

Where were the vanguard?

Workers Solidarity Movement

1993

The Irish Left is very small. However history has shown that it is possible to have influence far out of proportion to your numbers. So what strategy did these highly organised groups committed to fighting for womens' liberation adopt. **Militant Socialist** placed all its efforts in electioneering for one of their members, Joe Higgins, who was standing in a Dublin West (a General Election being called for the same day as the referendum). Their only presence in the pro-choice movement was to turn up in mass to a Repeal the Eighth Amendment Conference (REAC) in order to get one of their members elected onto committee and try (but fail!) to get other left groups off.

The **Socialist Workers Movement** concentrated on their age old policy of showing up the "pro-life" movements as the bigots they really are, chiefly by holding counter demonstrations when ever the "pro-lifers" marched. In one instance worthy of a black comedy both **Democratic Left** and the SWM held separate counter demonstrations on the same weekend. Both refused to support each others' event, both claiming the other was being ultra-leftist.

Five weeks before the referendum the SWM attempted to set up a 'Youth Against Bigotry' campaign. However this disappeared very quickly without trace. Both Militant and the SWM put party building before politics. Recruitment was prioritised above gaining a victory in the referendum.

The **Dublin Spartacists**, a small and not often seen organisation leafleted against womens oppression whenever anyone else provided them with an opportunity to do so. They could not get involved in any Right to Choose campaign as they believed all these campaigns were in fact campaigning against abortion!!

DL, Labour Party, Workers Party, SWM and Militant members took no part in any campaigning groups on the ground. The only Green Party members working on the referendum were in the "pro-life" camp.

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