

His Master's Voice

Government scapegoat of immigrant encourages racist thugs



In July of this year the government managed to convince 79% of the people who voted to pass a referendum which restricted the rights of some children born in this country to Irish citizenship. We helped campaign against the citizenship referendum on the grounds that to deny someone citizenship based on the fact that their parents were immigrants was racist and unjust. We also feared that that, if passed, the referendum would encourage racists and bring about a climate where they were likely to be more active.

Unfortunately that's turned out to be exactly what has happened. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) has been compiling statistics on racist incidents since May 2001 and they reported an increase in both the number and seriousness of incidents during and after the referendum campaign. Racist incidents reported to the NCCRI had previously been running at the rate of about 47 every six months. Four months into this year that figure had already been passed and the nature of the incidents has been getting worse.

People have been literally run out of their homes and the areas they settled in. A black couple in Dublin had their windows smashed and the woman of the house, who was alone at the time, had to flee over her back wall into her neighbour's house when the attackers broke into her home. The same thing happened to a Pakistani woman who was alone with her child. She fled her home but was followed by three men and verbally and physically abused. African shopkeepers in Cork have had racist threats daubed on their buildings and all around the republic the number of racist incidents is on the increase.

Meanwhile north of the border the incidents are even more serious, with some of the attacks being linked to elements within Loyalist paramilitary groups. People have suffered punishment beating style attacks while their homes have been burned out with petrol bombs. People who previously focused their hatred on members of a different religious group now have a new focus, people from different countries. Families and individuals from Portugal, India, Africa, China, the Philippines and Eastern Europe have all suffered. To add to the problem the fascist White Nationalist Party has started organising in the North.

Both North and South the hatred is re-

flected, and often driven by institutionalised State racism. It's no coincidence that racist incidents and attacks go up when the governments of both states attack the evils of supposed 'maternity tourists' and 'illegal immigrants'. Indeed in many of the incidents in the Republic attackers taunted their victims, telling them to 'pack their bags' and claiming that they'd be run out of the country after the referendum. So-called respectable politicians and media demonise and criminalise immigrants, they try to claim that immigrants are responsible for the terrible state of our health services and for housing shortages when the truth is that these problems are the result of government policy and morally bankrupt political parties.

We believe that racism must be confronted from a working class perspective. We urge working class communities to mobilise against racism and believe that the only long-term solution is for people in working class communities to come together, around common interests, and to fight alongside each other for better housing, facilities and the things that are needed by all of us. The bosses want us to be at each other's throats so that they can continue to exploit all of us. Let's not do their job for them.



Up Against the Wall

An Eyewitness Report from Palestine

Despite the condemnation of the International Court of Justice and human rights groups Israel is currently building a massive wall across Palestinian territory. In August the Palestinian International Solidarity Movement (the ISM) organised a three week long "Freedom March", from Jenin to Jerusalem, along the route of the wall in support of the ongoing campaign of civil disobedience and direct action against the wall. Dec McCarthy, a WSM member from Dublin, and two Grassroots activists from Galway travelled to the West Bank to take part in these protests.

It is impossible to visit Palestine without being overwhelmed by the generosity and warmth of the people there. Nonetheless, everything we did and heard was done in the shadow of the wall. Within hours of my arrival in East Jerusalem I found myself in front of what is now known as the "Apartheid Wall". It is an extraordinary structure made up vast, grey slabs of concrete that measure over 8 m in height. Elsewhere the dull, totalitarian monotony of the wall gives way to fences, razor wire, trenches, guntowers and military emplacements.

It was only after a few days walking along the route of the wall that the magnitude of the project became clear. When the 730 km wall is finished it will snake through towns, cities and villages and cut through agricultural land right across Palestine. Worse still the completion of the wall will result in a number of towns being completely encircled- creating Palestinian ghettos surrounded by barbed wire and concrete.

Every day we met with Palestinians in school halls, olive groves, orchards and people's homes and heard the human stories behind this massive project of social control. People complained of land confiscation, damage to agricultural equipment, the disruption and destruction of their livelihoods and the breaking up of extended family networks. A particular source of resentment and anger has been the uprooting of thousands of much cherished olive trees. For Palestinian farmers the olive tree is more than a source of income - it is a symbol of their relationship with their land and culture, as one villager in Qubeida put it "these trees are like our children". There can be no doubt after the testimonies that we heard that the wall has led to the further impoverishment and greater militarisation of the Occupied Territories. The Palestinians are also incensed that 16% of the population of the West Bank will end up on the Israeli side of the wall (1). Not surprisingly this has led many people to conclude that the primary function of the wall is to divide and control the Palestinian population rather than guarantee Israeli security.

Further controversy has arisen because the route of the wall has been clearly chosen to legitimise and make permanent the illegal settlements

that have mushroomed all over the Occupied Territories. An estimated 98% of the settlers on the West Bank will live on land annexed by the wall (2). The settlements, which resemble something you might expect to see in a Las Vegas suburb with large semi-detached houses sometimes with their own swimming pools, make for a bizarre sight in the middle of the rolling hills of Palestine. Many settlers are religious fundamentalists who think they have a god given right to harass and attack Palestinian villagers. We also learned from villagers that the settlements have their own private road system which Palestinians are forbidden to use and that in an often parched region settlers regularly siphon off water from neighbouring Palestinian villages. To add insult to injury in some of the villages we visited we saw effluent from the settlements being pumped out onto Palestinian land.



In most of the communities that we visited popular committees have been set up to fight the wall. These popular committees have attempted to halt construction solely through mass non-violent civil disobedience and we regularly witnessed ordinary villagers courage and determination in the face of overwhelming military might and intimidation. In one village we visited, Budrus, near Ramallah, where the resistance has been particularly strong there have been over 40 demonstrations over the past year. Often the men, women and children of Budrus have sat or stood unarmed in front of military bulldozers. Despite many injuries and arrests the bravery of the villagers forced a temporary halt to building work and "glorious Budrus" has become a beacon to other communities fighting the Apartheid Wall (3). Support for this grassroots resistance has come mainly from left wing NGOs, the ISM and perhaps most notably from Israeli anti-Zionist groups such as the Anarchists against the Wall. Interestingly, in the vast majority of communities that we visited the role of Israeli activists was warmly acknowledged and clearly valued.

In many of the places we stayed non-violent civil disobedience has been met with brutal and sometimes deadly force. In Beitunia a teenager was shot dead on a demonstration. And in Biddu, where three people had been shot dead and two others had died from the effects of tear gas, the

grief and anger was still palpable. The campaign against the wall has also resulted in an unprecedented event - the shooting of an Israeli citizen by the Israeli army during an attempt by anarchists to dismantle a fence along the route of the wall. Because of the deep-rooted racism of the Israeli military we, as Europeans, rarely received the sort of treatment that is doled out to Palestinians on a daily basis. Nonetheless, we did get a small glimpse of how peaceful protest is dealt with in the Occupied Territories. Over the three weeks of the march the Israeli military used sound bombs, arrests, beatings, tear gas and, after I left, live ammunition to intimidate protestors.

We also witnessed on several occasions how arbitrary detention is used to coerce and control Palestinians. There was a striking example of this following the march to Budrus. While we were meeting locals an Israeli snatch squad seized a 14-year-old boy who was sitting on steps close to the edge of the crowd. He was blindfolded, tied up and put in the back of a military vehicle. After a stand off he was released but nobody, including the boy, thought that this situation was abnormal. I learned in countless conversations that detention without trial, torture and arrest are a rite of passage for most Palestinian men. Hashim, a political activist from Budrus, has a tu[oca; story. A man in his early thirties Hashim explained in a quiet and uncomplaining way that he had been detained several times without trial and had been beaten in custody. Over the past fifteen years Hashim has spent over seven years in prison, a year and half of which was spent in solitary confinement (4).

For many of the people I met in Palestine history is a nightmare: a series of barely comprehensible catastrophes the latest of which is the Apartheid wall. In Beit Sira a small village north west of Jerusalem, a local man brought us up onto a roof and pointed out where, on the plain below, three villages were razed to the ground after the 1967 war. Then he pointed to a large settlement on a hill established as a military base in the 70's that became a settlement in the 80's and had grown ever since. Finally he pointed at the route of the wall at the edge of his village-the most recent encroachment on his land and freedom.

The wall along with the checkpoints, the roadblocks and the military incursions has become part of the vast and complex machinery of repression deployed against the Palestinians. Nonetheless, I left inspired by the courage and solidarity of the Palestinian people and convinced that their culture and history will not be wished out existence by the Zionists in the Knesset (5) or their backers in the Pentagon or that any wall can contain the desire for freedom.

by Dec McCarthy

Footnotes

- (1) This percentage is from PENGON a Palestinian NGO
- (2) This percentage is from PENGON
- (3) Work on the wall has restarted in Budrus and the resistance continues
- (4) Name has been changed
- (5) Israeli parliament

Slaving your life away just so you can make ends meet; having no say in the major decisions that affect your life; criminal politicians and businessmen plundering the country. Try to do something about it and they'll lock you up. Yes,



Politicians Enjoy Another Work-Free Day in the Pub

Cork City Council certainly knew how to mark European Car Free Day. Last year they did nothing at all. This year they have hired a coach to transport councillors a mere 200 metres from City Hall to attend a nearby function (or 'boozing session' to be more accurate).

Bare Breasts Can Seriously Damage Your Health

A law has been passed by the American congress, which was initiated after the Janet Jackson Super Bowl incident. It's called the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act, and it covers TV and radio other than cable or satellite. The fine/punishment for showing a bare breast or allowing bad language is a lot more severe - up to \$3,000,000 - than if an employer is found knowingly allowing workers to work in an environment where their lives are put at risk.

War Does Pay - For Some!

Haliburton, the company formerly headed by U.S. vice-president Dick Cheney increased its profits in 2003 from \$119m to \$1,003m - an increase of more than 800%. This massive increase is almost totally accounted for by its contracts to service the U.S. military in Afghanistan and Iraq. Pentagon figures suggest Haliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root has been paid about \$4.5 billion for support in Iraq and Afghanistan so far.

Source: Sunday Tribune 19th Sept. 2004

'Partnership' at work

Ireland (i.e. the 'Republic') is now the most profitable country in the world for U.S. corporations to do business in. Profits made here by U.S. companies doubled from 1999 to 2002 from \$13.4 billion to \$26.8 billion. According to U.S. Treasury figures, U.S. multinationals made \$2.01 profit in Ireland in 2001 for every \$1 they made in 1999. 'Social partnership' is obviously working for some.

Source: Irish Times 17th Sept. 2004

Are You or Have You Ever Been a Member of the Independent Workers Union...

Dublin Bus Drivers Suspended for Union Organising



Four Dublin Bus drivers were suspended without pay in late July. What did they do? Abuse passengers, steal cash, take their busses home? No, nothing like that. Their terrible crime was to hand out leaflets telling their fellow workers about the Independent Workers Union.

The first driver was suspended, in Phibsboro garage, when he was giving out IWU leaflets after he had finished his day's work. Two senior managers, Joe Kenny and Mick Matthews, arrived and ordered the driver to go to the local manager. As he was not allowed to have his IWU representative accompany him, he refused and was then ordered off Dublin Bus property. Three more IWU members were also subsequently suspended.

This is an attack on all bus workers. Management is deciding which unions will be allowed to talk to workers and which unions will not be allowed to organise. It doesn't matter whether we think the IWU is a good initiative or we think that workers should remain with SIPTU and the NBRU in order to change them from the inside. The issue here is about free speech and the right to join the union of your choice.

The Independent Workers Union was formed a couple of years ago, after a dispute inside the ATGWU. Left wing officials Mick O'Reilly and Eugene McGlone had been victimised for accepting the breakaway Irish Locomotive Drivers Association into the union. They were also seen as too responsive to their members and too supportive of workers who are prepared to take on their employers. Although Mick and Eugene were reinstated after a long campaign inside

the ATGWU, the Cork butchers and home helps had already decided to leave and set up a more militant union.

The IWU is a small organisation but one which worries the more conservative officials in many other unions. It is far more democratic, it is opposed to 'social partnership' deals, and it stands for traditional trade union principles. Whether it will grow significantly remains to be seen. What is certain is that a lot of workers are becoming dissatisfied with their unions' caution and moderation in the face of increasing management attacks on job security and working conditions, not to mention the small pay rises we are fobbed off with when the economy is booming.

And some union bureaucrats are afraid that if the IWU gets organised inside one of the bigger jobs, it might become a beacon for many of those who are unhappy with their own organisations. That's why neither the NBRU nor SIPTU have lifted a finger in defence of the suspended IWU drivers. It's as if they share a common agenda with management to control the workforce and pave the way for a smooth privatisation (despite union conference policies opposing privatisation of public transport!) Is it any surprise that some drivers want a new union?

by Joe King

Solidarity Messages can be sent to:

Dublin Bus Division,
Independent Workers Union,
61 North Strand Road, Dublin 3
<http://www.citybus.net>

The Business of Brutality

Weapons Conference in Dublin - Less Lethal, More Repressive

The Jane's "Less Lethal Weapons Conference" took place in the Berkeley Court Hotel, Ballsbridge on Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th of October.

Less lethal weapons can be defined as any weapon which is less likely to kill than normal military hardware, therefore normal guns and bombs are out while plastic bullets, electric shock batons and tear gas are in. Previously marketed as 'non-lethal' weapons they had to be rebranded once people started noticing the fatality rate.

Jane's is a publishing company which specializes in producing trade magazines and websites for the security and defence industries, basically advertising and information publications combined with yellow pages type directories for those who wish to be kept up to date on everything from the latest biological weapons to the newest advances in crowd control techniques.

The organizers didn't release the guest list, but from the list of speakers it's fairly clear that this conference was aimed at various police forces. M.C. for the conference was Colin Burrows, formerly of the RUC (who have killed 14 people in the North with 'less lethal' plastic bullets) and the line up also included members of police forces from Los Angeles, Germany and the infamous English West Midlands division. Also in attendance was a man named Tom Smith, the president of Taser International Inc, a company which manufactures weapons that deliver 50,000 volts of electricity and are designed to disrupt the victims nervous system, disabling muscle control and temporarily incapacitating the person. What Tom probably didn't mention was the numerous documented deaths caused by Tasers in the U.S.

However, the use of these kind of weapons is international. Amnesty International has reported the fact that in 2002 they were being imported into over eleven countries with wide spread documented records of torture and abuse of prisoners. In Brazil, for example, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture stated that: "Torture was reportedly practiced during



every phase of detention ...the most common forms of torture were electric shocks, beatings, and threats."

Interestingly, another conference speaker was our own Garda Assistant Commissioner Joe Egan. Stun guns were briefly available through a legal loophole in Ireland in the early 80's until the trade was shut down by the gardai. At the time, they rejected using the devices themselves claiming that they were unsafe but maybe now that they've seen the newer, deadlier model they've changed their mind?

This conference was about two things. Firstly making massive amounts of money for companies like Taser. In 2002 the U.S. alone granted export licenses for almost \$15 million worth of these types of weapons.

Secondly it was about the gradual attempt to militarise and criminalise public protest across the E.U. and U.S.

At the recent Republican National Convention in New York entirely peaceful protesters were brutalised with Tasers and electro-shock batons as well as the more traditional police club. In Ireland, while the gardai are still trying to forget the day they were caught battering people at a street party on Dame Street, Garda Representative Association spokesperson P.J. Stone recently claimed that gardai armed with guns and not just batons should face protesters at the Mayday actions. Since they managed to break people's bones using the traditional baton we'd hate to see what would have happened if they had used any of the weapons being marketed in Jury's.

We don't think that these devices have any place in our society which is why we called for Jury's to cancel this conference and why we took part in the protests called by the Dublin Grassroots Network outside the hotel.

by Padraig

EVENTS & CONTACTS

ANARCHIST GROUPS

Workers Solidarity Movement

Platformist Anarchist Organisation

Publishes this paper

PO box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland

www.struggle.ws/wsm.html

wsm_ireland@yahoo.com corkwsm@eircom.net

Organise! Working Class Resistance

Class Struggle Anarchist Organisation

Publishes "Working Class Resistance"

PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ

organiseireland@yahoo.ie

LIBERTARIAN NETWORKS

Networks and collectives with a libertarian ethos in which anarchists are involved

Grassroots Network

Non-hierarchical Direct-Action Network

Network of grassroots activists with groups in Dublin, Cork & Galway.

Organisers of Mayday anti-EU protests

www.geocities.com/eufortress

Indymedia Ireland

Irish Branch of Global Media Collective

Open Publishing web site where everyone has a voice. The place to find Irish campaign news.

www.indymedia.ie

Red Ink Infoshop

Anarchist / Radical Book & Zine Store

4 Upper Fownes

ACTIVIST

Activist groups fight

Alliance F

Campaign for women

www.struggle.ws/ireland/index

Residents Ag

Campaign against ra

Deported to be Mutilated?

Make Female Genital Mutilation Grounds for Asylum

The Irish government is currently trying to deport women and children under the threat of female genital mutilation (FGM), which frequently results in death. Asylum in Ireland can be sought on the grounds of religious or political persecution. However, the government refuse to acknowledge FGM as a political act and therefore women and children cannot apply for asylum on the basis that they have suffered or will suffer female genital mutilation if deported.

Unlike other European countries, Ireland does not have legislation to protect these women as FGM is not strictly prohibited under Irish law. This urgently needs to be addressed and Comhlamh and the well known Professor of Law Ivana Bacik presented draft legislation to the previous Minister of Health Michael Martin but this was not acted upon. The current Minister for Health Mary Harney seems to be taking the same stance on the proposed legislation as her predecessor.

In an increasingly multicultural Ireland FGM is being encountered by health professionals, anti-racism groups and women's groups from women who have suffered FGM and also from others who want to know where FGM is performed in Ireland.

The group Residents Against Racism (RAR) has, over the past few years, helped women and families who have fled to Ireland due to the threat of FGM and face deportation back to their country by the Irish state. Here are just some of the stories of the people facing deportation.

In 1999, Elizabeth Onasanwo left Nigeria with her children after watching her home being burnt down by tribal elders and family members when she refused to allow her daughters be circumcised. Elizabeth who witnessed her own sister die from FGM, did not want to

see her daughters meet the same fate. The Minister for "Justice" ordered the deportation of the Onasanwo family. Elizabeth could not handle the stress and suffered a nervous breakdown. Since then her eldest daughter Christina has reapplied for asylum on behalf of the family but they are still awaiting a decision on their case.

Juliet Imiruaye, a Nigerian midwife, fled from persecution six years ago. Juliet is a survivor of FGM and was working in her community to try to prevent the practice of FGM. Since her arrival Juliet has worked with Comhlamh, anti-racism groups, and other NGO's to highlight the practice of FGM in Nigeria. In Ireland she has also helped

raise awareness among Irish health professionals and Irish midwives who may not have dealt with FGM before. This is important as women and children are arriving in Ireland who have been mutilated and they may not wish to talk about their experiences and midwives may not be fully aware of the dangers that arise from FGM which can be life threatening. Juliet has recently received a deportation order courtesy of Michael McDowell. Because of Juliet's amazing work in Ireland she has a lot of support behind her and RAR has vowed to help fight the unjust decision.

Elizabeth Salako fled Nigeria four years ago with her children. Elizabeth feared for the safety of her children because Sharia law (based on strict Islamic principles) is in force in certain parts of Nigeria and would have subjected her daughter to early marriage and FGM. Since arriving the family have settled well into the community in Birr, Co. Offaly and despite having a large amount of local support Elizabeth still received a deportation order. Pressure from the local community and an intervention from a local TD resulted in the family being granted another three years to remain in Ireland on humanitarian grounds.

The government are treating women asylum seekers appallingly. Women flee from persecution for many reasons but one of the most serious is FGM. It is not only a women's issue - it is an issue of human rights. Only two women have ever been granted refugee status on grounds of FGM in Ireland and this is a disgrace. Residents Against Racism has started a campaign for women asylum seekers to gain refugee status on the grounds they have suffered or will suffer FGM if deported. We hope to work with other groups and organisations to raise awareness and want people to get involved and support the campaign.

by Emma

What is FGM?

Female Genital Mutilation is the removal or part removal of the clitoris. In Nigeria, where most asylum cases of FGM in Ireland are from, there are three main types performed. They are:

Clitordectomy (also known as sunna) where the clitoral hood with part or all the clitoris is removed.

Excision (the most common practice) where both the clitoris and part or all the labia minora are removed.

Infibulation (the most severe form of FGM but the least common) is where the clitoris and parts or all the labia minora are removed and incisions are made on the labia majora creating a raw surface. These surfaces are sewn or pinned together leaving only a tiny pinhole opening to let out urine and menstrual blood.



What are the Dangers of FGM?

The horrendous conditions of FGM often result in death; the operation in the majority of cases is performed by an untrained midwife in the most appallingly unhygienic circumstances. Blunt and unsterile objects such as razor blades, broken glass and sharp stones are used which can lead to infection and HIV/AIDS. The age of women subjected to FGM varies from a few days old up till marriage or childbirth.

Why is FGM practiced?

It is believed FGM is a rite of passage into adulthood, often in the child's community a ceremony will take place to celebrate her transition into womanhood. It is believed that FGM will promote chastity and help maintain her virginity before marriage and prevent her from becoming sexually active.

For More Information on FGM

Contact Residents Against Racism (RAR) at rar_fgmcampaign@yahoo.com

St. Temple Bar

Meets on Thursdays at 8pm in the Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square in Dublin
www.struggle.ws/rar.html

GROUPS

ing for social justice

or Choice

's freedom to choose
nd/allianceforchoice/
.html

ainst Racism

cism & deportations

EVENTS

Dublin WSM Public Meeting

The Chilean economy, neo-liberalism, imperialism and the poor - with Orlando Caputo, Chilean Economist
8pm Tuesday October 23rd, Contact WSM
Dublin for venue details

LadyFest Dublin

Non-profit, DIY feminist festival
The Hub, Temple Bar, 12-14 Nov 04.
Events include bands, workshops, films.
www.ladyfestdublin.org

Indymedia Videoactive Festival

Documentaries From The Edge - a festival of modern, independent political films.
Samuel Beckett Centre Trinity College Dublin:
12th - 14th November

EMAIL/WEB

irishanarchism@yahoo.com
Big, high-volume anarchist discussion list

ainriail@struggle.ws
Low-volume newsletter from the WSM

www.anarchism.ws/ireland.html
Index of Irish anarchist Internet resources.

Join a Union, Why Bother ?

by Gregor Kerr (Irish National Teachers Organisation Member)

Thinking about Anarchism



Before a single Luas tram trundled through the streets of Dublin, Ireland's largest trade union, SIPTU, concluded an agreement with the operating company, Connex, to represent the workforce. Unfortunately the agreement included a no-strike, indeed no-industrial action, clause. So workers at the company have effectively been told that their most valuable weapon when it comes to defending their rights and conditions has been given away. It seems that 17 years of 'social partnership' agreements have come to their logical conclusion and that the so-called 'leaders' of our trade union movement have effectively become 'social policemen' who see their role as being that of delivering a compliant and uncomplaining workforce to keep the wheels of industry turning.

When issues arise such as the latest round of redundancies in Aer Lingus (as the management prepare for privatisation), we hear the union leadership huffing and puffing, demanding meetings with management not to defend workers' jobs by resisting redundancies but to discuss the terms of the redundancy package. The idea of outrightly opposing the selling of jobs, and ultimately the selling of the airline, seems alien to the thinking at the top of SIPTU and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Given this situation, it is not surprising that many people no longer see the relevance of joining a trade union, and that a lot of workers see those 'leading' the trade union movement as part of the problem rather than the solution. When ordinary workers look at the salaries and perks enjoyed by the top union brass, they quite rightly see that in terms of income and lifestyle union leaders have more in common with the bosses with whom

they negotiate than they do with the members they are supposed to represent.

BUT what we must remember is that trade unions are OUR organisations. They do not belong to the 'leaders' but to the rank-and-file members. Joining a trade union, and encouraging your fellow workers to do so, strengthens your position in terms of looking for a wage increase, ensuring health and safety regulations are implemented, getting your proper entitlements (holidays, sick



pay ...) etc. Joining a union also delivers a very clear message to your boss that you and your co-workers see that you have common interests, and that he/she cannot pick on you individually. The old slogan that there is strength in numbers still holds true.

Despite the overpaid bureaucrats, despite 'social partnership' agreements, despite cosy deals, a union's strength still lies in its grassroots membership. If a group of workers in a particular employment are willing to stand together on an issue of

workplace safety, working conditions, wage levels or whatever they still have a very powerful weapon at their disposal - the ability to stop production, to refuse to co-operate with new work practices, to tell the boss that without the workforce there won't be any profit!! Sometimes to use that strength, it will be necessary to either take on or bypass the bureaucracy but remembering where the strength lies - initially with one's co-workers, and more broadly with other rank-and-file trade unionists, this too can be done.

None of this is to minimise the difficulties involved in joining a union - especially given that many companies and employers are viciously anti-union. In such employments, it may initially be difficult to organise openly. It may even be necessary for workers who join a union to do so as secret or 'sleeper' members for a period of time until at least a significant minority of workers have joined. Sometimes, the formation of a loose or informal network of workmates might be the precursor to joining an actual union.

Ultimately joining a union is our way of demonstrating that we have different interests from our bosses and common interests with our fellow workers. And while the current structures and bureaucracy are rotten and need radical reform, we must remember that the trade unions are our organisations, that we have every right as workers to organise in unions of our choice, and that Unity is Strength - and it is from fellow workers and fellow trade unionists that that strength can come.

See the WSM Trade Union position paper at www.struggle.ws/wsm/positions/tradeunions.html

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Affiliated to International Libertarian Solidarity (ILS/SIL) [http://](http://www.ils-sil.org)

www.ils-sil.org

This paper is produced by the Workers Solidarity Movement an anarchist organisation which fights for an end of the division of society into classes, into a small minority of rulers who control all the resources and wealth and the rest of us. 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 affect them.

In September the WSM celebrated its 20th birthday. Over the 20 years since its formation, WSM members have been involved in a

many different struggles, for example: fighting for better working conditions in our workplaces and within the Trade Union movement; in our local communities in such campaigns the anti-water tax and the anti-bin tax campaigns; against fees and privatisation as part of the students movement in universities. We've fought for progressive changes in Ireland such as the introduction of divorce and continue to fight for women's right to control their own bodies and have access to free abortion on demand in Ireland. As part of the anti-war campaign we took part in protests including those against military refuelling at Shannon airport. We are also involved in ongoing anti-racism work and recently held an anti-racism conference to discuss how best to combat racism in Ireland today.

The way we want to see society organised in the future is reflected in how we organise today: WSM is organised in a non-hierarchical fashion, with no leadership who make all the decisions but instead with every member having equal say in decision-making. We are always eager for more people to get involved. If you'd like to join or find out more about us, contact us (our contact details are above) or come to one of the events advertised on the middle pages.



Justice in a Corrupt Society

In the world we live in today, words like equality, freedom and democracy are used so frequently and in many differing and often contradicting ways, that the words themselves have been almost entirely stripped of meaning and resonance. Justice is another example of a concept that has been bastardised by the successive governments of this land, as a way to create the illusion that we live in a healthy and 'normal' democracy. However it has long been the case that the population of this fair isle is well aware that there is one rule for some and another rule for the rest of us.

People intuitively feel that we live in a divided society of haves and have-nots. It has been the government of the miss, and reject out any notion that structured in such a way that exploits the great of the population for the benefit of the ruling class and their business criminal friends.

We live in such times today. The structures of power and coercion over the population are indeed so strong that the 'leaders' of this contorted democracy can, with staggering arrogance, feel confident enough to do away with even pretending that we live in a society based upon fundamental concepts such as justice and equality. Michael Mc Dowell, taking time out from reading congratulatory letters from the KKK on his racist immigration 'policies', states openly that "...inequality is needed for modern society to fuction." He was and still is minister for Equality, Justice and Law Reform. When fellow PD Mary Harney was asked to explain how someone responsible for equality and justice could even suggest such a notion she said "The concept he tried to explain could have been explained using different language...we don't live in a society where everyone is the same...its like a football team, some people are Premier Division, and some aren't so good, unfortunately." You can only wonder what this now means for the Dept. of Health!! Democracy, it seems, is something we help the American and British governments kill Afghans and Iraqis for, not something we need to apply to our own country.

So what about justice in this country? Justice is often thought of in terms of crime and punishment. Miscarriages of justice are notoriously common around politically motivated court proceedings, or as more recently seen in Donegal, 'bent coppers' but they are not in any way restricted to these types of cases. In fact the idea of singular miscarriages

of justice in some ways completely misses the point.

Ireland, like so many of industrialised 'democracies' employs a system of justice that deliberately targets members of the working class. Basically this is a tactic of ignoring the long established link between inequality, poverty and crime and managing the results. Long term unemployment, poor housing, and alienation from any meaningful decision-making process which could improve communities combine to create an environment in decay.

It sets up the conditions for communal decay and contributes massively to what is called 'anti-social behaviour'. This is not an attempt to rationalise away or ignore the very real impact that petty crime has, both to individuals and to society as a whole, but to argue that justice can only be achieved by tackling the causes of social decline and also by treating everyone equally when judging their actions and resulting impact.

Why is it that there is no expensive tribunals set up to 'establish the truth' about joyriding in Dardale. How come there isn't a ten year toothless talking shop funded by me and you to discover what really causes inner city decay and crime. The reason so often given for Flood, Moriarty et al is that if these cases were heard before a court, the truth would never be known. So, if the courts system cannot function in such a way to see justice served to the country's biggest business criminals, because it is unlikely to get to the truth about the institutionalised theft of our land and money, why should the rest of us have to put up with it?.

Why also has the Criminal Assets Bureau limited its investigation to particular types of criminals? One explanation that is proffered is that only violent criminals need to be investigated. Again it is the state who defines violent. I wonder if those waiting on hospital trolleys, unpaid care assistants, under funded overworked public servants, those slaving under job insecurity, or asylum seekers 'surviving' on 19 euros a week would have a different interpretation of violence, knowing that this government will do all in their power to hide the hundreds of millions of euros, generated by us, that have lined the off shore accounts of their business criminal friends.

Justice, like so much, will only be served when we stand up to demand it!!

by Mark Malone

Internet Review urban75.com



The website *urban75* has been around for years as an online focus for Brixton residents. In 2002 *urban75* hit the headlines. A regular poster called 'ColintheCop' had riled up its users with homophobic comments and his claim that "the people of Brixton deserve to be treated with contempt". In response Brian Paddick (commander in chief of Brixton's police force) came onto the site and ended up debating cannabis policies, political philosophies and methods to improve community relations.

Of course the tabloids got whiff of it. The Sun's frontpage headline screamed "*The Odd Bill: I back ANARCHY*" and eventually exposed that Paddick was gay and smoked dope with a past lover. He got the chop. Since then *urban75* has flourished as a site of controversy. It Provides reasonable advice on drugs, enlightening discussions on politics, on-the-ground accounts from the UK left and photo archives from music festivals and protests stretching back to the early nineties.

There's also a host of games to piss away hours online at work. Downing Street Fighter rips off Street Fighter pitting individuals from the Conservatives and New Labor against each other in combat. Punch a Celeb lets you hammer the crap out of the obnoxious gits gracing the tabloids. *Urban75* is a great example of how the net has facilitated the creation of new communities of interest and culture. Check it out.

Free Education

...Continued from Back Cover

It is without doubt that the education system is set up to serve the existing social order, all one has to do is walk on to a university campus to see how much the university curriculum is designed to maintain a knowledge based economy or the free market. Public schooling offers a way out for many working class youths but to use the school to solve problems of poverty is to seek a conservative solution without directly changing the social structure that creates poverty in the first place.

The school indoctrinates its students with the dominant ideology of the time. This, however, creates a dilemma for libertarian educationalists as to whether the child should be indoctrinated with revolutionary beliefs. How does one avoid placing their beliefs into a child? Despite this, a true education system is one that encourages people's full participation in the world, a social awareness and an eagerness to act.



Bleeding Education Dry

OECD Report Advocates Increased Fees, More Inequality

Something is seriously amiss in education. Inequality of access is rampant and it doesn't take a genius to figure out that the latest Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report and bouts of rhetoric from the government are going to do little to solve it. Beaten back two years ago, the government is once again trying to introduce fees, this time dumping the idea onto the OECD. Meanwhile, back home it uses its own shoddy track record in tackling educational inequality as a justification.

It comes as no shock that out of 26 countries the OECD surveyed Ireland is the fourth richest, yet comes second last in funding education. In 1999 3.2 per cent of students left the formal education system before even taking the Junior Cert. A 1998 literacy survey found that 1 in 10 children still leave primary school with significant reading problems caused by a lack of resources. Most research proves there is a direct correlation between the social background of a kid and their access to education at any given level.

The OECD identifies a funding crisis in education, something anyone working in education could have told you. This year saw a series of heavy cuts imposed in order to force University heads into accepting fees. Yet despite a funding crisis that led to library cuts last year, the President of UCD Hugh Brady still managed to find €1.6m for house renovations paid for by the college.

As in UCD, this is an issue of priorities. Nothing is making this clearer than the state's plans for third level. Reneging on its social duty to fund education, it intends to let private companies fill the gap endangering academic freedom and educational quality in the process. John Dawkins

is the main driving force behind the latest OECD report, a former Australian education minister who oversaw similar changes in Australian education in the 1980's. One of the consequences of this was a 38% fall in the numbers of working class men entering third level education and a drop of 17,000 mature students enrolling annually. Fear of accumulating debt was the reason given by 61% of prospective students from low-income backgrounds for their decision not to go to third level. A fact much ignored by Irish media commentators who laud this Australian 'loan model', while buying all the bullshit about inclusion the Education minister has to sell.



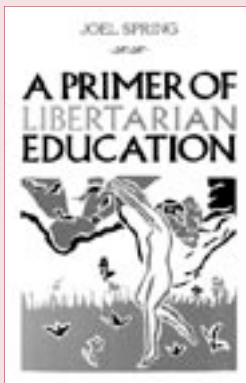
Imposing more fees at the college door will only compound the problems of high rents, increased work pressures, miserable incomes and crap grants that drive most people away from third level. And God knows what it will do to tackle underfunding in primary and secondary schools. One thing is for certain, until we stand up and begin to promote a vision of education as a social right for all rather than something reserved for those that can pay and for business interests to exploit, we can expect the inequality to continue. Decisions like Brady's gaff will also continue, until those involved in education control the decisions affecting them. Opposition so far has been meek, its time to crank it up into a movement that can issue more than just press releases, reports and declarations. Instead we need actions and occupations across the campuses involving workers on shit contracts, researchers whose work has no value to business and students subsisting below even the essentials.

by James R.

Free Education!

Aidan Regan Reviews *A Primer of Libertarian Education* by Joel Spring. Black Rose Books, 1998, \$10 from WSM Books, p.o. box 1528, Dublin 8

The overall aim of the primer is to introduce ideas from different libertarian thinkers that are concerned with producing a radical theory and practice of teaching that will encourage non-authoritarian and revolutionary character structures in both the individual and society.



The earlier chapters concentrate on the works of William Godwin, Max Stirner, Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Illich and Francesco Ferrer. The common bond between these early thinkers is their radical critique of schooling. Each believed that the school is nothing more than an agent of the state and the school's role was to produce loyal and obedient citizens who will accept the authority of the ruling political and economic elite. The school alienates the learner from what is being taught, the school becomes the socialisation process of the individual rather than the community. Essentially the government wanted schools to produce loyal citizens and industry needed obedient and trained workers.

Spring then introduces some modern think-

ers on the issue of schooling, child rearing and the family such as Paulo Freire and Wilhelm Reich. Freire is a Brazilian educationalist that is internationally renowned for his alternative education methods. He argued that the current education system is based on a form of banking. That is, the student is but an object which the school deposits uncritical information. A good student is therefore classified as to how well and how easily they receive this deposit. They are rewarded by their level of obedience. Freire argued for an education system based upon praxis, that is the organic intermingling of theory and action directed at social structures to be reformed. The most important step for a self-governing society is the removal of authority from the character structures of its individuals. Reich argued that for this to occur the patriarchal family and compulsory marriage must be removed.

A radical pedagogy is central to a radical social movement. Strategies must be developed to confront the political realities of the existing educational establishment.

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