

Trusting the politicians?

A record of lies and dishonesty

Workers Solidarity Movement

1995

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY no doubt that voices will be heard telling anti-charges campaigners to trust one gang or another of politicians to abolish the charges if only we will wait until the next local elections and put them into control of the councils. It has been tried before. Our reply is “don’t be conned again!”.

When Fianna Fáil abolished household rates in 1977 they said the lost revenue would be replaced by injecting £30 million into the building industry. This was to create 5,000 extra jobs (and PAYE contributions) whilst eliminating 5,000 unemployment benefit payments. The following year they added 5% to VAT and increased PAYE & PRSI to cover the loss of rates. The Local Government Financial Provisions Act No.1 ‘guaranteed’ that local authorities would receive enough money from the government for their needs.

The first suggestion of imposing local charges came in the 1982 Fianna Fáil manifesto, ‘The Way Forward’. Later that year a general election was called. In newspaper advertisements Fine Gael warned that if Fianna Fáil won they would impose service charges. In the same newspapers Fianna Fáil warned that if Fine Gael won they would impose service charges. The Labour Party said they were totally opposed to such charges. So all three of them were, at least by implication, against these charges.

A coalition of Fine Gael and Labour formed the government, and in July 1983 passed the Local Government Financial Provisions Act No.2 which empowered City and County Managers to charge for services. In 1985, just before local elections, the government decreed that Councilors would have the final decision on the charges. Fianna Fáil contested these elections on an Anti-Service Charges ticket. Immediately after the elections they did a U-Turn and voted for them.

Just before the General Election of 1987 Fianna Fáil gave a written guarantee to the National Association of Tenants Associations. Paddy Lalor, MEP and Director of Elections, promised that if they formed the next government they would scrap the service charges. He further promised that local authorities would be given enough money for their needs.

Since 1978 householders have been paying domestic rates through increased VAT & PAYE. Local charges are simply a way of getting us to pay twice, it is double taxation. They are dishonest charges. The politicians who voted for them are dishonest. They are practiced liars and are not

entitled to our trust. The only way to be sure of ending these charges is a massive national campaign of non-payment.

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