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Costly speech for Irish dissidents

Workers Solidarity Movement

1994

Three socialists in Cork, members of the Socialist Alliance group, have found themselves up against the guardians of 'public order' for the second time in two months. Their crime? Putting up posters.

The first case went to court before Christmas and related to charges under the 1982 Litter Act. Charges were pressed by the Special Branch and had to do with a poster they took offence to, last April, which called for "British Troops out of Ireland". A total of £700 in fines was imposed.

The day following this court case the same three were summonsed again, this time for postering carried out in July of last year. On this second occasion the "offending" message was a call for Irish women to have "the right to abortion in Ireland". This second case went to court in February.

Each person was fined £300 on foot of guilty pleas. The judge had it in for them with comments about postering being an attack on democracy. There was also an attempt to stitch up one of the three, James McBarron, with a further charge relating to postering

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he was not present at. This was so obviously a frame up that it was dropped during the court case.

The fines now total £1,600. A 45 day prison sentence was set on default of payment. Justice Now, a Cork based civil liberties group, is appealing for financial support to help the three. Messages of support and donations can be sent to Justice Now, 3 St. Mary's Avenue, Dillons Cross, Cork.