

Reports from Cork from the General Strike

Workers Solidarity Movement

25 November 2009

Strikes took off across Cork city and county this morning as workers took direct action to stop the Government's attack on wages and conditions.

Despite desperate wind and rain, pickets were out early and in force this morning across Cork city and county. Workers were striking back against the Government and its cosy plan to make workers pay for the crisis the Government and the bosses have have dropped the country in. Reports indicate widespread support and effective picket right across the public service. In some areas due to the flooding crisis that has enveloped part of the county, pickets has not taken place in order to assist with the alleviation of hardship – particularly to the elderly, the sick and those with young families.

We have the following reports:

Cork Tax Office on Assumption Road, Blackpool was closed this morning by a large group of about 30 picketers.

From Nagle Community College in Mahon. "The strong wind and occasion splashes of rain didn't deter the picketers on duty here. The gates were adorned with placards from SIPTU, IMPACT and the TUI. I was told here that this strike was putting down a marker that the government couldn't keep coming back and taking more and more from these workers. "You have to stand up and fight or they'll be back again and again." The picket I talked to felt it was hard to see a way out of the current impasse.

The Cork School Of Music was closed by pickets from the TUI and Impact. Cork College Of Commerce was also closed by large force of picketers.

We have this report from the Central Statistics Office in Mahon. "A large picket of perhaps fifty people from CPSU, IMPACT and SIPTU was in place outside the gates. The large CSO building eerily quiet. It was a bit easier to ward off the weather in this big crowd. Talking to Don Dean, I was told that people just wanted fairness. He gave the example of Pat Kenny's' (the RTE radio presenter) massive salary. "If Pat Kenny was laid off 60 workers could have a E10,000 wage increase, that kind of division is madness". Don lives with his wife and three kids on the Northside and has no water for a few days now. He pointed out how everyone was pulling together and looking after one another in a natural outpouring of solidarity after the massive flooding.

"Contrasting that with how the country is run. It's not private versus public sector, that's just the usual divide and conquer stuff, it's rich versus poor." Other workers at this big picket were of a similar opinion. Don felt that things will escalate and that the Trade Union leaders "Could do

a lot better”. What is needed is to spell it out to people that this is a battle between the wealthy and the rest of us – full stop! “This is about my kids’ future, the sort of country they’ll grow up in.” He added finally that he had told the reporter from Red FM Radio this morning that as a worker he would be financially better off on the dole, but that he wanted to work, wanted to make a contribution, but wanted fairness too.

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