

fightback!

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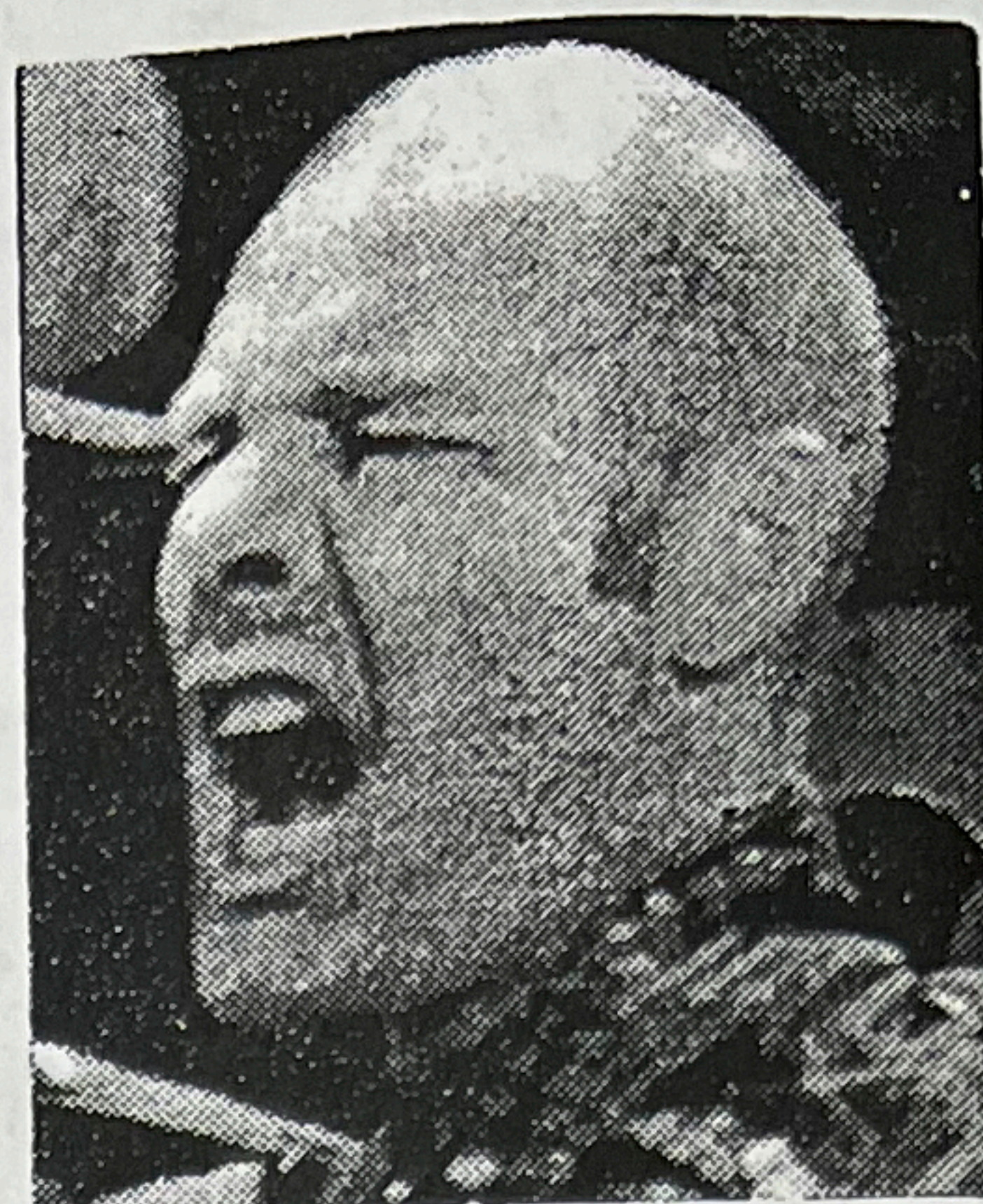


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Football Fascism



If we did not already know that racism and fascism are still a major problem in the world of professional football, the recent debacle at Lansdowne Road and the Eric Cantona incident have proved that the problem has never gone away. Week in, week out, the neo-nazi jobs are pedalling their filth up and down England and across Europe. Black and foreign players are consistently abused from the terraces, the fascists regularly congregate at football grounds to sell their 'literature' and wreak what havoc they can in the back streets surrounding stadia.

Supporters must organise themselves to combat the threat of neo-nazis. The problem is a microcosm of the growing threat of the far-right across Europe.

The Lansdowne Road affair was a field day for the fascist thugs. In the Daily Mail on February 18th, Andrew Whittingham-Davenport (he had his name changed to Herman Hilter by deed-poll), one of the perpetrators, talked about the day. He barefacedly gloated about how easy it was to 'run rings' around the Gardai. He admitted how small the his "team" of thugs was, but pointed out the huge amount of publicity they gained from the incidents. The thugs were in their element. They were able to steal the limelight at a major international and had prime time TV coverage to boot. "We're revelling in the attention. Of course we shall go on with it until we meet someone who is stronger than we are to bring us down", said Davonport.

Gratifying as it was to see the thugs getting their heads bashed in by the gardai, football supporters must realise that they cannot rely

on the police to control the thugs. Police aggression would be used in just the same way against working class protesters under different circumstances.

Supporters must organise themselves to combat the threat of the neo-nazis. The problem football has is a microcosm of the growing threat of the far-right across Europe. If the working classes stand back and leave control of the situation in the hands of the state, the nazi elements will only grow stronger. The only way to combat

imprisonment. The magistrate Jean Perch pointed out that Cantona was a "high profile public figure...looked up to by many young people" and this was a major factor in the jail sentence. The truth of the matter is that under 4% of offenders are sent to prison for common assault. Cantona had no previous convictions, was clearly provoked, and pleaded guilty to the charge. He had already been heavily fined and suspended by both his club and the Football Association. Why then was he given a prison



the thugs is through self organisation. Football supporters must fight for a radicalisation of the terraces, and a greater mobilisation of supporters en masse to ensure the thugs are not allowed to perpetrate their filth inside or outside the stadium.

The recent Cantona incident has highlighted the way forward. Cantona responded to racist abuse from Crystal Palace 'supporter' and known BNP sympathiser Matthew Simmons, with a flying kick to the chest. For his pains, Cantona was originally sentenced to two weeks

sentence (which has since been reduced to 120 hours community service?)

Clearly for the ruling class, the working class en-masse evokes fear and paranoia. Following Cantona's example, the thought of collective anti-racist action by the working class rattled the authorities. They could not allow Cantona to become a figurehead. Cantona is no hero, his actions were irresponsible for a professional footballer, but they still clarify the issues >>>>>>>>>>

PLC Grants Now!

Fightback is keeping up the momentum in fighting for grants for PLC students.

On March 16th Fightback members joined in a militant march of about 300 students and teachers from Parnell Square to the Dail causing traffic chaos and taking the Gardai by surprise.

Many speakers, spoke against the injustice of not giving PLC students the grant. A member of the Irish Workers Group stressed the need to fight for a grant *without a means test*. He argued that many PLC students come from families whose gross income is above the present absurdly low limit of £14,800 for getting a grant.

We must fight against any means test as there is a danger of being split by the Government into two halves - those above £14,800 and those below it, he said.

On April 7th Fightback picketed the Labour Party conference in Limerick. Fightbacks' placards called for a non-means-tested living grant for every PLCr. We also gave out a leaflet to delegates urging them to pass resolutions in LP Branches and Constituency

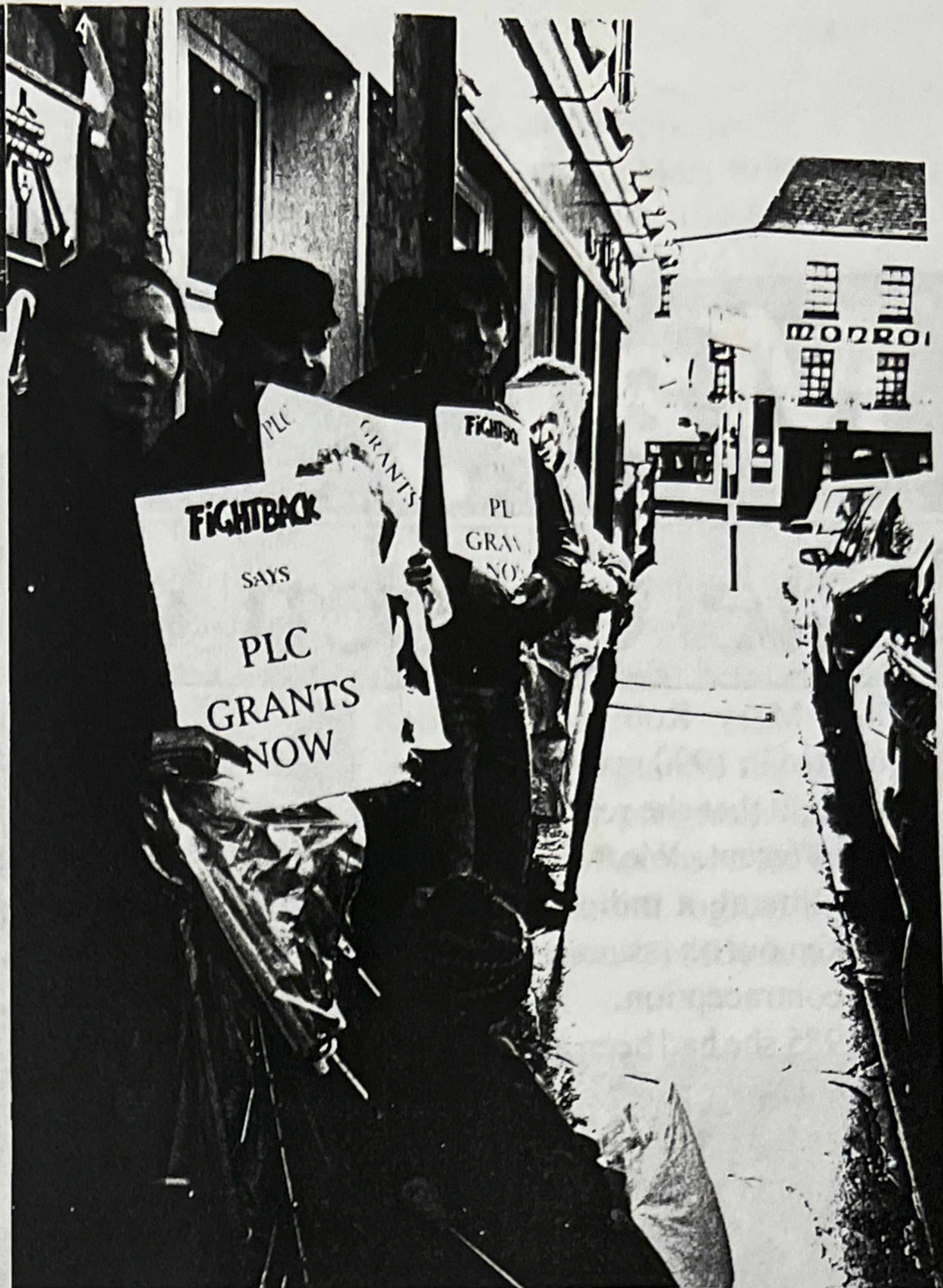
Councils demanding PLC grants and to bombard Niamh Breathnach's Department of Education offices in Marlborough St. with them. At the INTO's national congress in Galway on April 18th Fightback members, succeeded in giving Niamh

Breathnach a petition containing 600 signatures from PLC and other students in Galway demanding PLC grants now. Leaflets were given to delegates calling on them to pass motions supporting PLC grants at their congress and to join the fight for PLC grants.

We got a warm reception from the INTO delegates. This was no doubt due to the fact that we stressed a

living grant without a means test - as many of the INTO delegates would have sons and daughters doing PLC courses themselves but would be above the absurdly low means-test limit of £14,800 gross income.

The PLC Grants Campaign intend to keep on fighting for a living maintenance grant - without a means test - for all 18,000 PLC's.



Football Fascism

facing real football supporters today.

It is time for collective action to boot the racists out of the stadia and off the streets. A much greater co-ordination of supporters is needed. Reliance on the authorities to curb racism is a dead end. Football clubs and the ruling bodies are merely interested in making profits, not catering for the well being of players or supporters.

Football is a working class game, without supporters it ceases to exist. It is time to reclaim the terraces. Racists can be targetted and booted out of the grounds. Remember, the neo-nazi element is tiny, but it is highly organised and co-ordinated. With collective action we can succeed in crushing them for good.

UNITE AND FIGHT Build a school student Union

A BRIEF LOOK at the Irish educational system shows that it is a farce, a jumbled mess which must be cleaned up now! With issues such as the lack of grants for Post-Leaving Cert students, sky-rocketing points for university and an archaic curriculum which serves little purpose in today's world, it is time for second level students to take their fate in their own hands. Yes, that's right! All second level students must fight for their right to a comprehensive nationwide second level students union.

In fighting for a union they will be fighting not only for the forementioned issues but most importantly for the right (so far denied) to voice their grievances, to take an active role in the decision making process, to individuality and to make class connections with their third level comrades and workers in schools and campuses.

It is said in schools that the students should learn responsibility. What better way than to take responsibility for yourself and anything which affects you and your education. So to all second level and Post Primary school students **Unite and Fight!**

Mary Robinson

The Queen of West Britain

When Mary Robinson was elected in 1990 many people thought that she represented something different. We were told that she is a liberal, a radical even, who has spoken out on issues such as divorce and contraception.

Until 1985 she had been a member of the Labour party (and of course she was nominated for the presidency by the Labour party and the Workers party). When she was a member of the Labour party Mary Robinson had generally been opposed to coalition with right wing parties.

All of these factors led to her being portrayed as a progressive candidate. I lived in London at the time of her election but if I had been here at the time I would have voted for her. With hindsight and on studying the issues more closely and more seriously I believe that I was wrong to support Mary Robinson.

Now I think that Mary Robinson is the greatest pile of shite since Eamonn De Valera. Eamonn De Valera was bullshit personified for the 1930's and 1940's. Mary Robinson is simply the user friendly modernised and liberalised bullshit personified for the 1990's version. She is kind of our version of the Queen of England.

In fact I like to nickname her the Queen of West Britain. She goes around the place smiling inanely, shaking hands, declaring things and events open and all with her incredibly regal looking husband Nick beside her. Nick Robinson definitely resembles a colonial governor of Burma in his appearance and manner.

The facts about Mary Robinson are these. Her record as a liberal or radical was nothing special. She had a fairly consistent progressive position



on issues like divorce and contraception but she never had the guts to call for a woman's right to choose on the abortion issue. On working class issues she made Michael D. Higgins and Prionsias De Rossa look like great revolutionary leaders and we think that they are a political waste of space.

In the 1990 election Mary Robinson went out of her way to deny that she is a socialist and that she had ever supported the nationalisation of the banks. My mother voted consistently for Michael D. Higgins from 1981 to 1992. However she refused to support Mary Robinson in 1990 because her hairdresser (who votes P.D.) "and all her snobby friends in Bushypark are all very much support-

ing her. So if they are supporting her then she couldn't be a proper Labour or left candidate." You were so right mother!

Mary Robinson has always had a chronic right wing west-brit position on northern Ireland. She has become a sort of patron saint for Irish Times reading west-brit bullshit liberals. We are in favour of building a united struggle of Catholic and Protestant workers against rich bastards like Tony O'Reilly and those who run and lead the unionist parties in the north.

However Mary Robinson's version of 'unity' between Catholics and Protestants has more to do with herself and the regal Nick chatting to as

many vicars as they can at wine and cheese parties. As Beavis and Butthead would say this type of 'unity' really sucks!

A key reason for not supporting Mary Robinson is that her position of President holds no real power at all. She could do more as a liberal barrister, if she was half serious, than she can as a bullshit president. Taking a position which she knew had no real power and then using it to pose as a friend of the poor and the oppressed is a supreme act of cynicism. Mary Robinson uses travellers and other such groups as nothing more than photo-opportunities.

The other point is that there is no use saying vote for Mary Robinson and then if she does not deliver then people will have their false illusions in her shattered. The precise point about the position of president is that the only thing she is expected to deliver is lots of silly, smiley photographs and boring speeches. How then can false illusions in her be broken in that way?

Her record as a liberal or radical was nothing special. She had a fairly consistent progressive position on issues like divorce and contraception but she never had the guts to call for a woman's right to choose on the abortion issue.

A final and very silly reason often given for supporting Mary Robinson is that she "is a good, presentable representative for Ireland abroad". This is the type of silliness which can probably be only cured by a long period of total withdrawal from reading the Irish Times.

For two years of Mary Robinson's Presidency I lived in London. During that time no-one ever indicated to me that they gave a damn about the way that Mary Robinson being President is supposed to have improved Ireland's "image". Maybe I was moving in the wrong social circles I don't know? While I was

living in London I lived on the bread-line and was often homeless. It never made me feel better to know that Mary Robinson has a silly light "perpetually" lit in a window of Aras an Uachtaran to remember Irish emigrants abroad. This type of thing has more to do with making silly, guilty, middleclass people feel less guilty than it does with Irish emigrants. It is in no way the job of people who want to change things for the better to help the Irish elite to give themselves a more presentable face.

It is far more straightforward for real socialists to deal with ignorant Fianna Fail and Fine Gael politicians with uncouth manners, unacceptable sideburns, too much Brylcream and interesting stains on their trousers.

They are easier opponents.

Last month Mary Robinson met General Pinochet, the Chilean ex-dictator who murdered thousands of workers, peasants and students in 1973. This is a part of her campaign to become UN General Secretary. She is a blatantly careerist politician, from a very privileged background (one of the snooty Bourkes from Ballina). How many women from Mayo got to go to Trinity college in the 1960's? Very few but Mary Robinson did.

On first glance the idea that socialists and progressives should support Mary Robinson for President might seem quite logical but when you examine it, it really is a bit ludicrous.

Travellers' Defence Squads?

A recent spate of attacks on travellers around the country has once again raised the question of blatant Irish racism towards the travelling community.

It is now commonplace for travellers to suffer not just verbal but physical abuse from vigilante gangs from settled communities.

In Bantry in Cork, last year, a hired ten-man gang armed with an iron bar, a flick knife and a fork-lift attacked a five-months pregnant travelling woman and attempted to overturn her caravan.

In New Ross a couple in their 50's were beaten on the head with pickaxe handles by a group of men in balaclavas, their caravan was also badly damaged.

Glenamaddy in Co Galway was also the scene of violent attacks by locals on travellers who frequented the "Four Roads" pub. This pub has since been forced to close by the same racist gangs and their friends in the police and the judiciary. These incidents are only the tip of the ice-berg.

What is the answer to these physical attacks on the most oppressed section of the Irish people? A traveller in the days after the Glenamaddy attacks gave us a clue. He argued that the travellers must organise to defend themselves. We agree with this. In addition it is crucial to commit trade unionists, students and youth to active support for travellers self-defence.



French youth speak out

In France, like in Britain, young workers get exploited all down the line. Poor wages, poor conditions, poor training. And no job security.

Our comrades in France from Pouvoir Ouvrier (Workers Power) have been working with a group of young steel workers, selling *A contre-courant* (Against the Stream), the French equivalent of *Revolution* and discussing politics with these young workers, on and off the shop floor.

These young workers were employed on a two-year "Qualification Contract" for Sollac, a branch of the nationalised steel company. At the end of the contract, the company went back on its promises and said none of the young workers would be taken on.

Together with our comrades, the youth fought back, going to the unions and asking for their support. At the end of the struggle, half of the fifteen youth were taken on permanently. Unfortunately, neither our comrade nor David, one of the workers interviewed here, were amongst them. Below, our comrade talks to two young steel workers, David and Fred.

ACC: What lessons do you draw from your two-year contract?

Fred: It was my first experience in a big company. They took us for a ride and didn't honour our contracts. We were supposed to have been working in pairs with a tutor. This tutor was supposed to teach us how to use the machine, on the bench. But I was just left to get on with things, so I had to learn without my tutor. In fact, it was the older workers who showed me the work, not the blokes who were supposed to be teaching me.

ACC: What was the atmosphere in the workshop like?

David: The bosses treated me like shit, so there was some elementary solidarity with the permanent workers. In fact, I joined the CGT (a French trade union) in order to get my boss to leave me alone.

Fred: At the beginning, I thought that the workers would think we were there to steal their jobs. But we discussed a lot, and we gained confidence in each other, and I was well integrated into the team.

David: The question of racism was important. I felt that my colour upset some people. When I was taken on, they told me that some workers were racist. I was the only black worker in the plant, so . . . Sometimes they made remarks, called me "l'ami noir" (this is a pun on the name of the machine they worked on, a "laminoir" but it means "our black friend").

***"Now we know that you
win by fighting. We're the
real majority"***

ACC: What did you do to keep your jobs?

David: At first we let things ride. They (the bosses) shouted at us, exploited us terribly, but we said nothing because we had to feed the family.

Fred: We were only able to put up with it because of the solidarity of the other workers. We wanted to be united. Us and the permanent workers. You explained to us how important that was. But our positions were very different; some of the other young workers didn't care about not being taken on because they still live with their parents.

David: The unions didn't support us. That really disappointed me. I'd always thought that the CGT was the best union, the one that frightened the bosses.

Fred: They talk good but they never once said "we support you". We'd have been in a much stronger position if everyone had been unionised. We need a single union, to defend the cause of the workers.

ACC: Do you think union activism is enough?

Fred: No. We've got to unite around our ideas, too. We've got to unite to defend the workers.

David: Before I become a militant, I want to be educated about politics, really impregnate myself with ideas, understand Marx, that way I'll be able to convince other people.

Fred: Why should we let ourselves be dominated when we are just as capable? Workers are having a harder and harder time; we've got to change society once and for all, have a revolution.

David: Today workers have a false sense of security because they've got a TV, a car. But the politicians think for the bosses and they will attack us on our gains. Now we know that you win by fighting. They've got to understand that we are the real majority.

Fred: We mustn't stay isolated. Our ideas are the ones the workers need; everyone needs to understand them.

ACC: So, you want to be a revolutionary?

Fred: That's right, and go and sell the paper, make contact with other workers, other youth. I've already sold the paper to friends and contacts.

David: I want to join too, but first I want to be politically educated.

ACC: Right let's get started! ■

Deep End by Ger Philpott

Ger Philpott's lover, Paul, was one of the first gay men to die of AIDS in Ireland. In his book "Deep End", Philpott writes about the traumatic effect of AIDS on himself, friends and community, and the criminal negligence of successive governments in dealing with its threat to gay men

The book movingly charts Philpott's emergence from his own personal tragedy, and later his involvement as a leading gay activist in Aidswise. He observes



with anger the unwillingness of successive governments to deal with the problem of Aids.

This book is not without its flaws, however. Despite his assertion that the problem of AIDS "will never be solved from within the status quo", Philpott has big illusions in liberal politicians.

His heroes are the architects of the liberalizing legislation on homosexuality in Ireland - Mary O'Rourke, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, but

above all, Mary Robinson ("her election swung my vote to return from the US). But there is no mention of the fact that the delight at the decriminalization of male homosexuality involved the increased oppression of prostitutes; no awareness in his approval of liberal women that they, no less than their homophobic male colleagues, are members of parties and governments resolutely opposed to anything other than a limited form of bourgeois equality.

The difficulties which Philpott encounters in his own life as a gay man and in his work for AIDSWISW - all of which he deals with in the book - will not be solved by liberal legislation.

Furthermore, when he demands equality with 'heterosexuals', he is clearly not demanding equality for those gays struggling to survive below the poverty line. Nor for those in low-paid and insecure jobs, whose material and social well-being hangs daily in the balance, at the whim of profit and the capitalist markets.

Gay men and women suffer from specific oppression within our society, as Philpott's own difficulty in getting employment as a teacher testifies. None of us who have suffered such oppression can ever ignore its suffocating weight. Despite its flaws, "Deep End" draws our attention to the fact that all of us, of whatever

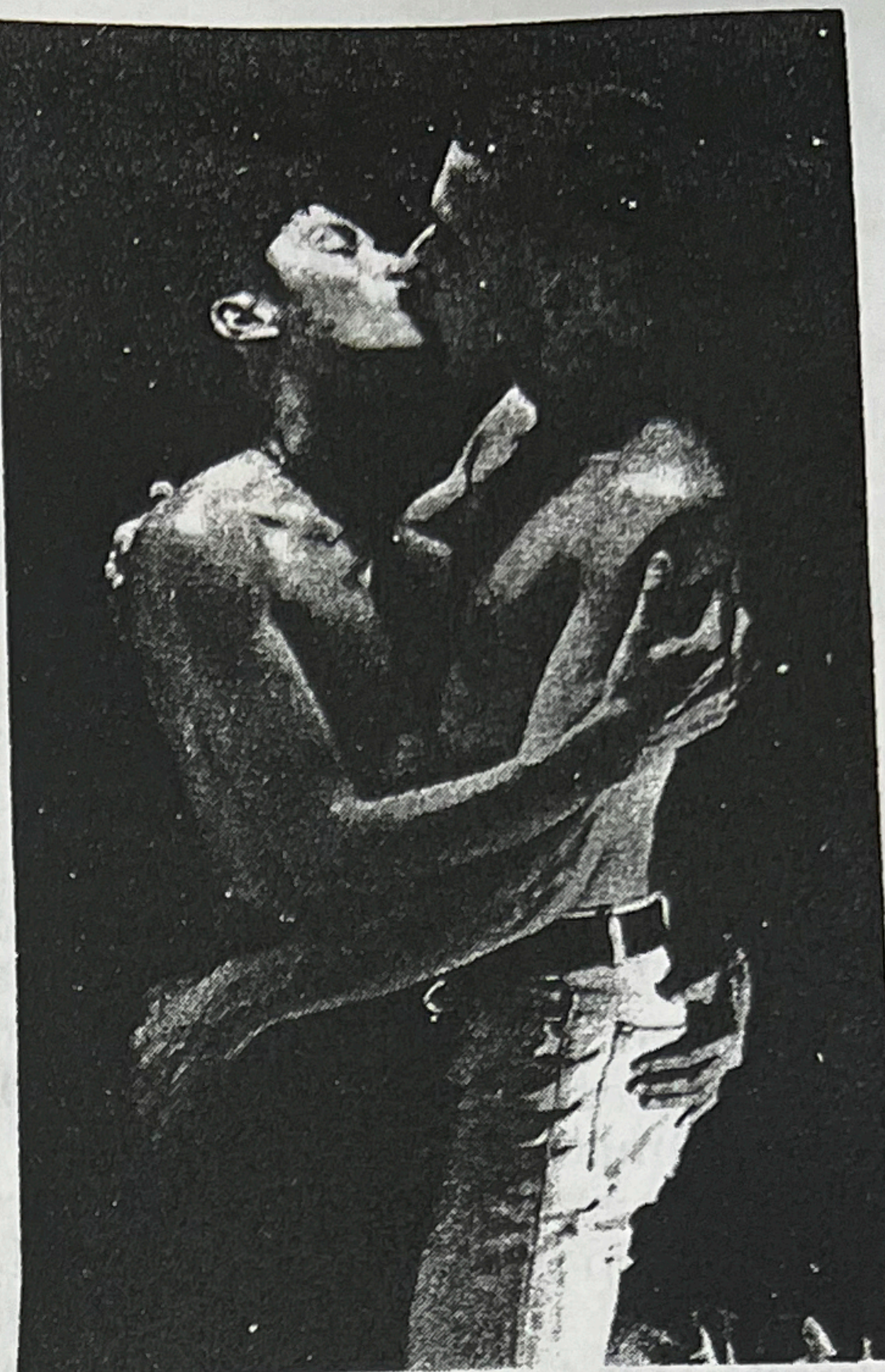
sexual orientation, should fight alongside activists like Ger Philpott in their struggle for the basic democratic right of freedom from sexual oppression and against the monstrous

indifference shown by officialdom towards the tragedy of AIDS.

However, as socialists, we recognise that the 'compulsory heterosexuality' decreed by the prevalent morality cannot be detached from the capitalist class system. The distortion of

sexuality is necessary for a system that is based on private property and the accumulation of profit. For this reason, we must fight for gay liberation as part of the general struggle for socialism.

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Dear Fightback,

It now seems certain that the bombing in Oklahoma City was carried out by members of a crazy racist nazi group called the "Michigan Militia".

Maybe its time that the ordinary people of the USA got together and rounded up all the various rightwing nutters in the USA - the Ku Klux Klan, Oliver North, the fanatical doctor killing anti-abortion groups and Newt Gingrich - the new ultra right-wing Republican speaker of the House of Representatives.

Obviously its up to ordinary american working class people themselves to choose how to deal with them.

But maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea to build a bonfire and throw every rightwing psycho in the US onto it and burn the lot of them. Then the ordinary people of the USA could get on with their lives without interference from these right-wing headcases.

Bob Roberts

Church, State & Abortion

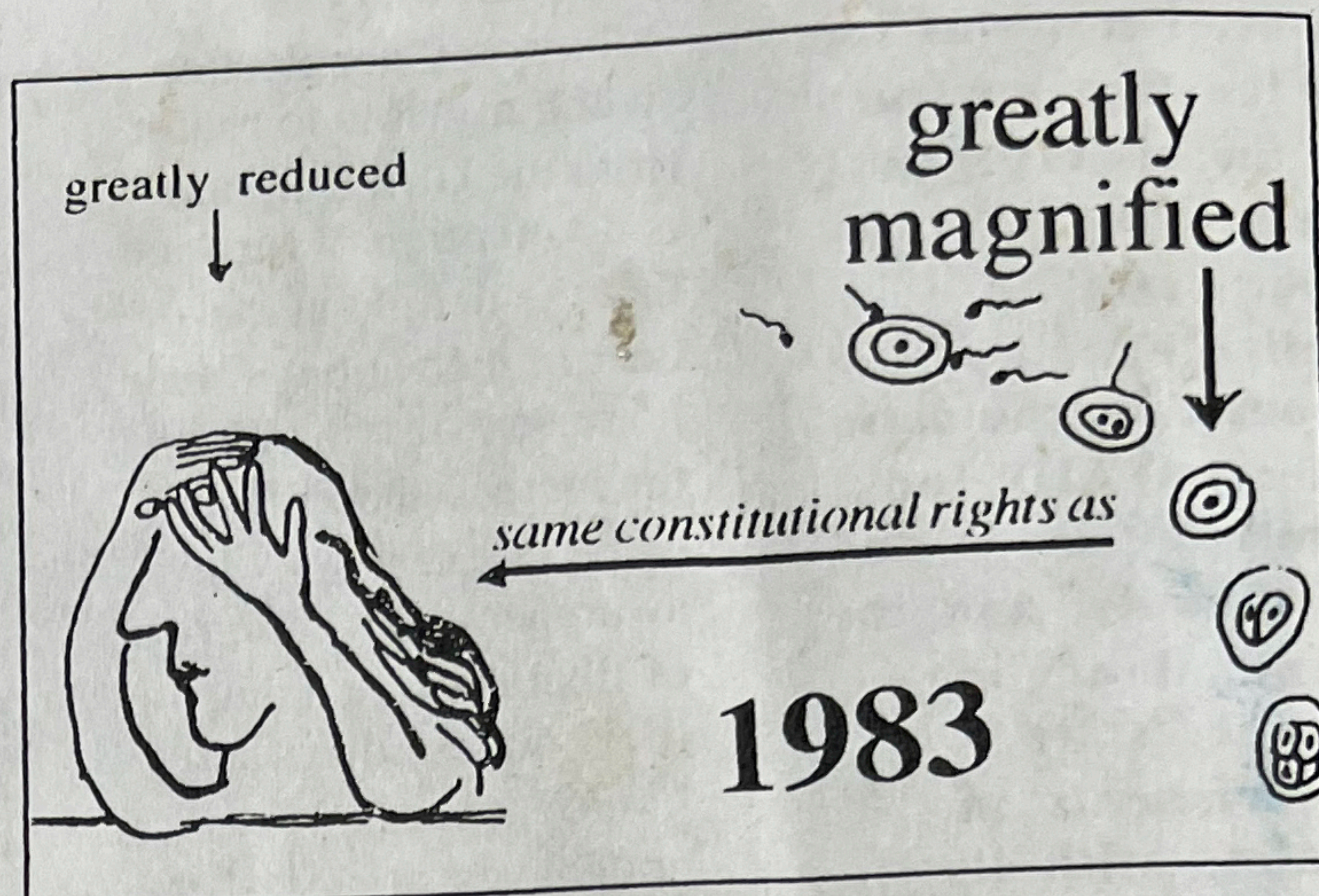
In response to the re-emergence of the abortion debate. "Fightback" organised a meeting in University College Galway on the subject of "Church, State & Abortion" in February.

Such meetings are vitally important in institutions such as UCG which has constantly shown itself to be conservative in the extreme. This is especially evident in relation to the abortion question, where the presence of organised pro-life elements in the college is growing, with many well

publicised propaganda campaigns and regular meetings held. It is high time that students were given the true facts about abortion, instead of the emotionally charged pro-life drivel that has predominated up until now.

The meeting itself was well attended. This was probably due to the fact that people actually got a chance to see the relevant posters advertising the event. On a previous occasion the posters were ripped down by Students for Life and Youth Defence.

An introductory talk



was given by Bernadette Barrington of the Irish Workers Group. She drew particular attention to the 1983 amendment which defined the fertilised egg and the woman as equals before the law. This amendment led to the

horrifying scenario of the x-case when a 14 year old rape victim was prevented by the state from travelling to England for an abortion. This situation caused an outcry and thousands of people marched through Dublin in support of the 14 year old's right to an abortion.

The speaker went on to re-iterate the IWG's stance on the abortion issue - the need for free and legal abortion on demand. If it is not free only the rich can get it: if it is not legal women will be driven to backstreet abortionists. By making abortion a right, women can control their fertility and therefore their lives.

The abortion issue is one which must be addressed again and again.

It is up to everyone to stop being complacent, to get up of their asses and fight the Students for Life and their Youth Defence colleagues!

fightback!

Fightback is produced by youth members and youth supporters of the Irish Workers Group (Gal. Branch)

We live in a society where profit is the basic motivation. Millions starve and lie destitute around the world. Thousands are butchered daily in wars rooted in greed and financial acquisition. All over the world, millions of working class men and women sweat their guts out and scrape a meagre existence while their capitalist bosses drive around in flash cars and count their gold.

It doesn't have to be like this. The capitalist system which dominates world-wide runs with the sole intention of making money for the few that own land and factories. But it can be overthrown. We believe that the world doesn't have to operate like this. A socialist system would be based on common ownership and would organise society to provide the necessities and luxuries of life for all according to a democratically worked-out plan.

We cannot just wait for it to happen. The LRCI has worked out a transitional programme to pave the way to revolution. We support all workers struggles, the struggles against women's oppression, racism and homophobia. We support national struggles against imperialist domination, including critical support for the IRA. We defend the IRA against all repression and persecution by the British State and call for British troops out of Ireland. However, the national struggle cannot be won unless it is led by the working class and for the working class. We support the fight to regain workers control and re-establish the revolution in Stalinist nations.

If you are pissed off with the oppression and exploitation you see around you, join in the struggle for a free and democratic society. Write to Fightback!, even if it's only to express your opinion on the issues we address. Join the revolutionary tradition of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. TEL. 091-764032

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