

Freedom of choice

Workers Solidarity Movement

1995

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IN 1992, the Supreme Court ruled that, in some circumstances, women were allowed to have an abortion in Ireland. Yet over 4,000 women a year still have to travel to England for an abortion. Again in 1992, we voted to allow freedom of information about abortion, yet the Dáil passes laws that are extremely restrictive and intrusive, in defiance of our wishes. Where is our freedom?

Freedom

The Workers Solidarity Movement has always supported a woman's right to control her own body, and have campaigned for this right as part of the pro-choice movement. We believe that control over one's fertility is an essential part of individual freedom.

Personal freedom is expressed in other ways — in asserting your sexuality, heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian, gay, whatever it may be — in asserting your culture, when, like that of the Travellers, it is ghettoised and stigmatised. The freedom to be your own person, and take pride in yourself, is often lacking in our society.

Equality

But freedom must have its limits. Freedom to have sex doesn't mean freedom to rape — the freedom of one must be balanced by the equal freedom of all. Nowhere is this balance more obviously lacking than in economics. Capitalism is based on the freedom to acquire as much money as possible, but where there is wealth there is also poverty. The fortunes of the Smurfits, the Goodmans, the Bransons, are balanced by the millions that go to bed hungry each night, the millions more that die every year as a direct result of poverty.

Even in Ireland, part of the industrialised, developed West, with the highest rate of economic growth in the European Union, there is poverty. How many people sleep rough on the streets of our cities, how many barely scrape by from week to week, how many thousands are unemployed? Too many.

Anarchism

Anarchism offers a way forward. Society organised from below, not from the top down by obscenely rich industrialists, self-serving politicians, or the 'benevolent' dictatorship of the party. Power cannot be used against us if we keep it in our own hands, and use it to create a society based, not on the freedom to exploit others, nor on a forced equality that destroys individuality, but on real freedom, real socialism, real anarchism.

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