

Joe Mulholland,  
Head of News,  
RTE,  
Donnybrook,  
Dublin 4.

31 Buttercup Park,  
Darndale,  
Dublin 17,  
October 30th, 1990

Dear Mr Mulholland,

I was Chairperson of the Strike Committee during the recent dispute at the Gateaux factory in Finglas. I was interviewed on six occasions by RTE reporters in relation to the strike there. One of these interviews was broadcast on the FM2 12 noon news. I was interviewed on a number of occasions after that for news programmes. However, not one of these latter interviews was broadcast.

It was finally confirmed to me by an RTE reporter on the 14th of August, 1990 that the reason my interviews were not broadcast is because I am a member of Sinn Fein. According to him I was censored under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.

As you are probably aware Section 31 prohibits interviews with, or broadcasts by, or on behalf of, representatives of, or spokespersons for, Sinn Fein. I did not act in any of these capacities in relation to the Gateaux Strike. The RTE interviews with me took place only because of my representative capacity as a spokesperson for the Gateaux workers. My Sinn Fein membership was not relevant either to the interviews themselves or to the Section 31 censorship provisions.

Please tell me whether, in your opinion, the interview with me broadcast by FM2 was a breach of the Ministerial Order under Section 31 of the Broadcasting act.

Please explain in detail how you could possibly justify censoring me as spokesperson for the Gateaux workers under the Section 31 provisions. As you are possibly aware Gerry Adams MP was interviewed on the BBC1 9.00pm news on October 1st where he represented the people of West Belfast. I am aware that there are significant differences between the Irish and British censorship orders. However, in relation to the distinction between membership of an organisation and acting in a representative capacity on its behalf they are similar. If the BBC can recognise this distinction why can't you?

Larry O'Toole,

copy to: Director General