

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

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version

*Irish Anarchist Paper*



No. 71 - July/Aug 2002

[www.struggle.ws/wsm.html](http://www.struggle.ws/wsm.html)

## Irish taxpayers to subsidise clerical rapists

**PRIESTS, nuns and Christian Brothers beat, molested and raped thousands of young children who were sent into their "care". Decades of horrific abuse were suffered in residential institutions. So far over 1,000 Catholic Church internal files about incidents of child sexual abuse have been handed over the Birmingham inquiry.**

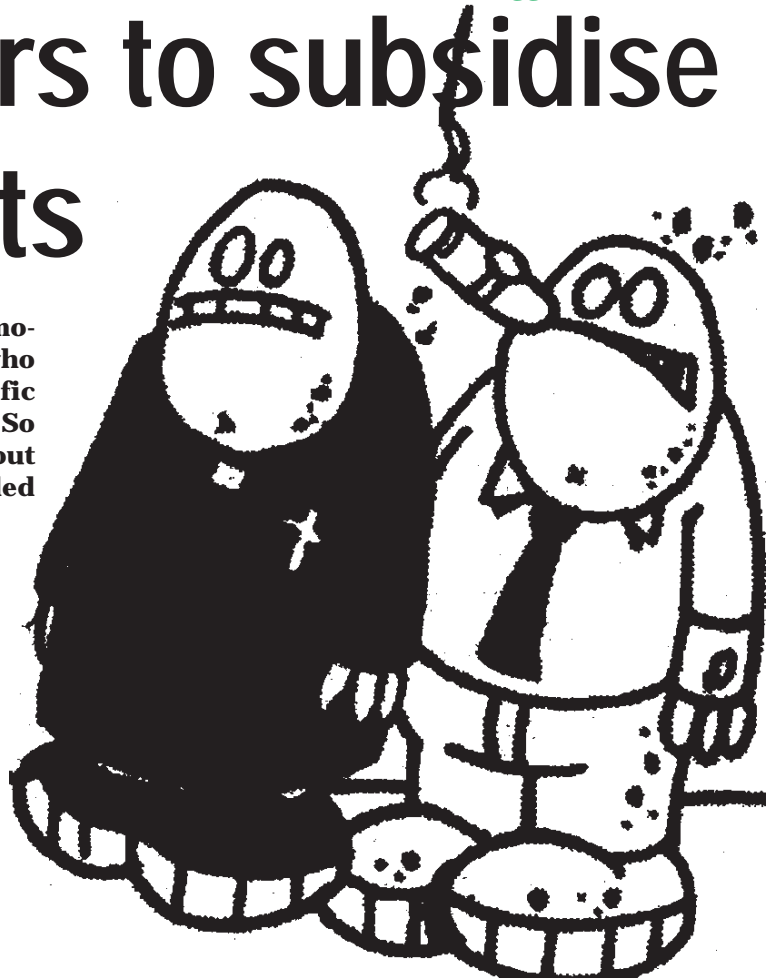
A massive criminal conspiracy protected the abusers. Not one single priest, nun or Christian Brother reported a fellow cleric to the guards, all complaints were made by those who had been the victims. The Department of Education never intervened.

In the final days of the last government Education Minister Michael Woods signed a deal with 18 religious orders whereby the state will pick up the bill for all compensation in excess of €128 million. Already costs to the state are estimated at over €400 million (Sunday Business Post, June 9<sup>th</sup>).

In fact, only €40 million will be paid in cash. Another €40 million worth of property transferred to the state, or to voluntary bodies, over the last three years counts as part of the church's bill. The remainder is to be paid through more transfers of property, which the church no longer needs because of falling 'vocations'.

Of the cash, €12.7 million will go into a special trust fund controlled by the religious orders themselves. The victims of abuse will have no legal right to this money. And to cap it all, the deal allows any future Minister of Education to extend the protection of the deal to non-residential institutions by simply signing a ministerial order.

To rub salt into the wound, Sister Elizabeth Maxell, the secretary-general of the Conference of Religious in Ireland told us that the tax payer *"is getting very good value... we've been more than generous"*. This is the same nun who announced that since 1997 CORI own helpline had received over 5,000 calls about sexual abuse by clerics or religious personnel. And surely it is only some victims who would phone a helpline run by the very



organisation their abusers belong to.

Nobody should dispute that the state shares responsibility, it sent vulnerable children to cruel institutions where they were abused. And, at the very least, turned a blind eye to the suffering of those children.

However, Fianna Fail and the PDs have effectively told the church that their crimes of abuse and cover-up are not really too serious, and that they will only have pay a small fraction of the compensation awards that will be made to those whose childhoods were destroyed. The PAYE worker will be hit once again, this time to pay for the monstrous crimes of an extremely wealthy organisation.



# International Libertarian Solidarity (S.I.L.)

**At the last Workers Solidarity Movement conference we took the decision to join a new international anarchist network, International Libertarian Solidarity, which is most often referred to by its Spanish acronym of SIL. This was after we had discussed the founding document of the SIL, the 2001 Madrid declaration and the work it has undertaken since.**

The SIL brings together a wide variety of anarchist groups internationally from the largest (the Spanish CGT with 45,000 members) to some of the smallest (including ourselves). The purpose of the SIL is not "a new international workers association with its statutes and agreements and organic structures" but biannual co-ordination meetings intended to reply to capitalist globalisation and aimed at "fostering international solidarity and mutual aid".

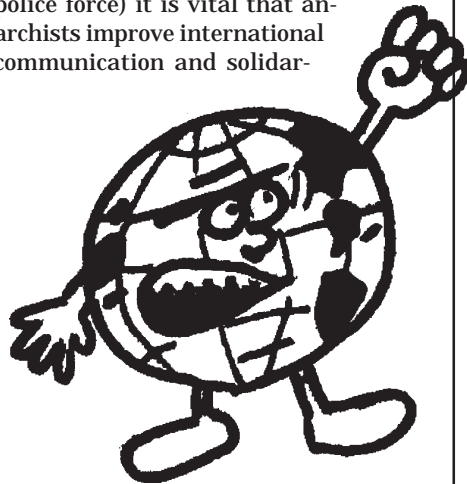
In practical terms this means those organisations based in the countries of Europe where workers have won higher wages and a higher standard of living helping the organisations in the 'global south' where workers are poorer in real terms. Over the last year the organisations in the SIL have sent financial aid to Brazil to help the Federacocao Anarquista Gaucha acquire offset printing equipment. A second FAG project that was aided was in the city of Alegrete where 483 families have been squatting land since 1999. Aid was needed to build "a hall with space for debates, self-managed meetings of the inhabitants, tasks and social jobs and popular fights that create collective benefits for community". More details of these projects on the SIL web page.

WSM members taking parts in the EU protest in Seville in June were able to attend a meeting of the SIL which took place in the CGT offices. There it was decided to complete the existing projects in the next months and to draw up proposals to aid groups in Argentina, Siberia and Mexico. We also appointed a European co-ordination group for the next SIL meeting to take place in Porte Alegre, Brazil at the same time as the next World Social Forum meeting there. Each of the European organisations will delegate one member to this group to help organise the meeting.

An article in Workers Solidarity 64 last year discussed the founding document of the SIL in more detail (<http://struggle.ws/ws/2001/64/madrid.html>). It is notable for being a very open and honest evaluation of the problems facing the anarchist movement and how we can offer an alternative to capitalism today. This is reflected in the organisations currently involved in the SIL which tend to be from those sections

of the movement that prioritise direct involvement in the real struggles of workers where they are located. Some like the CGT and the SAC are unions with mass memberships; others are more like the WSM and are anarchist groups that involve themselves in mainstream unions and social struggles.

With capital being more and more organised internationally and the growth of international bodies designed to quell protest (like EuroPol the new European police force) it is vital that anarchists improve international communication and solidar-



ity. With the increasing poverty that capitalist globalisation is imposing on workers in the global south those of us in the west need to develop systems of mutual aid. In Argentina at the moment the rapid increase in inflation is making it increasingly difficult for anarchists there to continue publishing their papers. This in the very period when it is most essential that such publication not only continues but also actually increases in quantity.

We would like to encourage other anarchist and libertarian groups in Ireland and internationally to consider joining up in the SIL. It's loose nature allows for involvement in other international initiatives and for the involvement of more than one group from each country, in France three separate organisations are now involved. We would also appeal to individual readers to consider making a donation towards these projects by sending cheques or cash to us which we will add to our international solidarity fund.

Andrew Flood

More info. SIL web page <http://www.ils-sil.org>

## That's Capitalism

More families have been evicted from their homes in the 26 counties in recent years than during the equivalent period of the land war under Queen Victoria. After the richest five years in Ireland's history there are more homeless people on the streets and in bed and breakfasts than at any time since independence. The number on council housing waiting lists had increased from 26,000 in 1996 to more than 60,000 currently.

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Last year over 1.9 million tourists out of the 10 million foreigners who visited Thailand went to the areas populated by hill tribes. "The hill tribes are important for tourism in the north. They come second, after trekking and exploring nature, to draw visitors," says Smithseth Chantusen of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. These hill tribes are acceptable to the government as a commodity but have little value as people. Many of them have no legal status and can be arrested for moving out of restricted areas in the north.

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According to the Dublin government, the Students Summer Jobs Scheme is "to provide income support for the less well off". If a student manages to pass the means test, it will pay a whopping €3.85 per hour (that's IR£3.03 in old money) – which is just 65% of the minimum wage. And this is for working, truly a real education in the values of capitalism.

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Most European governments have been scapegoating immigrants, calling them freeloaders and scroungers. It's much easier to blame 'foreigners' than it is to build better homes, hospitals and schools. How embarrassing it must have been when the British Treasury had to admit that immigrants contributed £2.6 billion more than they received from Tony Blair's government last year.

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According to the Department of Agriculture, 26 county farmers pay just 1.1% of the total income tax bill. PAYE workers pay 82.6%. Farmers pay an average €1,173. PAYE workers pay an average €7,103. Isn't self-assessment a great thing!

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Sixty Americans own total assets of \$331 billion. The richest of all, Microsoft tycoon Bill Gates, owns \$8 billion more than the combined assets of 104,000,000 million Americans. We are told that the rich got where they are today as a result of hard work. Poor Bill must be knackered after all the overtime.

# Thinking about Anarchism Movement Direct Action

**The idea of 'direct action' needs some explanation. Every time somebody puts a brick through a window or organises a minor protest there will almost inevitably be someone else who describes it as direct action.**

Direct action is about empowering people, it's about breaking from dependency on others to run our lives. Rather than pleading with our bosses or electing 'better' politicians to make decisions for us, it means ordinary people coming together to win change through our own efforts.

In work this can mean using work-to-rules, strikes and occupations to win improvements rather than trusting in the Labour Relations Commission or Labour Court. In our neighbourhoods it means organising mass non-payment of the bin tax rather than passively hoping our local councillors will eventually vote to abolish the double tax.

The point is that action is taken, not indirectly by 'mediators' or 'representatives' over whom we have little control, but directly by those effected. It is action intended to succeed, not just to gain publicity.

It is a rejection of the notion that ordinary people are powerless, and so must leave the important decisions to someone else. It holds that most improvements are not benevolently handed down by generous rulers and bosses, they have to be fought for. That is how we gained much of what we have today, from the 8 hour day to paid holidays.

As well as being the most effective way of hanging on to what we have and gaining a bit more, direct action is also a preparation for bigger things. Anarchism will not become a reality through the actions of any small minority or elite.

If we are to create a free socialist society

based on the grassroots democracy of workplace and community councils, a lot of people will have to be involved. A lot of people will have to believe that together they are capable of not only overthrowing the present system but of building and sustaining a much better one.

Through engaging in direct action we learn, through experience, that there is no need to leave things to 'experts' or professional politicians. We learn how to manage our own struggles, to build our own structures, we learn that we need to

link up with others. After all, there is no point in getting your neighbours to boycott the bin tax if people in all the other areas are unaware of the campaign and continue paying.

Ideas of solidarity and mutual aid become real. There is no pre-condition for anarchism more important than working class self-confidence.

If most people don't feel capable of running society themselves, this task will be taken up by whatever Party or group can con us into thinking that they are the 'professionals' and 'experts' we should place our confidence in.

When that happens we are on the road to changing our rulers but not the system we live under. There will still be a division of people into rulers and ruled. And rulers always look after their own interests, not those of society as whole. This has happened every single time a minority has been trusted to rule a country after a revolutionary upsurge.

*Alan MacSimóin*

## NEWS FROM THE WSM VIA THE INTERNET

Our email list Ainriail distributes regular news updates and notices of events to subscribers. There are 4 - 8 emails a week. To join the list just email [ainriail-request@struggle.ws](mailto:ainriail-request@struggle.ws) with the subject subscribe

Our web page [www.struggle.ws/wsm](http://www.struggle.ws/wsm) includes a huge archive of articles about the history of anarchism and Irish struggles.



## Getting involved

Anarchism is a very simple idea – basically society should be organised in a non-hierarchical way, it should not be divided into order-givers and order-takers. We don't need bosses, politicians, bishops or anybody else to tell us how to live our lives. Anarchists look to a society which will be based on the idea of "from each according to ability, to each according to need".

We want to bring about a society based on real grassroots democracy where power remains at local level and is organised upwards through workplace and community councils.

We do not want to become rulers nor do we want to seize power "on behalf of the working class". We have no interest in replacing one set of bosses with another. Instead we work for a free socialist society where everyone can have a direct say in making the decisions that will effect them.

This society will only be brought about through revolution! There is an old anarchist slogan which says that if elections changed anything they would be illegal. The thinking behind it is that real democratic change cannot come from the top down but must be built from the bottom up. Instead of voting in elections and effectively giving someone else control of our lives, we stand for direct action and solidarity among and between workers.

The Workers Solidarity Movement has been busy over the last couple of months. Our campaign around the general election saw thousands of homes get leaflets outlining the anarchist alternative, in several constituencies the people doing tallies reported a noticeable number of ballot papers with 'anarchism' written across them.

The June bank holiday weekend saw 50 or so anarchists heading off to Achill Island for the first of a series of camping weekends where rebels from around the country can meet up and get to know each other. Later that month a delegation from the WSM traveled to Spain to join the anti-capitalist demonstrations at the EU Summit in Seville, while at home thousands of copies of *Anarchist News* were distributed explaining what the summit was all about and how it will effect all of us. And just as went to press the Derry Anarchist web site announced they were launching on July 30th, check it out at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/derryanarchistnews/>

Members of the WSM are also active in their trade unions, in the campaigns against the bin tax, and in the ongoing struggle against racism. We produce this paper, the magazine *Red & Black Revolution*, and the occasional *Anarchist News* bulletin. With our relatively small numbers there is a limit to what we can do. That's why we need people like you to get involved. If you like what you read in this paper, maybe you would be willing to take 10 or more copies to distribute among friends, workmates or neighbours. The more people who read about the ideas and the more people who get involved in struggle, the sooner we will reach our objective – a world free of poverty and exploitation. A world where freedom is a reality for all.



# Kashmir – another legacy of British Imperialism

Travelling to the west for the Anarchist Summer Camp a few weeks ago I was amazed at the amount of tricolours flying from every vantage point. I recalled to myself that this is more reminiscent of a country that's just won its independence.

Of course the national flag was on display because in Japan the football team were competing in the World Cup. Nationhood makes that competition all the sweeter. Unfortunately while millions all around the world tuned into TV sets for the games – the other more prevalent form of Nationalism and madness was being played out at the top of the World in a place called Kashmir.

At the western end of the Himalayas – a province that borders on Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China has been in dispute since 1948. Effectively what happened was the British pulled out and the ruler of this province, the Raja, dithered when deciding to link up with one of his choices, India (Hindus) or Pakistan (Muslims). When he finally decided to link with India the two thirds of the population that's Muslim felt aggrieved and split setting up free (Azad) Kashmir. In May 1948 troops went in from both sides and by 1949 a line of confrontation had been drawn.

There has been intermittent fighting there ever since. Over 60,000 people have lost their lives and while I was trundling along on the train to the west of Ireland this latest conflict between India and Pakistan had me wondering if any of us would see the World Cup. Of course this area has been in dispute for as long as the two countries have existed. Another legacy of the great British empire and the troubles that it's created all over the planet.

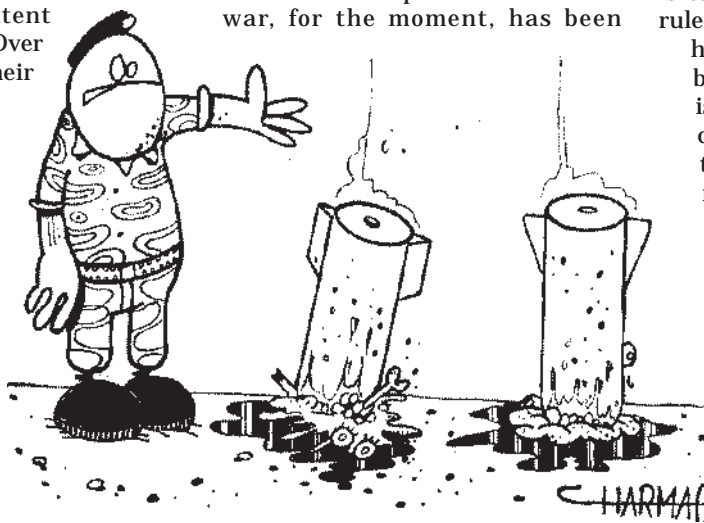
Like a family feud that refuses to go away – the Kashmir question has been here for exploitation by both sides over the last 50 years. The difference now being that this is a family feud that involves nuclear weapons. Only 4 years ago a certain General Musharraf orchestrated a manoeuvre whereby some of his troops took over some abandoned winter bunkers normally occupied by troops from India near Kargill. A 6 week battle ensued. Buoyed by this daring move General Musharraf took power in coup in Pakistan 6 months after this battle in Kashmir.

With George Bush carrying on his "crusade" or shouldn't we call it war on ter-

ror, it's an inevitable consequence that other leaders see this as a time to sort out their issues. While war rages people are deflected from the issues that are being neglected and ignored. General Musharraf took the opportunity to declare himself leader for life – when the US was bombing the rubble in Afghanistan to smaller rubble. Now once again he turns to Kashmir (a place he has used before) as a means to continue his own personal wars and deflect the people of Pakistan away from the real issues of poverty, education, lack of clean water.

As one poor farmer in the Punjab said when asked about the possibility of war "for us there is always a war." [1] He was referring to the endemic problems of corruption and the economics of just being able to survive. As long as the leaders of India and Pakistan continue to bluster on and move troops to the troubled area they can continue to do nothing to help the people of their respective countries.

Most recent developments means that war, for the moment, has been



averted. So people are continuing to be killed, journalists assassinated, peace activists have been attacked, kidnapped and tortured, and leaders have made promises. Of course this means that nothing has really changed. General Musharraf – leader for life of Pakistan has promised to crack down on Muslim militants who have made frequent incursions into Indian controlled Kashmir. India's Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee most worryingly claimed "If Pakistan had not agreed to end infiltration, and America had not conveyed that guarantee to India, then war would not have been averted." [2]

(this time with nuclear weapons)

So this story hasn't ended. It's a situation that will not go away and while we sit around and look at our sports broadcasts two Nuclear countries throw slaps at each other every few years and shape up for a massive fight. While all of this was going on Tony Blair was stating that the British government was trying to be a "calming influence" in the region while 30 British companies attended an arms fair in Delhi, his ministers signed export licences for weapons, and a few of them tried to convince the Indian Government to buy 66 Hawk jets worth £1 Billion. [3] Business as usual. Emanating from their imperialist history the British government try and play the diplomats and ambassadors of peace to the world media while they beaver away at selling arms to both sides in the conflict. Business must go on despite the media spotlight.

The people of the region, of course, are the forgotten ones. When a poll is conducted it only answers that are allowed is to name the country you wish to be ruled by. Of course in the long and bloody history in this region there has never been a referendum on the issue. War is the great diversion for both of these countries. In both India and Pakistan the gap between rich and poor is enormous and appears to be growing on a daily basis. Rather than grappling with this reality it's in the interests of the rulers to stir up old hatreds along religious and nationalist divides. George W. Bush is not the only leader to resort to a war to deflect attention away from his bankrupt domestic policies.

Dermot Sreenan

<sup>1</sup> Taken from interview on Labour Party of Pakistan web site

<sup>2</sup> Guardian "India Claims Victory without war" 17<sup>th</sup> June 2002

<sup>3</sup> Guardian "UK Selling arms to India" June 20<sup>th</sup>

## Subscribe:

Send 10 Euro to WSM, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8 and we will send you the next 9 *Workers Solidarity* and the next 2 issues of our magazine *Red & Black Revolution*

**International rates** (for 6 WS + 1 R&BR), Britain 5 STR, Europe 7 Euros or equiv, rest of world 10 USD. Send cash or cheques made out to WSM to WSM, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland.

# Review: The Bolsheviks and Workers Control

How many times as the clock inches towards five thirty have you thought that you could do the bosses' job! Well not only have workers often thought this, they have occasionally even kicked the bosses out and given it a go.

*The Bolsheviks and Workers Control* is a detailed book that shows firstly how Russian workers took over and managed their workplaces, secondly how they wished to extend this control to the entire economy and thirdly how it was wrested from them by the Russian state. It is an essential read for anyone who thinks that Leninist parties have any relevance to creating a socialist society.

Factory committees sprung up before, during and after the revolution booting out managers and taking over enterprises. The committees quickly realised that co-ordination and integration of production was essential. The Resolution of Factory/Shop Commissions declares:

*"The economic life of the country - agriculture, industry, commerce and transport must be subject to one unified plan, constructed so as to satisfy the individual and social requirements of the wide masses of the people".*

In August 1917 the Second Conference of Factory Committees took this so seriously that they resolved to devote a quarter of their wages to support a **central Soviet of Factory Committees**. After the revolution they made attempts to do this with the **All Russian Council of Factory Committees** which the Bolsheviks stopped from meeting, believing instead in their vision of control by the State *'on the workers' behalf'*.

In December 1917 The Central Council of the Petrograd Factory Committees issued a *'Practical manual for the implementation of Workers Control'* which quite explicitly moves beyond stock-taking, and into **real control of production**, calling on each committee to set up control commissions for the various aspects of production. That same month the Bolshevik paper: **Isvestiya** published the *'General Instructions on Workers Control in Conformity with the Decree of November'*. It also talks of commissions, but says that the only role they should play in management is **making sure that the central governments directives are followed through**.

So after initial luke warm support for the committees the Bolsheviks quickly moved towards one man management under direct state rule from above. By April 1918 (six months after October), Lenin's article on *'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'* was published in *Isvestiya*. He claims that *"The irrefutable experience of history has shown that...the dictatorship of individual persons was very often the vehicle, the channel of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes"* and *"Today the Revolution demands, in the interests of socialism, that the masses unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of the labour process."*

If you are interested in how the factory committee movement worked and how the Leninists quickly moved to absorb and smash them this book has all the detail you could possibly want.

8.00 Euro from the bookservice also online at <http://struggle.ws/russia.html>

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## More news on the WSM web page - [www.struggle.ws/wsm.html](http://www.struggle.ws/wsm.html)

Our web page is regularly updated with news reports from events our members take part in. Below are some of those added since the last issue.

**Court Report; Burlington Cases-** A court report on the continuing prosecution of activists arrested at the Burlington hotel anti-privatisation protests in Oct 2001.

**The Seville 2002 EU summit protests** [with photos]- An Irish anarchist reports from the European Summit protests in Seville

**Cork anti-general election campaign** [with photos] - An alliance of anarchists in Cork ran an anti-general election campaign during the recent Dail elections. The campaign put as its aim to 'use the elections to highlight anarchists ideas'

**Dublin against police brutality** [with photos] - After two days when the first item on the evening TV news was the brutal Gardai attack on a Reclaim the

Streets party it was not surprising that thousands joined a rally against police brutality outside Pearse St police station on Thursday night.

**Reclaim the Streets attacked by Gardai** [with photos] - It was expected that this would be the largest Dublin Reclaim the Streets to date. What was not so expected was that by the end of the day 24 people would have been arrested and over a dozen hospitalised.



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## REVIEW :

[www.StopTheBinTax.com](http://www.StopTheBinTax.com)

Like it or not if the present government gets its way every household in Ireland will have to get used to paying bin charges, so for anybody curious about the arguments against the introduction of bin charges into Ireland, please familiarise yourself with [www.StopTheBinTax.com](http://www.StopTheBinTax.com). A very user friendly site that will also give you good tips on recycling and a wealth of links to other political campaigns - from Greenpeace to anti-war activities. Pleased to say that trawling through the links offers a healthy picture of opposition to the bin tax in Dublin, Limerick, Cork and Drogheda.

The information provided should be sufficient to convince people of how completely unjust this taxation is. PAYE workers are already paying 80% of taxation in this country - our taxes have already paid for the service so why pay again? The notion that this is a 'Green Tax' is debunked by the reality that households only produce 5% of rubbish in this country, why should we subsidise the big rubbish producer? If anything making people pay for rubbish collection just increases illegal dumping and now that isn't usually good for the environment. The danger of commercialising rubbish collection, particularly for those who are currently getting waivers (can't see a continuation of free service once there's profits involved can you?), is well highlighted on the site. If they get this commercialised what next - water, health and education probably. The strategy to defeat the tax is mass non-payment and this policy seems popularly supported. A figure is given of 167,000 bin tax bills given out in Dublin city area of which just under 40,000 have paid - and when adjusted for waivers - the result is that for every person who pays two do not. That same figure applies in Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown. Now that to me is a sign of some popular success. Long may the non-payment continue - *Don't Panic Don't Pay*.

Joe Moffat





# Garda investigating Garda

**The vicious attack by some 70 gardai on the Reclaim the Streets party of May 6th left 14 peaceful protesters hospitalised, many others injured and over 20 arrested for offences such as, for example, doing a handstand! This is not the first time gardai have attacked demonstrations linked to globalisation. This time however, the actions of the police were recorded on film and the next day the whole country could watch images of baton-wielding cops. Many of the gardai had clearly removed their ID numbers before starting to beat up the crowd.**

Gardai bosses responded to the initial public outcry by singling out one garda, removing him to desk duty, and announcing an internal investigation into the events of May 6th. Clearly, however, individual gardai had been acting in a way which they felt was permitted by senior officers present. Judging by the European-wide pattern of violent attacks by police on similar globalisation protests, the directives on how to 'deal' with protesters would appear to be coming from on high.

It comes as no surprise then that, far from investigating police violence, those who seem to be coming under investigation are the protesters. Since May 6th police have been paying house calls to people associated with the demonstration and questioning them on the extent of their involvement in

RTS. It appears that these officers are not connected with the police complaints board and seem to be gathering information about protesters under false pretences. In some cases it appears that these officers have accessed the complaints book to gather contact information about people.

After the Garda complaints board received 41 complaints of excessive police violence, it was announced that an independent inquiry was being set up to supposedly investigate the events of May 6th. The so-called inquiry, which is headed by a former assistant garda commissioner, is not required to publish the results of the investigation. It can access CCTV footage but will have no power to release this to the public. It will not in fact be investigating garda tactics and training but instead can only focus on com-

plaints about individual gardai. No attempt will be made to advertise the inquiry or to seek submissions from the public.

Although the investigation is supposedly separate from the Garda internal inquiry anyone who does come forward will be guaranteed confidentiality only when deemed "appropriate". So what can this inquiry do? Nothing, as a garda spokesperson went on to explain, the investigation can in fact take no action whatsoever. The 'independent' ex-cop investigator can only refer a matter for further action to a Tribunal which will itself be made up of half the members of the Garda complaints board.

A legal defence campaign has been set up by protesters who were attacked, at least 12 of whom are now facing court charges, and their supporters. The campaign is involved in co-ordinating the legal issues arising out of the May 5th demo and fundraising for the defence of those charged and for those wanting to sue the police. Turn up to offer your support to the defendants who will be appearing on Court 46 (behind the Four Courts) at 10.00am on September the 30th.

You can contact the campaign at 087-9425422 or by email at [rtsmayday@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rtsmayday@yahoo.co.uk)

*Deirdre Hogan*

## They Call It The Law....

**If anybody was under any illusions that the 'law' treated trade unionists fairly, or was in some way neutral when it came to trade disputes, the events of a few weeks in late May/early June should have been enough to rid them of such silly notions.**

Firstly we had the Aer Lingus pilots' dispute. As with any strike – or even work-to-rule – the red tape which must be gone through in order to make any action official is often enough to render the action ineffective. As a result of the Industrial Relations Act, the pilots' union had to serve seven days' notice of their strike on the company. This of course meant that Aer Lingus had plenty of time to organise scabs to undermine the strike. Ironically, the only day of the dispute when any Aer Lingus planes actually took to the air was on the day the pilots were on strike.

Aer Lingus management responded to the pilots' one-day strike by unilaterally locking them out, announcing that they would not resume flights until they were sure there would be no more industrial action. How come, one might ask, the management did not have to give the same notice as the workers? Did the workers – even the customers – of the company not deserve the same amount of notice just because the action was precipitated by the management?

The answer, as we know, is of course no. One law for them and another for us. If further proof of the bias of the law against workers taking action to preserve their job security was needed, we didn't have to wait long. In early June wheel clampers in the Dublin City Council area (not directly employed by the City Council, but by a contractor) took strike action in protest at the

fact that union members were passed over for promotion. Management scabbed on the strike so the workers attempted to place effective pickets on the depot to prevent the clamping vans being driven out. The 'law' arrived in the form of several cops and 25 of the strikers were arrested under the Public Order Act, their crime being to defend their working conditions.

This is nothing new of course. Since the foundation of capitalism, the bosses have relied on the 'law' to protect their interests. Since the foundation of trade unionism, workers in struggle have always found themselves coming up against that 'law'. At times in history, such as the 1913 lockout in Dublin, and more recently e.g. the miners' strike in Britain in the 1980s the force of the 'law' has been very brutal. At other times it has been the threat – and enforcement – of court injunctions that has blunted effective action.

More and more groups of workers are beginning to realise that effective action cannot always be 'within the law'. When the law gets in the way, it too must be defied and we cannot and must not allow the union bureaucrats to tie our hands by tying us to 'the law'.

*Gregor Kerr*



## SIPTU General Secretary elections

Long term readers of Workers Solidarity may recognise the name of Des Derwin, one of the candidates for the General Secretary of Ireland largest trade union, SIPTU. He wrote a detailed article for our magazine Red and Black Revolution on "The two souls of the trade unions" (at <http://struggle.ws/rbr/soulrbr2.html>).

WSM members have worked with Des in countless union (and other) campaigns over the last decade including the various campaigns against partnership. Our members in SIPTU decided to back his election attempt in so far as it offers an opportunity to build opposition inside the union. As he has written "This is not about getting Des Derwin elected. It is about the best showing for a different, a changed and forceful, SIPTU, with far greater member input." And elsewhere "I am standing on a platform of change, revitalisation and the return of our Union to independence, fighting-form and control from below by the general membership".

The ballot begins on 19th September and runs for three weeks until 9th October. We encourage our readers who are members of SIPTU to campaign and vote for Des.

You can contact Des at Ph: 087 6229686 E-mail: [dderwin@gofree.indigo.ie](mailto:dderwin@gofree.indigo.ie)

The following article is from the *Solidarity Bulletin*, paper of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation. It was based on an interview by ASF members with two of the sacked ICTS workers, Brian Summerfield and Malcom Spencer.

# Sacked Belfast Airport security workers speak out

**On Saturday, 6 July at 1 pm a crowd of nearly 100 assembled at the roundabout outside Aldergrove airport in a show of support and solidarity with 24 sacked airport security workers. Speaking to the crowd, the workers promised to continue their struggle for reinstatement with picket lines, protest marches and through the courts.**

The dispute arose with their employer ICTS over pay and conditions, but quickly became much more complicated. The security staff were originally working on a number of different pay scales, but they wanted a single rate for all workers. And they wanted it badly- 97% voted for industrial action in April. The paperwork was done, the strikes were sanctioned and things were all set to kick off. As a result, negotiations between management, shop stewards and labour relations began, and strike action was suspended for the duration of the talks. This ended on Mon 13th May, when the management failed to contact the union.

On the advice of union lawyers in London, the strikes restarted the next day at 4 am. ICTS deemed the strike illegal, and managed to obtain a letter of repudiation from ATGWU union official Joe McClusker agreeing with them. Workers arriving for the evening shift joined the picket after a two day rest period, only to be told by ICTS manager Clifford Duncan that the strike they knew to be legal wasn't. Three days later, 24 "randomly selected" workers were handed suspension letters and after a disciplinary hearing three days after that were sacked.

"It was the union that got us sacked in the first place, we were very badly let down," claimed one of the workers, but he qualified this- pledging respect for the shop stewards who had worked hard to get union backing since then. They met Bill Morris, the union secretary, who admitted liability and promised to throw all resources behind the campaign to have the men and women reinstated.

"What I would like to know is what method was used to 'randomly' select us. Who was the independent witness and where are they? How random can it be if a married couple were selected for dismissal. There's more chance of me winning the lottery. And I don't play the lottery!" said Brian Summerfield, whose wife Valerie was also sacked.

With 44 workers, the odds of two particular workers being sacked at random from in a set of 24 are 3.4 to 1, making it indeed statistically quite unlikely. The feeling amongst the dismissed is that the

mass sackings were in fact tactical, and that TBI (the parent company of ICTS) are driving much of the management's decisions.

At a time when the powers that be are keen to emphasise the role that airport security has to play in providing security for passengers and other ordinary citizens, it is particularly sickening to see the bosses show where their real interests lie. When safety takes a back seat to strikebreaking, everyone suffers. There has been a great grassroots response to their struggle, even if the union bureaucracy got off to the mother of all bad starts.

The workers are realistic about their chances. At the appeal ICTS training officer Alec Bradley claimed they were already training 29 new staff to take their place. Further to this is the problem that every industrial dispute like this throws up- management never admit that they were in the wrong. Nevertheless, they will not go quietly and the fightback in this wrongful dismissal dispute is only just beginning.

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You can get a copy of *Solidarity Bulletin* from ASF, PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ, N Ireland



## John McGuffin

**John McGuffin of Belfast and Derry (and other parts) was cremated on May Day, 2002 at Roselawn in Belfast around 3.00pm.**

John, or Seán as he was sometimes known, was a very independent anarchist who is perhaps most well known for providing the single anarchist element within the People's Democracy group of the sixties and carrying an anarchist banner (himself), on the Burntollet civil rights march. He was interned in 1971 and later wrote an excellent and valuable book on the history of internment in Ireland, as well as another book, 'The Guineapigs', about the selection and torture of a group of internees, which caused much embarrassment to the state.

John was from a Protestant background and was college educated. By his own admission he had never met a Catholic, until he was 18 years old, and he always regarded himself as a 'Lundy'. He had many contacts with libertarians from Germany over the years in particular but was never active in mainstream anarchism, as far as I know, here in Derry or in Ireland generally.

John was a cantankerous and grumpy character who had a serious dose of cynicism, but through his 'Dispatches', e-mailed to many people across the north, he kept up some form of political and anarchist-inspired activism. He will be missed by many, especially by his partner Christiana, and will always be remembered as an anarchist.

*Mairtin O'Cathain - ASF - Derry*

## Nice 2

We are currently setting up a libertarian campaign to argue for a No vote in the second Nice referendum this Autumn. We hope to arrange an initial meeting in mid to late August. If you'd like to attend this meeting or be informed of developments please contact us.

The form of the campaign has yet to be defined but we would hope its message would be broadly similar to that of the last anarchist campaign on Nice. Details of that campaign can be found at <http://struggle.ws/about/nice.html>

### Contact the WSM

Workers Solidarity Movement, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8  
or E-mail [wsm\\_ireland@yahoo.com](mailto:wsm_ireland@yahoo.com)  
Phone/SMS **087-7939931**  
On the web - <http://struggle.ws/wsm>



# Keeping the struggle going in Cork

**Sunday June 30 saw the latest protest at the Old Head of Kinsale. This is a long running campaign to reclaim the headland for public access. The exclusive golf course who now own the Old Head have gone to new depths to hinder the campaign. Large boards advertising the peoples picnic were placed at roundabouts in Cork city. A week after they suddenly disappeared overnight. However the culprit was spotted in his company van by an observant member of the public and supporter of the campaign. The eijit was tracked down and had to shamefacedly hand back the boards. On the Sunday the usual protest took place but with an added trek to the club house for a brief rally to inform the golfers just what was going on.**

The Cork Peace Alliance are good supporters of the Old Head campaign and have organised transport from the city to every picnic. The CPA is in existence for over a year and brings together oppositional campaigners of various hues in a non-hierarchical group which campaigns on numerous issues. Currently the group is working to highlight the Irish arms trade, on an anti-racism festival and of course the Old Head of Kinsale. The group has a solid record of work and mobilising people to national events; anti-war activities, Palestine justice marches, the Shannon Airport protest etc, as well as responding to short term issues like the visit of Henry Kissinger to Cork. CPA also organises public meetings, most recently one about Palestine which attracted over 100 people.

The strength of the group is in the diversity of talents and interests in the people it attracts, environmentalists, feminists, anarchists, trade union activists, people with no labels etc.. The

## Drogheda ain't paying

Non-payment of bin tax in Drogheda is scaring the Council. According to Louth County Manager, John Quinliven, less than 50% of residents have paid any of the yearly 260 Euro charge. He is claiming that the Council now faces bankruptcy and is threatening to end the rubbish collections "forthwith". As non-payment increases so does the likelihood that the council will be unable to privitise this vital service.

We have them on the ropes, keep the pressure on. And if they stop collecting our rubbish we can bring it down to the Town Hall and let Quinliven look after it!

key is the democratic and transparent way it functions. The group is constantly evolving in organisational methods and regularly engages in critical evaluation of tactics and structure. Sub groups work on various issue projects and a second layer work on finance, communications, media and agitprop. Imagination is given full flight leading to a vast array of ideas and innovation. The CPA meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the CAZ, first floor, 4 Knapps Square, Cork.

James McBarron

## Sectarianism deepens in North

The results of the 2001 Life and Times survey in the north of Ireland confirm that sectarian attitudes are spreading and deepening. In 1998 we warned that "the structures proposed in the [Good Friday] agreement actually institutionalise sectarian divisions. Politicians elected to the proposed Assembly must declare themselves either 'unionist' or 'nationalist' - those who refuse will not have their votes counted in measuring the cross community support necessary for passing legislation. We are supposed to line up behind Catholic/Green or Protestant/Orange banners and seek the best deal for 'our community'. The concept of working class interests is not even considered".

The survey confirms these fears. In 1999 some 12% of Protestants and 6% of Catholics wanted single religion workplaces. In 2001 these figures have doubled to 21% and 14%. In 1999 29% of Protestants and 21% of Catholics wanted their children to go to separate schools. Now this stands at 37% and 29%. Similar figures show an increase in support for segregated housing and a decrease (to 25% and 33%) of people who believe things are now better than they were in 1991!

There are some positive signs, 10% identified themselves as being of no religion and only 47% said they attended a religious service once a week or more. But overall the survey confirms that despite the benefits of the cease fire the 'peace process' itself is structured in a way that is deepening sectarian divisions further as working class communities are encouraged to view each other rather than the bosses as rivals for scarce resources.

Joe Black

See the full survey on the web at <http://www.ark.ac.uk/>



## Sellafield protest in August

The two ships which were sent to Japan to collect the MOX fuel shipped with falsified paperwork arrived late June. It is very likely the ships will travel up the Irish Sea around the end of August. This shipment represents a last ditch effort from BNFL to win Japanese custom for Sellafield which they hope would then lead to business from other countries. If they are successful this may lead to 80 of these shipments, each enough for at least 50 nuclear weapons, travelling through the Irish Sea over the next decade, plus increased discharges from Sellafield (even if there is no accident).

Amongst other events planned to greet these ships on their return will be a nuclear free flotilla ([www.nuclearfreeflotilla.org](http://www.nuclearfreeflotilla.org)) originating from several ports in Ireland and Britain. There will also be protests in Barrow-on-Furness, BNFLs home port and the eventual destination of the MOX ships. There are plans for a group of activists to travel from Ireland for these protests, if you are interested in taking part contact Barry O'Donovan at [fgod@hotmail.com](mailto:fgod@hotmail.com) or 087-2320437