



Vote or Lose Your Voice?

The Electoral Commission have outdone themselves in their most recent campaign to convince us all that if we do not register to vote that we will lose our voices – or be gagged by the looks of things.

Apparently deciding not to vote for any of the candidates put forward in the forthcoming European election by our local sectarian parties leaves us powerless to effect change. Of course we at the Leveller, being Anarchists, take exception to this suggestion just as we take exception to the idea that any politician will or can ever represent the interests of working class people.

We note, with no surprise, that all of the candidates in the 4th June election pledged themselves, at a Federation of Small Businesses event to, well, represent the interests of the bosses. Bairbre de Brun's denial of an obviously false allegation made by Jim Allister that she was a "communist" comes as no surprise to the Leveller.

We know that the bosses and the working class have no common interests so it stands to reason that politicians like this lot cannot give working class people a voice anywhere - whether in Europe, Westminster, Ireland or Europe.

NIC-ICTU Rally for Jobs and Workers Rights



Organise! on the Rally for Jobs and Workers' Rights in Belfast 17th April

On Friday 17th April 1,000 people attended the NIC ICTU rally in Belfast in support of workers rights and in protest at ongoing job losses across the north. Speakers from NIC ICTU joined workers from Visteon/Ford, Bombardier Shorts, and Nortel, in addressing the lunchtime rally. Many had marched with flags and banners from Transport House to the City Hall where they were joined by others.

John Corey introduced the speakers and made opening remarks concerning the impact of the recession on local jobs. Corey pointed out that the complaints from the First and Deputy First Minister about negative reporting in the Belfast Telegraph was the least of the two ministers problems. He went on to appeal to politicians and the Assembly to sort things for us despite the fact that they have admitted they are 'powerless' in the face of the recession.

Peter Bunting attacked the international elite who are profiteering from the current recession and demanded protection for workers from these profiteers.

He condemned cash and grab employers who took advantage of concessions and financial packages to set up shop in Northern Ireland and were using the cover of a recession to relocate to take advantage of lower wages and worse terms and conditions in other parts of the globe. Attacking the management of Visteon/Ford, whose Belfast plant has been occupied since Tuesday 31st March, Bunting said of the workforce:

"They developed technology which made cars safer and contributed to the wealth of that corporation. What thanks did they get? Their technological innovations are now being made in South Africa, their pensions are in cold storage and their futures shattered by corporate greed.

"Their bosses have fled with their pensions intact, their reputations protected, their share options guaranteed. This is an act of corporate mugging."

Turning his attention to Bombardier Shorts who made nearly 1,000 workers redundant he said:

"Bombardier failed to mention one small detail – for the fourth quarter ended last January, global earnings rose 42% to \$309m. Share value in Bombardier Inc. increased, revenue rose 3% to \$5.43bn."

Once again, like the previous speaker, he also demanded that our politicians do more in support of the workers.

Andrea Hamilton speaking from Nortel giving details of the cutting

of 87 jobs there and the firms breach of the agreed selection procedure. Acknowledging the limited power of local politicians Andrea instead appealed to the Irish and British governments to act to protect workers jobs.

David Thompson, a Union rep from Bombardier took no comfort from the fact that the majority of those recently made redundant were agency staff:

"They too have to feed their families and have bills to pay".

The local Unite conveynor for Visteon John Maguire then addressed the rally and exposed the fact that Ford had falsely portrayed the company as unviable. Workers have been betrayed by a company that promised them mirrored terms and conditions for life with other Ford workers and which is in reality in the process of renaming and relocating to South Africa, the Philippines and China to take advantage of worse terms and conditions and "slave wages".

Jimmy Kelly warned that legal action is being taken against the workers occupying the plant:

"...there may come a day when someone may try to force them out. They could even face jail, but we must join them and support them to the hilt".

Patricia McKeown, president of ICTU, like many of the other speakers, demanded our politicians are put under pressure to support workers. She also pointed out that our power was not just in the ballot box, but lies with actions such as the impromptu stoppage in support of the rally by city bus drivers. She went on to demand support for immigrant workers who face both physical attacks prejudice in the workplace.

In closing John Corey committed the Trades Union movement to physical defence of the occupation at Visteon in the event of any attempt at eviction. He said the place of trade unionists was alongside the occupiers.

Jason Brannigan

Derry Rec Campaign

Plans by Derry City Council to close the re-cycling centres at the Brandywell and Eglinton have been met with stiff opposition from locals, community activists and trade unionists.

A protest outside the Guildhall recently won no support from councillors, the SDLP saying

that the closures were tied to rates hikes that were legally binding and Sinn Féin's motion for a stay of execution being unsuccessful, both united in support of the sites being shut down.

The Derry City Council area has one of the better recycling levels in the north and the sites are also used by many Donegal people trying to avoid the bin tax over the border.

The Council's new strong-arm chief executive, Valerie Watts has

been brought over from East Dunbartonshire Council where last year she was involved in securing pay reductions of 25 per cent from 30 of the lowest paid council workers as well as removing allowances such as overtime and weekend pay. Her management style was noted then as bullying and domineering, exactly the type Derry City Councillors wanted to steer the new super-council into existence and tackle (or rather sack) Council workers on the sick.