wary of precipitating an open, possibly bloody split in republican

The need for a radical socialist alternative, uniting working class people on social and economic issues, has never been more opportune. Militant Labour, alongside left groupings, independent labour

councillors and others hope to

contest the elections under one united banner. A clear socialist manifesto taking up the issues of prisoners, arms, policing etc in the interests of the working class communities would cut through the sectarian and divisive rantings of the main parties. Socialists would demand open talks and the automatic involvement of trade unions, womens' and youth groups.

The coalition of Labour groupings and others will try to agree a basic minimum profull policies of each group can also be presented in the areas where they are standing. If ture.

agreement is possible the Labour coalition stands a real chance of winning seats. Even if no seats are won at least the ideas of campaigning socialism will have reached a wide audience who are sick of the failed sectarian politics of the

This may prove to be the first step towards the formation of a new socialist alliance which can become the dominant force in the North and which represents the true majority in society, the Catholic gramme for 30th May. The and Protestant working class who are the sole guarantors of lasting peace and a decent fu-

RELEASE PADDY KELLY

MILITANT LABOUR has called for the immediate release of the critically ill republican prisoner Paddy Kelly, who is dying of cancer. Paddy Kelly is presently imprisoned at Maghaberry prison outside Belfast. He has a history of recurring melanomas and lymph cancer.

There is particular anger at Kelly's treatment in Catholic areas of Belfast. This is because of what people see as double standards over the treatment of Private Lee Clegg. Clegg was sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering a West Belfast teenager, transferred to an English prison and then released after serving only two years. Kelly was sentenced in Britain to 25 years on 'conspiracy' charges. This is his fifth year in prison.

In July 1994 prison auhorities became aware of a ossible recurrence of skin ancer, but did nothing. hey waited for more than year before they allowed Kelly to see an outside conBy Manus Maguire Belfast Militant Labour

sultant. The consultant said that the cancer would spread to his lungs and his liver unless Kelly was operated

During his recovery from this operation Kelly was handcuffed to his bed surrounded by armed police. Demands for Kelly's transfer to Ireland were eventually met last December when Kelly was transferred to Maghaberry prison.

The prison authorities there agreed to allow Kelly to undergo a further operation at Belfast's City Hospital to remove a lump under his right arm. After this he was returned to Maghaberry prison. During March it

was reported by his partner, Angela Rice, that Kelly had difficulty eating and sleeping. He has cancelled visits because of his weakened state. A recent report said that he was "back on his feet" but there is fear that his health could take "a downward spiral very quick-

Militant Labour has written to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Patrick Mayhew demanding Paddy Kelly's immediate release and accusing the British government of using the dying prisoner to provoke IRA hard liners.

If Paddy Kelly dies the responsibility for any riots which may erupt in the North will lie clearly with the British Government.

IMAD CAPITALISM

THE 'BSE scare' has dominated headlines during the past few weeks as the European Union moved to ban British beef exports due to the possible link between BSE in cattle and CreuzfeldtJakob (CJD) disease in humans. In Ireland, the press has focused on the possible knock on effect on the powerful

domestic beef industry. BSE, otherwise known as 'mad cow disease', and its danger to humans is certainly not news to the Tory government in Britain. Some scientists were

warning about the possible links

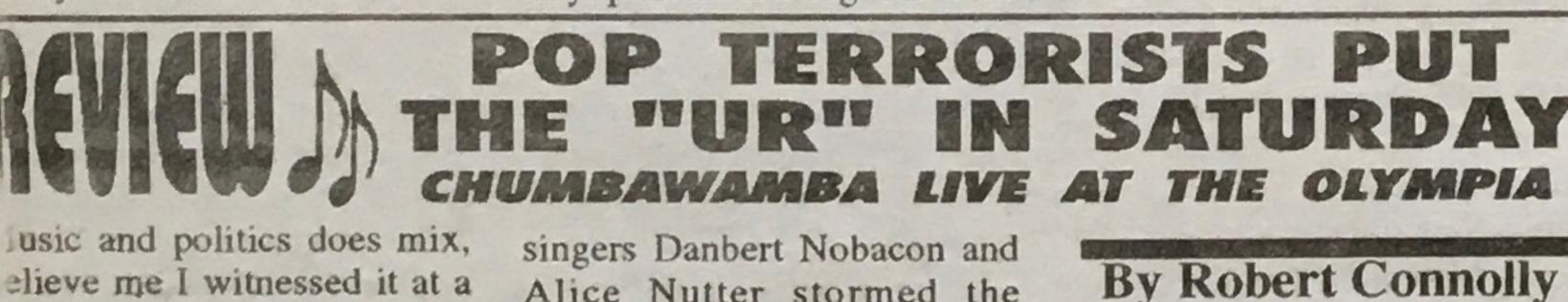
shortly after the first 'mad cow'

By Tom Crean South Dublin Militant Labour

er is the pervasive infection of eggs and poultry with salmonella. There are 30,000 cases of salmonella poisoning in Britain every year, resulting in

Irish beef is completely safe. While reported cases of BSE in Ireland over the past decade are certainly far fewer in number (124) than in Britain (nearly 160,000 to date), there is precious little reason to trust a government so closely tied to the beef barons.

Ireland was recently fined £71 million by the EU because of "inadequate" official con-



elieve me I witnessed it at a humbawamba gig. Everyme this group plays it leaves n indisputable impression on nose present. The last time hey played Dublin they swagered on-stage dressed as aloholic Catholic nuns and arew hundreds of condoms into the audience at a time when contraceptives were still llegal here. (fair play to them

On Saturday 16th March Chumbawamba returned defiantly to deliver their unusual blend of anarchist politics and twisted cabaret of punk/pop/ metal/jazz/rap/reggae/folk madness. Trumpets blared, guitars roared and collective eyebrows wrinkled as the lead

Alice Nutter stormed the boards.

Alice Nutter (don't ask!) dressed as a boxer took the mike for the opener 'Bad Dog' and captivated the audience for the night with her thick Leeds accent. Danbert Nobacon (yes it is !) played the gig alternating between crutches and a wheelchair, the result of a recent mishap rather than a part of the act as I soon realised. What a dedicated musician!

In a short and tight set Chumbawamba played many of their best songs from over ten years of touring and recording. 'Give the anarchist a cigarette', 'Enough is enough', 'Homophobia', 'Nazi' 'Mouthful of shit' and others. Personally,

Young Left Resistance

I'll never forget the fists in the air and screaming unity as the last lines of 'Nazi' reverberated around the Olympia.

" If you meet with these historians I'll tell you what to say. Tell them that the nazis never really went away. They're out there burning houses down and peddling racist lies - and we'll never rest again until every nazi dies...."

Don't wait for a Chumbawamba song to get radioplay, it's as unlikely as Joe Higgins paying his water charges! So check out their best album 'Anarchy' on One Little Indian Records.

was identified in 1985. The problem began in the late '70s when farmers looking to save money and boost profits began feeding sheep offal to dairy cattle. In 1979, the newly elected Tories then scrapped proposed regulations which had been put forward by the outgoing Labour government.

The BSE crisis is only one example of how profit drived "intensive farming" methods endanger public health. Anoth-

around fifty deaths. The true extent of the BSE/CJD danger is unknown but John Pattison, the British government's chief adviser on the issue warned that "tens of thousands" of cases of CJD could occur in Britain over the next peri-

Crying for the beef barons? Brian Cowan appears to break down on his return from a visit to the Middle East

to discuss the BSE scare.

Meanwhile, the Irish government has been rushing to reassure domestic consumers and foreign governments that

pressed PAYE taxpayer. If there is one thing that the "mad cow disease" crisis illustrates, it is the madness of a system where profit is put first and the interests of ordinary people, including their health, are systematically sacrificed. Our food will only be truly safe to eat when the food industry and agriculture as a whole are brought under workers' control.

trols on the beef industry. The brunt of this fine will of course be borne by the already hard

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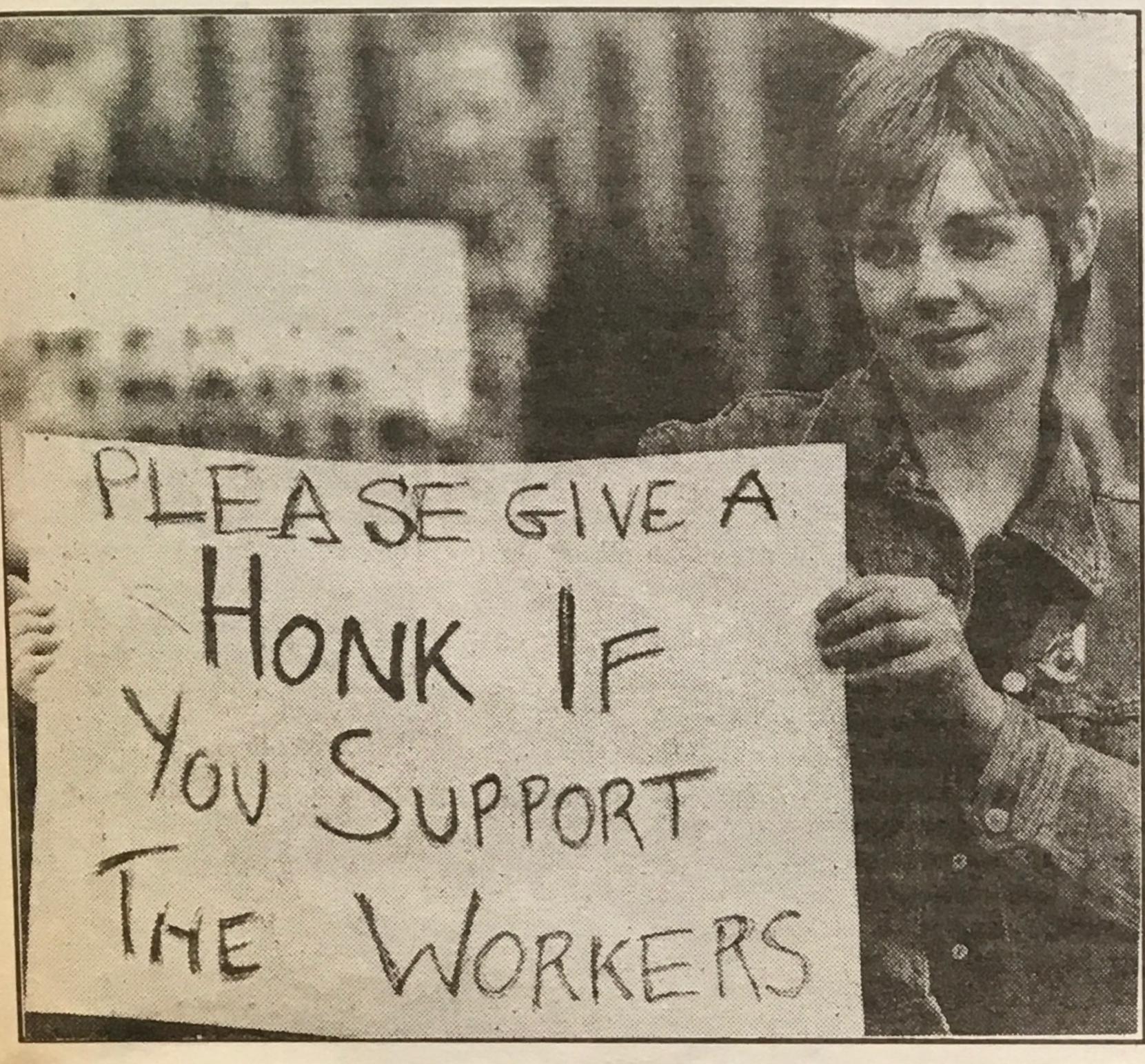
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BINDING ARBITRATION A threat to workers' rights



Dunnes Stores workers forced to fight for their rights. If binding arbitration comes in, it will take away the right to struggle

The Industrial Relations act 1990 has proved to be draconian from the perspective of the trade union movement. The decision in the Nolan Transport case in the High Court demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that the provisions of this piece of legislation are anti-trade union in nature and proved so in fact.

and file of the trade union movement were kept in the dark about the introduction of this piece of legislation.

Can or could something similar happen again and catch the rank and file membership of the trade union movement unawares?

Unfortunately the answer appears to be yes and arguably a more sinister event is developing.

The Irish Times reported early in April 96 that the Labour Relations Commission was recommending that 'Binding Arbitration' be embraced by union and employers. A spokesperson for I.B.E.C. welcomed the proposal while Jimmy Sommers, Assistant General Secretary of SIPTU indicated that such a development would not be resisted by the union movement provided the employers accepted the right of the unions to be legally rec**Martin Hamilton**

Swords

ognised.

Such a prospect of "binding arbitration"should set alarm bells ringing because what this, in reality, means is that workers will have their disputes automatically pushed into a third party arena.

In such arena, persons removed from the dispute and who bring to bear middle class perspectives and 'orderly minds' will dictate outcomes which may not be accepted as rational or reasonable by the workers concerned.

In other words, workers in dispute will be expected to put their faith in unaccountable civil servants who will determine the outcome.

It is not too strong to argue that if this principal of binding arbitration is allowed on to the statute book rank and file de-

In general terms, the rank — mocracy and the ability to determine their own destiny will go out the door.

> The argument that it is a price worth paying in order to have legally enforecable union recognition principals enshrined in law, to put it mildly is laughable. Reading between the lines, what is being welcomed by I.B.E.C and Mr. Somers is a legal method of bypassing the members of a trade union and allowing the corporate partners of the state to determine the outcome of a dispute.

I would respectfully suggest that the deafening silence that the introduction of the Industrial Relations Act 1990 met with is not allowed happen again. Every branch officer of a union should be demanding information and insisting on a debate before it is too late. The limited democracy that presently exists within the movement may soon be a memory.

ROUNDEUP

PACKARD ELECTRIC

MANAGEMENT AT Packard Electric in Tallaght have once again reneged on an agreement with the workforce.

The 400 workers laid off for the last ten months were to be offered their jobs back or voluntary redundancy by 15th April. When the unions approached the company they were met with the same evasiveness they have received for the last two years.

The Company would neither say they were going to take workers back on, or offer redundancy. They still think they can keep the Packard workforce in limbo, with no investment in the plant.

Its time now for action to force Packard Europe and their multinational owners General Motors to come clean. Are they prepared to invest in a future for Packard, how many jobs are they prepared to guarantee, or if it is their intention to close the plant, or make workers redundant to come clean so the workforce knows where it stands.

That is not to say that closure or redundancies should be accepted without a struggle but the workforce can no longer tolerate a situation where they don't know what's going to happen, with a veiled threat of closure over their heads unless they accept longer hours and poorer conditions.

The workforce reverted to a 39 hour week after management first broke last year's agreement just before Xmas. Plans are now being made for protests, including marches and action to highlight General Motors' treatment of the workforce.

But other action, especially industrial action should now be considered, to bring matters to a head. Packard's manoeuvering has gone on long enough. The workforce (including the laid off workers) need to be united behind a

strategy to take on the company.

There is a real danger in the present situation with no one believing in a future at Packard, that workers could end up fighting each other over who gets voluntary redundancy and who doesn't.

It is better to fight together for a future for the company and jobs with decent pay and conditions, or a decent redundancy package for all and pressure on the government to provide alternative employment in Tallaght than to accept Packard's dishonest manoeuvering aimed at dividing and demoralising the workforce.

DUNNES STORES

FOLLOWING ON from the recent Annual Conference of MANDATE, a National Dunnes Stores Shop Stewards meeting has been convened in Dublin for Sunday, 21st April.

None of the issues which were at the centre of last Summer's strike in Dunnes have been resolved. The Tribunal set up to resolve matters from the strike has collapsed due to a complete lack of co operation by Dunnes Stores management.

Dunnes have refused to pay the 3% PESP increase awarded by the Labour Court. They have refused to address the ratio of part time to full time workers, sick pay, pension scheme, and Dunnes workers were forced to take strike action again on Sunday trading pay rates in the run up to Christmas.

There is no doubt that the only language Dunnes Stores are prepared to listen to is the language of industrial action. Another all out strike in Dunnes is necessary, and this time it has to be fought out to a satisfactory conclusion from the point of view of the workforce.

CADBURY'S

MILITANT LABOUR member Fran English has been elected to the position of Senior SIPTU Shop Steward at the Cadbury factory, which employs 1,100 people in North Dublin.

Fran won the election by a two to one majority. SIPTU and the ATGWU each organise about fifty per cent of the 900 production workers. There is a Joint Negotiating Committee and a Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

At present the unions are in the Labour Court seeking compensation for the lockout of production workers during the craft workers dispute last year. They are also

involved in negotiations to sort out demarcation and a defined role for production workers before the new "Time Out Two" Plant comes into production.

CORKELC

THE MANAGEMENT of the Early Learning Centre have cut prices by 20% in their Cork shop in an attempt to persuade the public to break the five old month strike. However, public support has stayed rock solid.

Attempts to intimidate workers by hiring a bouncer have only hardend their resolve to win the strike against low pay and for trade union recognition.

Support for the strike was shown in April by the standing ovation received by shop steward Martina Ryan at the Mandate conference, the mass picket by Mandate activists on Easter Sunday and the resolution passed at TUI conference calling for a nationwide boycott of all ELC shops.

After attending the LRC and "offering" 10p per hour increase on their previous offer and union recognition in 1997 (i.e. after all the strikers have been sacked!) the company now refuse to attend Labour Court talks. Mandate must step up the fight by checkmating attempts to use Cork as a base for mail order sales, stepping up collections and delivering on leafleting of all ELC shops nationwide with an appeal for a national boycott.

TEAM AER LINGUS

A POSSIBLE strike at Team/Aer Lingus has been held off while talks take place between the unions and management over the use of contract labour and demands for more jobs losses.

Meanwhile Team Craft workers have come up with a novel way of getting their union officials to be more determined on their behalf.

They have stopped the check off system whereby union dues are automatically deducted for pay and sent to the unions. Instead the money is now collected in a credit union account.

To receive the subs, union officials have to attend and report to a mass meeting of the workers every three months. A shop steward has described this as PRP, Pay Related Performance. If you perform you get paid, if you don't, you won't. Interested workers should contact the Team Craft Stewards for details on how to set it up.

THE SOCIALIST PAPER

ISSUE 243

Miliant is on the Internet Worldwide Web at: http://www,dojo.ie/militant/

Militant e-mail address is militant@dojo.ie

INDUSTRIAL ACTION by the Civil and Public Service Union (CPSU) has shown the industrial muscle that low paid civil servants have.

Already Finance Minister Ruari Quinn has been forced to rethink the recruitment embargo he arrogantly imposed just a few months ago. On our pay/grade restructuring claim he has also had to do an about turn and put more money on the table. The CPSU have agreed now not to escalate our action while talks get underway in the Labour Relations Tribunal, the first time that any government had accepted talks going outside the Civil Service negotiating structures.

We represent low paid grades with a starting rate of £150 a week rising to a maximum of £230 after eleven years. This government expected us to accepta situation where only one in every three vacancies will be filled. Two major problems would have resulted from this, low paid grades such as the Clerical Assistant will be expected to take on more work, in the long term they could effectively be asked to do the work of three people. The only way for our members to get out of the low pay trap is through promotion but because of this embargo our promotion outlets have been reduced to at best a third of what they should be.

This is not the first time an embargo has been inflicted on CPSU grades. In the 1980s an embargo identical to this one resulted in virtually no promotions for our grades. It meant that many of our members who were Clerical Assistants had to serve up to fifteen years in the grade. We now find ourselves nearly ten years later still trying to rectify the damage done.

As mentioned above low pay for our members also resulted in the CPSU being forced to take industrial action. For the past five years we have discussed Grade Restructuring with the Department of Finance.

Grade Restructuring would mean an increase in pay in return for our members being more flex-

By Denis Keane CPSU Executive Committee

ible in their jobs. This flexibility could include doing the work of higher grades but not getting paid the extra money, lunch time or weekend opening

To date the Department of Finance has made two offers on Grade Restructuring. The first was voted down by twelve to one, the second "improved" deal was voted down by nine to one.

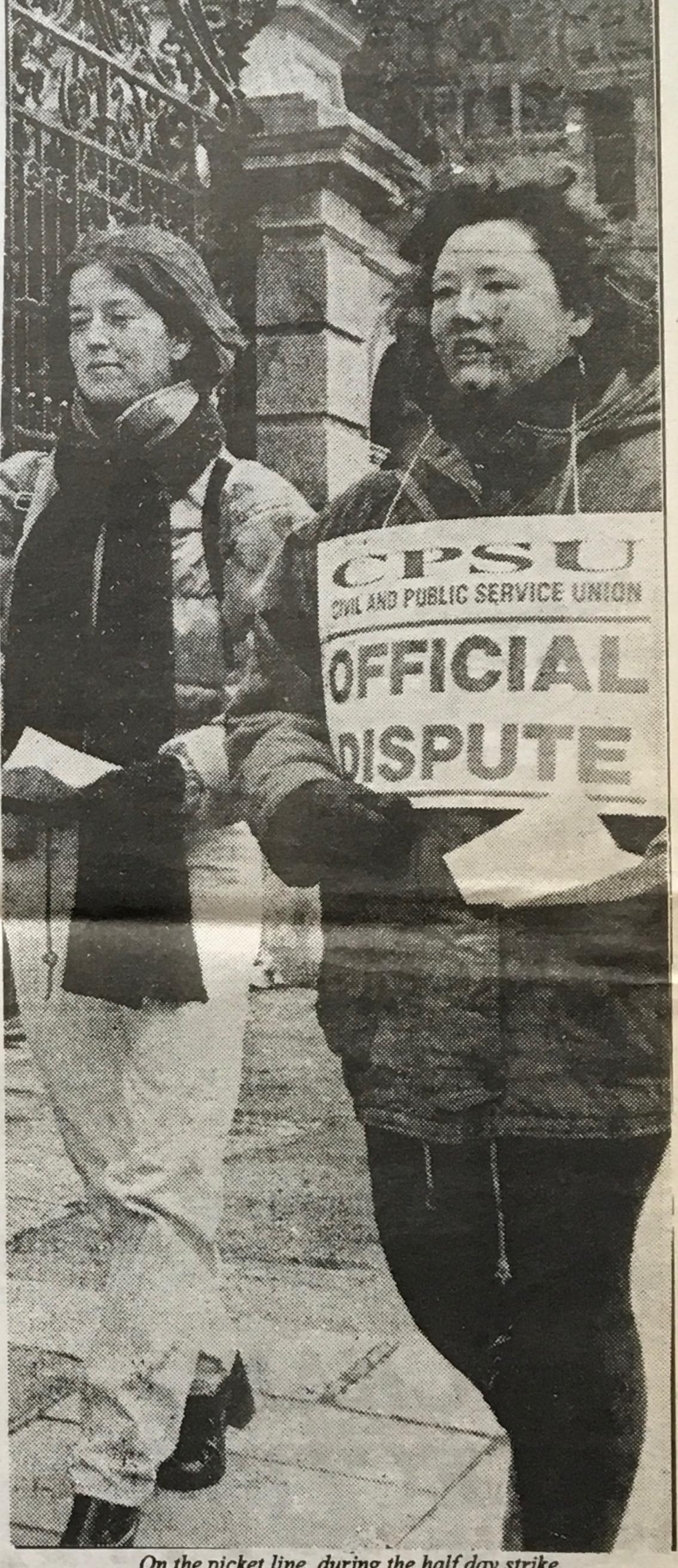
It has now become clear that the Department of Finance will continue to insult us with these pathetic offers. Because of this we have been left with no other option but to take industrial action to achieve a reasonable increase in

On the 21st of February 10,000 civil servants went on strike for a half day. This sent a very effective message to the government and the Department of Finance that we will take whatever action is needed to have the embargo withdrawn and to achieve a good deal on pay. We have continued

with a complete overtime ban and various forms of industrial action in all departments. This action will be escalated if no progress is made.

We don't want to hit members of the public through our action but unfortunately as the government has left us with no option. It is unfortunate that they have shown so little respect for their employees, who work in dole offices, tax offices, garda stations, the passport office and the people who write their speeches for them. Some of our members are so low paid they are entitled to Family Income Support.

At a time when the unions and the government are supposed to be in partnership, we now find ourselves being pushed into the position of having to take industrial action. Nobody wants this dispute to run any longer than it has to but our members have had enough and are now committed to fighting until both issues are resolved to our satisfaction.



On the picket line during the half day strike.

You can contact Militant Labour at P.O Box 3434, Dublin 8 or Ph:(01) 6772686 / 6772592

CPSU/AN POST BERS STRIFACTION

CPSU members in An Post have voted for all out strike action after the company began suspending staff in a dispute over recruitment of secretaries.

The company had been threatening to recruit secretaries from outside the company and did so in April. These secretary posts are promotional outlets for CPSU members, and

By Terry Kelleher Chairman, CPSU An Post Branch

our union served notice for industrial action last February after a successful bal-

For a number of reasons the company obviously did not expect much of a backlash from the staff. Firstly the ballot on the issue was not as successful as other recent ballots. Secondly they agreed to promote other secretaries as compensation and thirdly the CPSU is awaiting a tribunal recommendation.

But they got it completely wrong, their actions provoked 240 CPSU members to walk off the job to a general meeting, an unprecedented move by the clerical grades. This action was deemed unofficial by union headquarters and made known to the members before they lest their duties. Despite this member held a meeting for half an hour and decided to go back to work but reconvene the meeting at 1pm and clock out.

At 1pm over 300 members attended a

lively meeting in Liberty Hall which lasted three and three quarter hours. This meeting after a lengthy debate decided to serve notice on selective industrial action to include overtime bans, ban on answering phones, ban on acting up, half day / full day stoppage and all out strike if the issue is not resolved within three weeks.

The sharp mood of the members is a reflection of the way they have been treated by management and the LRC. Such

was the reaction by staff that management agreed to a meeting with the union before industrial action could start. However the issue is further complicated by the fact that the externally recruited secretary is being paid £110 per week more than they should have been in the normal grade structure. Also the company advertised the job at the lower rate of pay to CPSU members.

Title: Miltant, No. 243

Organisation: Militant Labour

Date: 1996

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