

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

Irish  *narchist Paper*



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www.struggle.ws/wsm.html



~~NO~~ law for the rich

The last months in Dublin have seen the jailing of ordinary working class people for protesting against the bin tax. A tax whose introduction was not only opposed by most people but which tens of thousands are refusing to pay.

In the spring of this year more than five people were held in jail for periods because they had protested against the US military using Shannon airport to refuel en route to the Iraq war. Opinion polls at the time showed the vast majority of people opposed this war and this refuelling.

Charles Haughey, Ray Burke and Michael Lowry never saw the inside of a prison cell. These were all politicians who specialised in taking cash from their rich friends, salting millions away at the expense of the working class. On the other hand, Liam Lawlor eventually saw the inside of Mountjoy but only after months of defying the High Court, and then one week at a time.. Unlike the bin tax

protesters he was allowed to bring his mobile phone and his laptop with him,

In 1989 Dermot Desmond signed a letter from NCB to Pernod Ricard justifying the two million fees he was charging them because *"We orchestrated entirely the successful campaign to get a positive tax opinion from the Revenue Commissioners which involved using personal contacts at the highest level, including the Minister for Finance and the Secretaries of the Department of the Taoiseach and Department of Industry and Commerce"*.

A more farcical example was revealed at the Mahon tribunal the very week the High Court was busy jailing bin tax protesters. Liam Lawlor was given 40 grand by a builder to get the postal area of a new development changed from Clondalken to Lucan. Then to rub the point home it was revealed that Judge Mahon himself had forgotten to declare some of his earnings to the revenue.

Except for Lawlor nobody spent a day in jail as a result of any

of the above. Nor have Fianna Fail TD's GV Wright or Michael Collins. A few years back John Lonergan, the governor of Dublin's Mountjoy prison, admitted that 50% of the prison population come from a few deprived areas of Dublin. He didn't reveal how many were millionaires, but 0 would be a safe bet.

This is not so much a case of one law for the rich - one law for the poor, it's more a case of some laws only being applied to the poor. The corrupt politicians, Judges and their friends in big business ride roughshod over the law and fleece the country for millions and get away with it. The law exists primarily to protect the interests of the rich, so only the poor can be punished for breaking the laws if they have the temerity to stand up against injustice.

It's hard to draw any other conclusion but that the entire legal system from Gardai to High Court exists to protect the interests of the rich by keeping ordinary workers and the poor down. Stand in front of a bin truck and they may well jail you. Pocket millions, some of which would have otherwise gone to health or education, and they will ask you over for dinner.

Even the Olives are Bleeding: Palestine and the ISM

The second intifada began in September 2000 and since then over 2,500* Palestinians have been killed and 41,000 have been wounded. These stark figures alone do not tell the full story of the subjugation and the brutal oppression of the people of Palestine. The Israeli occupation forces have engaged in the systematic destruction of the infrastructure of the Occupied Territories. They regularly carry out punitive raids using explosives and bulldozers that result in residential areas being reduced to a lunar landscape of rubble.

Then there are the daily indignities and humiliations at the checkpoints and road-blocks that are used to enforce curfews and restrict people's movement. Arrests without due process and beatings in custody are commonplace. Since September of 2000 an estimated 28,000 Palestinians have been detained. Over 5,000 of these detainees remain imprisoned and 1,600 of these prisoners have not had a trial. These measures have wrought havoc on the Palestinian economy and almost three quarters of the population have to subsist on less than \$2 a day

Palestine also has the misfortune to be in an area of strategic interest to the US state. As we know the wretched of the earth come a poor second to the success of North America's grand geopolitical plans. The US State Department does not care how high the corpses pile up as long as the great game is played to their advantage. So the US continues to foist unworkable and unjust "Peace Plans" on the Palestinians while pouring military and financial aid into Israel.

Given all this, there would seem to be little reason to hope that international solidarity could interfere with the complex and massive machinery of domination developed and maintained by Israel and the world's sole remaining superpower. Nonetheless, the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), a Palestinian led movement made up of Palestinians and international volunteers, is attempting to do just that.

At the start of the current intifada Palestinians called for independent international observers. This proposal was vetoed by the US and international volunteers began to fulfil the role of international observers instead. It was found that the presence of foreign nationals often kept the worst excesses of the IDF in check. These volunteers also began to document and disseminate information internationally about the situation in

Palestine. Following this the ISM was founded and they organised their first campaign in August 2001.

Since then ISM volunteers have continued doing this sort of solidarity work in a series of themed campaigns. The most recent of these focussed on the free movement of people and the current campaign is centred on protecting farmers harvesting their olives, who have experienced harassment and intimidation in the past. The ISM is also trying to publicise the construction by Israel of the "apartheid wall", an 8 metre high wall in the Occupied Territories that will strengthen Israeli military control over the territories



and will be used to defend the illegal settlements that are mushrooming on Palestinian land.

The ISM has had a good deal of success in helping out in some of the day to day situations faced by ordinary Palestinians. More spectacularly, but perhaps less importantly, volunteers managed to break the respective sieges around Arafat's compound in Ramallah and around the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. In response the IDF has used lethal force to intimidate the ISM. Volunteers have been shot at and in two cases they have sustained serious head injuries. In March the IDF purposefully ran over and killed an activist with a military bulldozer. Paradoxically, these events have led to

an increase in the number of volunteers travelling to Palestine. Similarly, the efforts to turn away activists at the Israeli border have backfired as 20,000 tourists have been deported along with the 1,000 or so correctly identified ISMs.

The ISM's political demands are limited to calling for the implementation of the relevant UN resolutions and the proper observance of international law in Palestine.

The organisation is committed to the tactic of non-violent direct action. Although the ISM does recognise the right of Palestinians to resist the occupation through armed struggle ISM volunteers are forbidden from taking part in any violent action - even stone throwing. To this end every volunteer undergoes a short period of training in non-violent direct action and working and decision making within an affinity group.

The work and the politics of the ISM are clearly not anarchist and the region has no tradition of libertarian politics. Anarchists are critical of nationalist politics and of the corrupt political elite that rule the Palestinian Authority and would regard international law as an unsound basis for any political programme. However, given the dire nature of the conflict, the work of the ISM is important and necessary. It is worth noting that the tactic of non-violent direct action has been used by libertarians in Ireland during the recent anti-war and anti-bin tax campaigns and at the protests at Sellafield and the Falsane nuclear base. The logic behind this approach is to devise tactics and events in which a broad cross-section of people will participate. The evidence from Palestine is that a broad campaign using non-violent direct action can be useful, in a small and limited way, even in the face of severe repression.

Dec McCarthy

More about the ISM

Several people from Ireland have already served as volunteers with the ISM. You can find out more about the ISM at <http://www.palsolidarity.org/>

*the death toll since 2001 has been 2537 Palestinians and 743+ Israelis killed.

Thinking about Anarchism

Movement

Unequal power, unequal pay

During the year a spate of reports have 'discovered' what a lot of workers already know - that equal pay for equal work just doesn't exist. Although legal victories and a raft of employment equality legislation have made some dents, the fact remains that discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity and age (to name just a few) persists and is widespread. It seems obvious to ask: why?

To attempt to answer this question, anarchists argue that we have to look at an aspect of life that is often ignored - how the workplace and the office are organised. Take any workplace - small or large, corporate or local sweatshop - and what you will find, first and foremost, is a hierarchy. At the top is the manager or boss, and beneath him (mostly him) are layers of management; then supervisors. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the full-time workers, then contract workers... and so on.

What distinguishes the different layers within the hierarchy? Well one thing is the job they do, of course. But a second fundamental difference is the power they have. At the top is the boss with most power - the power to hire and fire, to set wages and hours and conditions. At the bottom is the contract worker - often with the worst wages and hours, the least benefits and the least security of income. In between are a layer of other managers and supervisors, with different duties but also with different levels of power.

Anarchists call this form of organisation a power-hierarchy. In capitalism, workplaces are organised like this because in reality there is no other way to get things done. Most people, given a choice, would not work for an employer. Employers are people we have to work for because if we don't we will end up poor (and in many countries, very poor) if we don't. A good example of what's at stake is found in the difference we often notice in ourselves when we are doing work at home 'for ourselves' compared to when we are doing work at the job for the boss. Working 'for your self', as we all know, is a lot more pleasant and productive. Bosses know this too, which is why they need active methods to force us to work harder.

Under capitalism the workplace is organised around a huge imbalance in power. The boss and the top managers have most control; the rest of us toe the line. There are many consequences for organising economic life in this way. One of the most significant is the key issue mentioned above - persistent inequality. To survive in a competitive environment a boss must fundamentally encourage discrimination. Promoting division and competition makes the existing hierarchy dynamic - there is a constant threat of falling lower in the pecking order, as well a

chance of going upwards too.

For the boss the overall reward is increased productivity. A second, crucially important consequence is that the generalised division that is caused within the workforce which acts as a buffer for the boss's rule.

It is not surprising that the power-hierarchy that exists in presence day workplaces makes use of human differences such as gender, ethnicity and age to divide us. A system of economic organisation - capitalism - that is fundamentally about greed and theft through profit must rely on unfair and inhuman means to survive. Women, for example, traditionally suffer lower pay and longer work hours in the workplace; they also do less well in their efforts to climb up the power-hierarchy. But this 'lower reward for effort' that many women suffer has nothing to do with women being women. It has everything to do with increasing employee productivity through the promotion of division and competition.



Although modern 'equality legislation' has outlawed overt discrimination in a lot of countries, the general format of discrimination continues unabated in covert

form. This (and the persistence of inequality in pay) shouldn't surprise us. In reality no matter how much legislation is enacted, such statutes will never challenge the fundamental right of a boss or corporation to create and actively maintain a power-hierarchy. To challenge this right we need a revolution.

Kevin Doyle

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One in eight people in prison in the 26 counties left school at age 12 or younger. Less than 17% stayed in school until age 17 or older. According to the Prison Adult Literacy Survey released in September, 52% of prisoners are functionally illiterate. Yet the government prefers the option of jailings rather than putting the necessary resources into the schools - which would doubtlessly reduce the incidence of petty and anti-social crime.

While Hewlett-Packard made 27,000 workers redundant across the world, it rewarded its chief executive, Carla Fiorina, with a 231% pay rise. AOL Time-Warner recently laid off 4,380 workers but found enough cash to give its chief executive, Gerald Levin, a staggering 1,612% rise.

Napalm is a mixture of kerosene and polystyrene which sticks to human flesh as it burns. In 1980 Ireland signed a United Nations convention outlawing its manufacture, supply and use. Mark 77 firebombs made of 63 gallons of jet fuel (kerosene) and 22 pounds of polymer gel (upgraded polystyrene) are still being manufactured despite the UN ban. More than 200 US military cargo flights and 400 others on charter carried these munitions though Shannon this year. As with telling the truth and keeping promises, international law does not seem to apply to governments.

Red & Black Revolution 7 is out



If you want to create socialism, it must be based on freedom.

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Chile: 30 years of 9-11 protests

A WSM member was in Chile for this years anniversary demonstrations marking Pinochet's September 11th coup and the terror that followed. She sent a report, extracts of which are below. The full version is on our web site.

September in Chile is the month of protests. It is the month where in protests and angry demonstrations throughout the country Chileans commemorate September 11th 1973, the day of Pinochet's bloody (US facilitated) coup. Throughout Pinochet's reign of terror September the 11th was marked by protests which were systematically and viciously repressed by the police. Although in 1990 Pinochet was forced to leave, the tradition of the September 11th protests has continued every year. This is because, despite the dictator's departure, little has in fact changed fundamentally in Chile.

Pinochet's constitution remains intact and Chile remains an impoverished, third-world country.

This year marked thirty years since the coup and so there was a bigger build up than usual to September the 11th, with various concerts and activities organised for the 11th and the week leading up to it. As the day of the 11th approached, student protests broke out in almost all of the Chilean universities, forcing the authorities to shut down the universities for the week.

In the days before the 11th the government declared that there would be 36,000 police on duty on the 11th, 15,000 for Santiago alone. Chilean police are infamous in Latin America for their brutality, their liberal use of live ammunition and their harshly repressive tactics. They receive a military training and are actually officially part of the army, although they are answerable to the minister for defence and the minister for the interior.

On the day of the 11th all around the city centre at every street corner, were groups of heavily armed police. At around 6 pm over 15,000 people gathered in a huge demonstration in the city centre. As happens every year, buses to the suburbs, which usually run until around 12, all stopped on the 11th at around 7:30pm. This is due to the fact that in all but the wealthy neighbourhoods of this city of over 5 million, there are street protests which start at around 8pm. In these neighbourhood protests people barricade the streets by building huge bonfires



and then proceed to battle with the cops. Every year (except 1997) in these protests people are killed by the police. Last year, 3 protesters were killed in Santiago.

In our neighbourhood the shops closed early and by 8 pm all the streets were deserted with no cars at all on the usually busy suburban intersections.

Santiago's streets are long and straight and so when you stood at a crossroads you could see many different bonfires on the streets stretching out in every direction. The police had gathered at a nearby intersection and while they awaited instruction they

used slingshots to fire at anyone they saw passing.

At some point around 9:30 or so, the electricity was cut. This was the sign that something was going to happen. People throw chains at the electricity wires to short-circuit them. Often you could see a flash of light in some distant area of Santiago, followed by sudden darkness in that area and you knew the protests were about to begin there too. People do this to make it harder for the police to spot them on the street. What happened next could basically be described as an uneven battle of the local youth with stones and insults on one side against the police on the other who responded with tear gas and live ammunition.

D.H.

This article continues at <http://struggle.ws/wsm/ws/2003>

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 visit

<http://struggle.ws/mailman/listinfo/ainriail>

Our web page www.struggle.ws/wsm includes a huge archive of articles about the history of anarchism and Irish struggles.

Debate on Iraq war

In Workers Solidarity, No 76 August 2003, we published an article under the title "Iraq war aftermath: slaughtering democracy" by Chekov Feeney. We received a reply to this from R. Knife, an (Iraqi) Kurd living in Ireland.

Unfortunately it is too long to print here but you can read the full text on our web site at www.struggle.ws/wsm/ws/2003. Below we print a summary of the main points made and a summary of the response from Chekov

R. Knife

- What is going on in Iraq is not resistance but the remnants of the former regime trying to ruin the chances of an improvement in the lives of ordinary people.

- Although the Iraqi regime was not a threat to the US or UK, it was a threat to 22 million Iraqis. This is a valid reason for the war to remove Saddam, who was supported by Germany and France and the former USSR.

- Removing Saddam was akin to removing the Nazis and there are many parallels between Arab nationalism and Nazism.

- Turkey's refusal to take part was an imperialist manoeuvre rather than a sign of democracy.

- This response completely misses the point of the article, which was specifically about the US regime's use of the term democracy to justify their war and what this democracy meant in practice, not about Saddam's dictatorship or anything else.

- I fully agree with the correspondent's view of the Iraqi and Turkish regimes, and nothing that I wrote contradicted that.

- The assertion about the nature of the people involved in armed actions against the occupation is an example of seeing the world through ideological blinkers, which



the respondent accuses me of. There is simply no evidence to back this up. The assertion that the US did not support Saddam's regime runs against all the evidence.

- Most importantly, if we are to say that an act of war is justified on the grounds of a brutal regime, we have to be certain that the war will make things better for the victims of the regime. The history of US invasions does not give one any confidence on this point and this is borne out by the current situation in Iraq.

The Social Forums: Abandon or Contaminate?

The 'anti-globalisation' movement has sometimes been characterised as 'One No, many Yesses', meaning that while everyone disagrees with the way things are now they all have different ideas on what they would like to see replace the present state of affairs as well as on the tactics needed to get there.

The World Social Forum, and the spread of social forums around the world, in some respects is a reaction to this. One of the ideas of this concept is to allow a space for dialogue for the different actors (trades unions, Non Government Organisation's, social movements etc) to try to hammer out some common ideas on how to reach the future society. However, the process has not been unproblematic and has led to controversies and to accusations that the structure and functioning of these bodies are undemocratic and unrepresentative of 'the new movement'.

The WSF was initiated by a coalition of Brazilian civil society groups with much of the organisation undertaken by the Workers Party (PT) that controls Porto Alegre and the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The WSF, and its offspring, the European Social Forum present themselves as venues where all the different tendencies can be represented but in reality the agenda being followed is that of the founders and controllers and more radical elements are consistently being sidelined and obstructed. As one activist Jason Adams wrote, in Porto Alegre the PT "jealously controlled the organizing committee of the WSF" with the result that one person remarked "we thought the WSF was going to be an open event, but then when we attempted to get involved and take part it was made clear to us that we would be given no decision making power at all...we were excluded from the actual planning and execution of the event". At the World Social Forum of 2001, anarchists and ecologists affiliated with People's Global Action protested against this exclusion and in 2002 their protests led to the Workers Party calling in riot police; as Indymedia posters pointed out, "Porto Alegre isn't the social democratic paradise that the PT makes it out to be".

The European Social Forum in Florence was also dominated by authoritarians and reformists. All the main speakers were chosen in advance by the organisers. The in-

evitable result were meetings with the celebrity names you would expect such as Jose Bove, Susan George, Tariq Ali) and the organisations you would expect (SOS Racisme, ATTAC, Amnesty International, Oxfam, Friends of the Earth, Pax Christi).

The control exercised by certain factions, the non-participatory nature of these events and the top down structures mean that the Social Forum movement "shares less and less of the characteristics that made this movement what it is: horizontal networks, no leaders, broad participation, open communication, self-organisation and diversity of movements and opinions". Some criticisms go further, with some claiming that the "bureaucratic left" is using the process to "To appropriate a struggle in which they do not participate" and to "catapult themselves to be elected like an alternative to the government".

The experience of being sidelined and sabotaged at the social forums have left more radical activists wondering whether to "abandon or contaminate" (i.e. try to participate and push direct democracy and participatory politics) the Social Forums. On the one hand groups are wary of assisting in the co-option and assimilation of our politics, on the other hand many people are attracted to the social forums because of what they have seen and heard of the anti-capitalist movement and because, in part at least, of our politics and actions, not taking part means abandoning these people to the trots, social democrats and other assorted vampires. Following from this idea groups affiliated to Peoples Global Action (which called the original 'global action days') established the Hub Camp as an autonomous space at the 2002 ESF in Florence 'not in competition' and 'not anti-ESF' to facilitate networking between groups and individuals and to 'contaminate by association the ESF with non-hierarchical practices'.

At the end of the day the social forums, at best, are a space where different people

working against neo-liberalism and those interested in that struggle can come together. Obviously this is a good thing and is the reason why we (the WSM) have taken part in the transparent and openly organised Irish Social Forum. At its worst the social forums can be stage-managed election and recruitment platforms for authoritarians and reformists. At the same time the social forums have attracted hundreds of thousands of people seeking a way to change the world we live in, we should not marginalise ourselves nor turn our backs on them. Instead we should present our politics and our ways of working together and explore the possibilities that result. Instead of abandoning the SF movement we should use it as a way to argue for changing society from below, not lobbying or seeking to merely replace those above.

Padriac O'Sullivan

A Libertarian Social Forum will be running alongside the ESF in Paris, see <http://www.ainfos.ca/ainfos336/ainfos08688.html>

Householders Against Service Charges meeting in Mayfield, Cork

About fifty people gathered in Mayfield GAA club in the first of a series of meetings relaunching the campaign against the refuse charges in Cork city. The meeting was addressed by Paddy Mulcahy and Ted Tynan, both jailed in 1991 for non-payment of the water charges. There was clear determination in the voices of people from the floor of the hall. The mood was defiant. Leaflets were distributed advising people on how to survive non-collection.

Just three years ago 7 people were jailed in Cork city as part of the campaign against the first attempt at non-collection. HASC members then brought their refuse to the City Hall when it was left uncollected. Fines led to imprisonment. The campaign succeeded with the Corporation backing down. A few weeks later the High Court ruled that they had to collect under the Health Acts. These were subsequently amended by the government to allow for non-collection. The first to suffer from this were in Dublin, but the plan was afoot for the rest of the country. Threatening letters have gone out in Cork city to all households. November 17th is the designated day for the beginning of non-collection in Cork and forces are being gathered for the showdown. The key issue now is to organise as many areas as possible and organise tactics to put the council on the defensive.

James McBarron

A longer version of this report is at <http://struggle.ws/wsm/cork.html>

Review of the Irish Social Forum

The first Irish Social Forum was held in University College Dublin the weekend of the October 18. Over 170 people registered from what the organisers described as "a diverse range of up to 40 citizens groups, organisations and NGOs".

After the experience of Globalise Resistance many had been concerned that the ISF would simply become another recruitment front for the SWP. This was not the case, the range of forums and workshops was broadly reflective of the anti-neoliberal movement as it exists in Ireland. Every-

one I talked to who attended felt they had got something from the experience.

The one criticism is the obvious one connected to the WSF. The refusal to take positions on particular aspects of neo-liberalism in order to keep the reformists and NGO's on board. Talking shops have some use but anarchists prefer bodies like the Grassroots Gathering which are willing to build libertarian struggle against the specifics of neoliberalism and so have an essential role.

Robert Emmet and the rising of 1803

Ruan O'Donnell- Irish Academic Press

The 1803 rebellion came to be associated with one man, Robert Emmet because that suited both the government of that time and later day nationalists in search of a romantic nationalist interpretation of the rebellion. As with the great rebellion of 1798, the process of burying the radical ideas of the rebellion was bound up in creating mystical notions of blood sacrifice and individual heroism.

The bi-centenary of the 1798 rebellion saw the radical ideas that lay at the roots of it being recovered. Instead of a romantic nationalist rising for the four green fields and the faith of our fathers it was put in the context of the wave of European / Atlantic radicalism that demanded equality for all. The United Irishmen were revealed not as narrow nationalists but as part of an international democratic upsurge against monarchy and colonialism that transformed the world we live in. See http://struggle.ws/rbr/rbr4_1798.html

The traditional history of 1803 is little more than a 'blood sacrifice' intended to confirm Ireland's right to independence. Ruan O'Donnell's book concentrates on exploding the myth that the rising was doomed from the start. It was planned not as a noble gesture of a handful of nationalists but rather as a mass uprising intended to decapitate the British state in Ireland at the very moment of a French invasion and liberation of the country. What went wrong?

The United Irishmen succeeded in keeping the plans for the rising secret until there was an explosion at their main secret arsenal in Dublin. This convinced them that they must rise as soon as possible. If everything else had gone to plan there was a chance of success.

The key munitions that were missing were the guns needed to fire the vast stores of musket balls and gunpowder that had been secured. When the rank and file mobilising in Dublin discovered that very few guns were to be had many of them voted with their feet and returned home.

At least 30 United Irishmen including Emmet were executed in the period after the rising. His courtroom speech and the spirit of self-sacrifice it contained was to make him the best known of the United Irishmen. The speech gave a romantic nationalist cloak under which the radical social program of the United Irishmen could be hidden.

Emmet is a safe figure for those who rule Ireland today. The 200th anniversary of his trial and execution happened to fall as the High Court was jailing bin tax protesters. Yet it was official Ireland in the form of the Minister for Justice, the Taoiseach and a Supreme Court judge that were the honoured guests at these events. The trial was re-enacted in the very same spot, Green Street court, as

200 years before. This is still used by the state for political trials, but nowadays without jury or the right to a speech from the dock. It's otherwise known as the Special Criminal Court.

Andrew Flood



Getting involved

We are an Anarchist organisation in existence now for nearly twenty years. In that time we've helped to put across the ideas of anarchism as worthy of serious consideration to anyone in the movement against capitalism.

We produce over 6,000 copies of this paper and our message is getting to more and more people. If you want to live in a society that is free from the enslavement of the state and where democracy is more than a nice idea poorly practiced then you have to be prepared to fight for it.

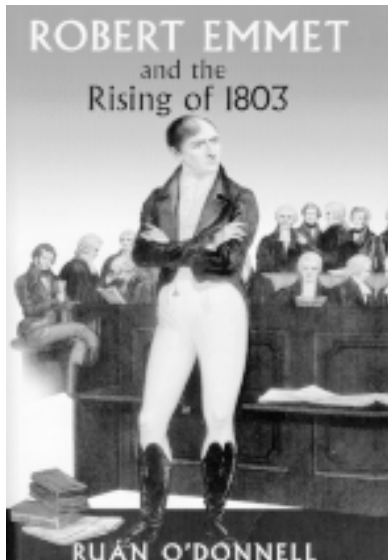
We are not the sole reason why Anarchism is on the map but the fact that this paper is distributed in Athenry, Belfast, Castledermot, Cork, Drogheda, Derry, Dublin, Fermoy, Kilcock, Kilkenny, Lurgan, Galway, Manorbennet, Maynooth, Naas, Oughterard, Sligo and Thurles has helped gain acceptance that anarchism is a real option on this island for those wishing to fight for change.

We in the Workers Solidarity Movement get involved. This is an important difference between us and would be leaders who sit in towers and contemplate how the future world should be run but never actually work towards achieving that. Where there is struggle to oppose the Bin-Tax, to oppose the privatisation of public transport, or even against the war you will find activists from the WSM involved. We defend ourselves when we see attacks against our class.

But we are not insisting that the only way to do this is to join the WSM. We welcome new members but we recognise not only are there already other libertarian groups who share our broad goal but that this struggle does not belong to any organisation; it belongs to all those who are exploited. But we do offer one way to organise in the here and now towards building a libertarian movement that will overthrow capitalism.

We can get the message out that there is a solution to the mess the world is in. Those answers can be found in the ideals of freedom and real democracy where we are free from the treacherous tyranny of leaders and their plans to further enslave us; A free society is not something that others can win for you, you have to win it for yourself. Get involved and find out more about becoming part of the revolutionary anarchist movement.

For more details on joining write to us at WSN, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8 or see our web site at <http://struggle.ws/wsm/join.html>



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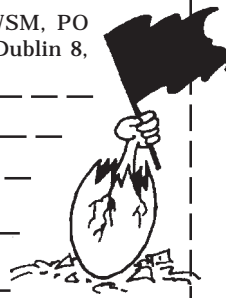
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**Anarchist History Pamphlets
from the Kate Sharpley Library-**

"Direct Action" by Emile Pouget and "A Day Mournful and Overcast" by an Uncontrollable of the Iron Column

A passion for freedom, opposition to all forms of hierarchy and the advocacy and use of direct action have historically been some of the most important and enduring characteristics of anarchist politics. The recent publication by the Kate Sharpley Library, of two pamphlets provides us with a glimpse of how these ideas and practices have evolved over time.

The first, "Direct Action", by Emile Pouget is a polemic in favour of a tactic dear to today's bin-tax blockaders, street reclaimers and squatters. Pouget was an influential anarchist journalist in France at the turn of 20th century. As an anarcho-syndicalist Pouget was firmly wedded to class struggle anarchism and radical trade unionism.

For Pouget, direct action is the most effective and appropriate tactic available to radical workers for two reasons.

Firstly direct action, such as strike action or sabotage (eg 'go slows') is a good way of winning struggles and yielding material gains such as increased pay or a shorter working week. Secondly, when people take direct action it builds up their confidence, especially as such action doesn't require intermediaries like politicians or union officials. This creates a culture of self-organisation and *"puts paid to the age of miracles - miracles from heaven and miracles from the state"*. Pouget sees direct action as the basis of any truly revolutionary politics because it teaches self-reliance and encourages us to cast aside the mind-forged manacles that keep us subservient.

The second pamphlet "A Day Mournful and Overcast" was first published in Spain in 1937. It is an account of the experiences of an anarchist militiaman and

is a fierce and moving declaration of faith in the importance of freedom and the capability of ordinary people to transform their own lives and history. Spain in the 1930's was a living laboratory of freedom and revolt with millions of people putting anarchist ideas into practice.

However, by 1937 the anarchist militias were caught in the jaws of counter-revolution, fighting the fascists at the front while their efforts were being undermined by Stalinist machinations at the rear. The pamphlet discusses these momentous events and gives us a feel for the passions and motivations that lay behind these great upheavals.

Both of these pamphlets are interesting, although Pouget's is perhaps aimed at those who have already developed an interest in anarchist history while the "A Day..." is more accessible and provides a wonderful introduction to the spirit of anarchism.

HOW TO ORDER

These two titles are available from the Kate Sharpley Library, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX, England. Send them £5.00, which will cover the price plus postage.

David Begg: Bertie's new partner

ICTU general secretary David Begg condemned the anti-bin tax campaign. He did this at the same time that the state was jailing protesters and refusing to collect rubbish from thousands of households in Dublin.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions is supposed to co-ordinate the efforts of our unions. In reality its officers are pretty far removed from the lifestyle and living standards of the rest of us. They are much more likely to be on first name terms with government ministers and top industrialists than with any ordinary union member.

Begg's disgraceful statement included *"Congress does not support the current anti-bin charges campaign"*. Well every union - including the biggest union in the country, SIPTU - that has discussed the bin tax has voted against it. But maybe democracy doesn't count for much when you are a self-described 'social partner' of the government and bosses. *"the campaign may ultimately lead to privatisation of bin collections and a potential loss of jobs"*. The man can't be so stupid that he believes this, but maybe he thinks the rest of us are. It is only when charges can be successfully collected that services become attractive to profiteering business people. And surely Begg knows that 41 of the 77 local authorities have already privatised their rubbish collection. Of course, we never heard him condemning that.

"(Higgins and Daly) are wrong to be leading ordinary working people into a cul de

sac of imprisonment in pursuit of a political objective". Seemingly our great leader can not believe that ordinary working people are capable of thinking for ourselves. The tens of thousands of non-payers are not dupes of anyone.

The Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union put it very well in their statement "if you fight you don't always win but if you don't fight you will never win". A lot of people are involved in this struggle because they think it is important to make a stand.

The bin tax is part of the process which has seen a huge transfer of wealth from workers to bosses. Figures from the Central Statistics Office show that in 1987 wages and salaries amounted to 59% of Gross Domestic Product, while profits and rents taken by capitalists amounted to 41%.

By 2001 the proportion going to workers had fallen to 46% while profits and rents rose to 54%. Partnership deals have given us crumbs while the bosses laughed all the way to their tax dodging offshore bank accounts. And that's the set-up Begg defends.

The ATGWU went on to say "Mr Begg is a partner of the government and employers and if that partnership requires him to at-

tack his own members, abandon his own policies, then that is what he will do. Why doesn't the executive of the ICTU try a partnership with its own members and these working class communities?"

Begg finishes his statement with *"Congress will seek a meeting with the Minister for Finance to press the case for a more just and progressive approach to financing public services"* Yeah, I bet that has Martin Cullen quaking in his boots.

Alan MacSimoin
(SIPTU member)



December 6th Anti-war blockade of Shannon Airport

The 'Irish Anti-War Movement' (IAWM) is planning a mass blockade aimed at disrupting normal business at Shannon airport. Demonstrators will gather at 2pm in the town centre before marching to the airport terminal to participate in the blockade.

According to IAWM spokesperson Dr Fintan Lane: *"This will be about people power. It will be about ordinary people taking action for themselves and refusing to accept the integration of an Irish civilian airport into the U.S. war machine."*

For more details contact Fintan Lane at 087 1258325

Cornered Council - Approach with caution

In Spain there was an old saying to describe the inequity of that society; "some people eat but do not work and most people work but do not eat." It appears that this is the new type of society that the present Government wish to implement in Ireland.

At the time of writing 15 people have been in prison for peacefully protesting the imposition of this unjust bin-tax. On Oct 14th and 15th a co-ordinated action resulted in all the bin depots across all four council areas being blocked by demonstrators thus effectively shutting down the service. The campaign has always maintained that all bins have to be picked up. Until non-collection is halted similar actions will take place.

The State and the city councils are displaying to the whole country what we already knew, that they are ruthless bullies who will stop at little in their attempt to get away with this heist. The heist is to take a public service, change the laws so as to bring about non-collection, do everything to force people into paying the charge, so that they can make it a profitable business and then privatise it.

The government will continue to jail us for demonstrating

against what we believe to be unjust. Another reason why the reaction has been so severe is that this is the culmination of a long campaign where we have won most of the battles. First they tried to make us pay, we refused; then they tried to bring us to court, we opposed them; then they tried non-collection, we blockaded them; then they tried to frighten us with injunctions and jailings, we broke that and activists were prepared to go to jail. This is the reaction of the state to direct action taken by a large community campaign.

But let's remember, despite all the media hysteria flying around that this is simply a case of democracy in action.

The majority of people in Dublin are against this double-tax and the harder they try to crush it the more that resistance grows. The council is like a cornered wild animal lashing out at all that's against them. They have asked their friends in the media to ensure a witch-hunt against the campaigns. It is because there is a genuine fear by the authorities that they are doing this. Lets remember that and ensure that we continue to take the fight to them by maintaining non-payment and preventing non-collection.

Dermot Sreenan

Further information:

087 283 7989 - Campaign Hotline number

www.StopTheBinTax.com and www.indymedia.ie for upcoming protests and meetings

Detailed reports and dozens of photos of blockades and marches at <http://struggle.ws/wsm/bins.html>



Bin Tax - what has been going on

The campaign against the bin-tax in Dublin has seen an upsurge of community resistance to the government. The mainstream media is usually hostile to the campaign and doesn't bother reporting many actions. Below is a summary of activity in two areas, activity which is being replicated right across the city.

In Stoneybatter and Cabra, where a number of WSM members are active, there have been a mixture of meetings, protests and blockades. Events in Stoneybatter got moving with a public meeting on the 17th of September. The mood was militant and supportive of action to defeat the government's attempts to ride roughshod over public opinion and enforce the double tax. In Stoneybatter we had two short blockades of bin trucks in the estates, one on Swords Street, the other in Drumalee. It became apparent that local blockades in isolation from other areas were capable of only putting limited pressure on the Corporation so the mood in Stoneybatter swung towards arguing for co-ordinated city-wide disruption in order to put a lot of pressure on the state. This was illustrated at one blockade where the choice was democratically made to call it off with no arrests or names taken and to fight another day.

The first step in this process was an evening picket of Grangegorman depot, an idea suggested from the floor at a public meeting and called with the Cabra campaign and supported by people all over the city area. This was a heartening protest as the turnout over the three hours was well over a hundred and no bin lorry got out while the protesters were at the gates.

In Cabra there have been a number of large meetings, at one over 500 turned up. In a very real sense the local meetings are a great improvement in democratic practice than the farce we see in the Dail.

In Cabra there have also been blockades and a number of well attended marches to events in the city centre, for example a march to Mountjoy on Thursday 16th in support of imprisoned protesters drew a crowd numbering hundreds.

In addition there have been pickets of Grangegorman (and other depots) which began at short notice on Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th October. Numbers were obviously lower due to the short notice, but the Council workers were very sympathetic to the campaign and their reluctance to break the blockades ensured their success. And, as we go to press, 48 people closed down Grangegorman depot for an evening (Oct 28th) and further blockades were held at depots around South County Dublin on October 29th.

Moving forward, we need improved co-ordination in causing disruption between local areas right across the 4 County Council districts. Decisions which emanate from below are much more likely to have the support of the communities as they participated in making them in the first place. Though the state has come down heavily by jailing protesters, our weapon continues to be solidarity in numbers, and if we can co-ordinate this we have a good chance of success.

James O'Brien