

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

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## Prepare to Sink the Service Charges



THEY WANT us to pay twice! When domestic rates were abolished the government increased PAYE and VAT to make up the difference. Now they are putting the screws on again. They tried it with the water rates but came up against massive resistance. Tens of thousands refused to pay. When peoples water was cut off local campaigns and sympathetic plumbers turned it back on. In Waterford a gang of contractors who were cutting off non-payers were held hostage by residents and Waterford Glass workers in the Fr Paddy Browne Road area. The upshot was that a lot of people never paid a penny and in Limerick, Waterford and Dublin the local authorities had to abolish water rates.

Now the politicians have decided to have another go. Each local authority has levied a service charge for this year. The one exception is Dublin Corporation which plans to do it next year. They can be stopped just like happened to the Poll Tax in Britain. See page 10.



## YES to PEACE and to an Ireland that is Neither Orange nor Green

DESPITE ALL THE talk of peace the war continues. The media has as usual focused on the acts of the republicans, particularly around the Heathrow attack in March. However as the following extracts show the British state is also continuing its war effort and continuing to defend its usual mixture of lies and torture while doing so. They are all taken from *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (Sinn Féin paper) in the closing weeks of March, mostly stories the media did not consider to be worth covering.

"Yet again, an RIR soldier has walked free from a Diplock court even though he admitted supplying the names and addresses of republicans to loyalist gangs. David Murdock was one of three people who appeared before Belfast Crown Court on Tuesday, 15 March. The court was told that Murdock supplied information to 28-year-old loyalist Brian Appleton from Windsor Avenue, yet Appleton was not convicted of any offence arising from this."

"The RUC has kept up its policy of harassment against nationalists in the County

Tyrone town of Cookstown, with a series of dawn raids carried out on Monday last, 21 March, on the Greenvale Estate. The RUC rampaged through 12 houses using sledgehammers to gain entry to several houses at 5.45am. They arrested one man who was released the following day without any charges being preferred."

"A ruling by the Court of Appeal in Belfast on Monday, 7 March, has sanctioned physical abuse of women prisoners in Six-County jails. It stated that the practices and procedures involved in the forced strip-searching of women prisoners is legal and so entitles the prison's governor to order a prisoner to be strip-searched whenever he sees fit."

"The inquest into the killings of six people in RUC shoot-to-kill operations in Armagh in 1982 have been adjourned yet again, for two months.... This latest adjournment was requested by the crown lawyers to allow the British government time to prepare a Public Interest Immune Certificate (PIIC)." The PIIC will prevent the questioning of those who carried out the shooting.

Not an especially exciting collection, in fact pretty typical of the ongoing war of  
continued on page 3

# IRISH ANARCHIST PAPER

# For Starters



• The Workers Solidarity Movement marching against the Nazis

**THE CHANGE** from a magazine to newspaper format reflects the increased readership *Workers Solidarity* is building up. It will take a few issues before we iron out all problems involved in changing our printing process but we hope you will bear with us. None of us is a professional journalist or designer. This issue was produced by a gardener, a couple of office workers, a teacher, a researcher, three unemployed people and a student.

If you like what we are saying, we would like your help. We need your reports. Tell us what is happening on your job, in your neighbourhood. Write a report, or a letter. This paper will only improve if more of you write for it, sell it, show a copy to your friends.

As we go to press final plans are being made for 'Revolution', a day of public meetings and debates in Dublin about libertarian socialism. With the collapse of both the Eastern Bloc and social democracy's radical pretensions it becomes increasingly important to explain that the ideals of socialism are not dead; that there is a libertarian alternative. The Workers Solidarity Movement is co-operating with other libertarian groups in this venture. We hope that it will be but the first such event where libertarian socialists of various traditions can debate and discuss turning our ideas into reality.

Also in Dublin we participated in the second Alternative Bookfair, which made radical and anarchist books and magazines available to an audience who don't usually come across such material. While the big newsagents and bookshops stock a lot of conservative material they very rarely give shelf space to publications which explain revolutionary alternatives.

In Cork we have been working with 'Justice Now', which is campaigning against the £1,600 worth of fines imposed on members of the Socialist Alliance for putting up Troops Out posters and ones with an abortion information telephone number. We also helped in the campaign to stop big business and hoteliers preventing the building of a new Simon Community hostel for the homeless.

In Dublin the WSM has started a series

of anarchist discussion meetings for readers. With the rise of far-right movements throughout Europe, and the disturbingly high vote achieved by the MSI/National Alliance in the Italian general election, it was appropriate that one of these was about fascism and how to beat it. Another marked the 75th anniversary of the Limerick 'Soviet', when that city was taken over by the workers as part of their fight against British militarism.

In March we published a pamphlet about the fascist threat in Europe, which was sold in cinema queues where Schlinder's List was showing. We also participated in the Anti-Nazi League demonstration, which brought about 500 onto Dublin's streets, to make it clear that while there are few fascists in Ireland we intend to keep it that way.



## THAT'S CAPITALISM

Since 1989 Irish farmers, especially the top 20% of them, have pocketed more than half of the billions received from the EC. Less than one hundredth of these funds went towards programmes for the long term unemployed. Meanwhile farm incomes have gone up 37% over the last two years. The yield from farmer taxation is now less than that from the old, the sick and the unemployed!

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In spite of the Employment Equality Act and the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act many employers still get away with treating women workers worse than male employees. More than fifteen years after the introduction of equal pay laws in the 26 counties, women workers earn only 62% of men's average earnings. On an hourly basis they are paid, on average, £2 less.

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60% of the tax relief in the 26 counties on mortgage interest and VHI premiums goes to the top 20% of earners. Only 5% goes to the bottom half.

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While workers' pay rises were kept down to the the PESP level, there were no restraints on the rich. Last year executive directors averaged 12% and shareholders 13.4%. The seven AIB executive directors averaged £526,666 each, earning more per hour than most workers get for a week.

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Of the £530 million the Child Support Agency hopes to get from 'absent' fathers in Britain and the North, just £50 million will go to mothers and their children. The rest will go the government Treasury. So much for the Tories' claim last year that the Agency would be a major help to mothers and children

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According to the *Irish Times*

industrial correspondent, Jackie Gallagher, £250,000 was spent during the negotiations on the Programme for Competitiveness & Work. Twenty union officials turned up each day. Most of them "spent their time playing cards, having quizzes and on one occasion having a sing song". Snacks included steak sandwiches. Wine was served with the meals. Indeed the drinks facility had to be cut off at one stage because so much was being consumed.

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Having being conned into accepting wage rises that may not even keep up with inflation (the PCW), workers now see top professionals get much bigger increases. The current chief executive of Telecom, Fergus McGovern, gets £70,000 a year. The maximum laid down in the Gleeson guidelines for top public servants pay is £81,000 (six times the average industrial wage). The new chief executive will be hired as a 'consultant', which will allow him to be paid 'fees' of over £100,000. Peter Owen, the new Aer Lingus chief executive is also a 'consultant', and the same will probably happen at the National Treasury Management Agency which was set up outside the control of the Central Bank so that its senior employees would not be bound by the Gleeson guidelines.

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According to the MSF union 14% of the workforce in the 26 counties earn less than £115 per week. Of full-time employees who earn less than £3 per hour 16% of them work in the very profitable banking, finance and insurance sector.



## STAKE YOUR CLAIM TO CASH

**WAGES COUNCILS** in Northern Ireland (and Britain) have been abolished by the Tory government. For years they set minimum pay rates in some of the traditionally low paid industries like catering. As of last February 7th they are no more.

However the Wages Inspectorate will continue to investigate complaints and order payments of back money until August 6th of this year. After that date

you will no longer be allowed to recover the wages that you were legally entitled to.

Earlier this year the Law Centre in Derry helped a bakery worker to get £4,500 in back pay. If you suspect that you may have been covered by a minimum wage order but paid less than the legal rate contact the Belfast Law Centre (tel: 321307) or the Derry Law Centre (tel: 262433). They can advise you how to get your cash before it's too late.

## Peace, Provos, Protestants and a Workers Republic *neither orange nor green*

continued from page 1

the British state, but one you just don't hear about in the mainstream press. Indeed in the aftermath of the Heathrow attack the mainstream centred on Gerry Adams threat of more IRA spectaculars to come. Except of course Adams, it transpired, had said no such thing. His words had been changed through the application of what it politely know now-a-days as spin. As usual however the original (false) remarks got front page



1974-94: From "terrorists to politicians"

headlines, the correction received no coverage or a couple of cm's

The peace talks represent the ditching of Sinn Féin's left gloss and a return to good old nationalist politics, pure and simple. They started with the Hume - Adams dialogue, a still secret document but one which clearly set out to demonstrate that the northern nationalists could be trusted (by both Dublin and London) to 'behave' in the event of British withdrawal. Once Sinn Féin might have talked of nationalising foreign sections of the economy, now according to their recent pamphlet on The Economics of Irish Unification they expect that the British government will continue to pump around £1 billion a year into Northern Ireland.

Gerry Adams gave a special St. Patrick's day address as part of the process of spelling this out. In it he said

*"Irish history has been scarred and mutilated by the support which the British government gives to unionism and the consequent inability of unionists to come to a democratic accommodation with the rest of the Irish people. The British government's role as persuaders is key. That is obvious."* AP/RN March 24, 1994

What all this means is transparent. In the past Tories have feared that British withdrawal would lead to a "Cuba off the British Coast", that a Sinn Féin victory would lead to widespread nationalisation and social upheaval. But Sinn Féin is no longer talking at all of that kind of victory. To expect Britain to give £1 billion a year after withdrawal clearly sees withdrawal not in the context of a defeat for imperialism but as a different way for imperialism to manage Ireland. The unionists are the problem, we are told Britain acting as a persuader is the potential solution.

Adams Ard Fheis speech was laced with such a perspective. Rather than appealing to Protestant workers he said *"It is also time that the Protestant people heard the voice of reason and sanity from their leaders. They need a De Klerk to lead them and us into the next century."*

The left in Sinn Féin would once have talked of the spirit of James Connolly, I'm sure nobody needs the difference between Connolly and De Klerk spelt out for them.

Adams Ard Fheis speech was quite clear about what Sinn Féin are offering and how they are looking to the ruling class of Britain and Ireland rather than

the workers as the way forward. *"Our party paper, Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland, clearly places the onus on the two governments to secure change. It especially calls on the British government to 'join the persuaders' and on the Dublin government to persuade the British that partition is a failure..."*

He also clearly put forward the idea of Hume-Adams as a pan-nationalist alliance saying *"credit must given also to Albert Reynolds...the first Taoiseach to have taken the steps he has taken to address the core issues of a negotiated settlement"* and again *"we need particularly to consider how we can appeal to the national sentiment that is strong particularly at the grassroots of Fianna Fáil..."*

### SELL OUT, SENSE OR INEVITABLE?

Now is all this a sell out? Well no, despite the twists and turns of republican politics from the "Year of Victory" militarism of the 1970's, to

the community politics "ballot box and armalite" of the 1980's this is what has always been the core of nationalist politics. It is no more a sell out than Fianna Fáil's attacks on healthcare or Thatcher's attacks on the trade unions.

The purpose of Irish republicanism is and was to see Ireland as Robert Emmet put it "take its place among the nations of the world". A place which includes those key features of all the other nation states, alienation, cops and the rule of a minority. Not just in Ireland but everywhere in this century it has been a fault of the left to accept the populist rhetoric of nationalist movements, from Nicaragua to Cuba as socialist.

Sinn Féin wants the same sort of settlement that the ANC and PLO have 'won'. Where the post boxes get a lick of green paint, and the harp replaces the crown on the caps of the police. Where the existing state (and yesterday's enemies) control what were their puppets (be it loyalist death squads or Inkatha) in return for a guarantee of stability from the 'anti-imperialists'. We recognise these things as a step forward, the ending of legal apartheid or the sectarian state in the North would not be trivial things and just as we would fight against their introduction, we support their ending. But they offer only relative crumbs to the working class.

Unification under capitalism throws up a huge number of problems for the ruling class. First amongst these is Protestant privilege. The northern Protestant workers may have the second worst living standards in

comparison with any group in Britain but they are ahead of the worst group, northern Catholic workers. What's more, in an economy where they too have a high percentage of unemployment about 30,000 Protestants are dependant on the 'security forces' for a job. If all that is on offer is unity under capitalism then given the past record of loyalism it could be foolish to expect them not to fight.

On the other hand any settlement that did not rectify the imbalances would offer nothing to Catholic workers. War weariness might cause it to be accepted but in the longer term resistance to injustice would be sure to reappear and without any left alternative would probably repeat the events of the end of the 60's and start of the 70's. Sections of the far-left have supported just such a republican 'surrender' in the impression that this would give them room to grow. In the south however many people consider the border irrelevant to their day to day lives. Here too the far left has failed to break out of isolation, suggesting there's more than the border in the way in the north.

So what are the two possibilities? With the end of the cold war and the collapse of the northern economy, Britain's long term interests in staying have declined. A significant section of the ruling class would seem to want out if they could leave stability behind. Let us not get too excited by this however, another section wants to stay under any circumstances. The debate may be leaning towards the first section at the moment but the wind could easily change. The question is are they willing to pay the price of stability?

That price comprises maintaining the current living standards of Protestant workers, including finding 20,000 or so new jobs for those currently working in security. Let's assume they keep 10,000 to police this 'new' Ireland. It means offering a substantial enough bribe to the local ruling class to pull them (and the unionist parties) behind such a solution. It also means pulling up the standard of living of Catholics to a level where the deal appears to offer something and creating a mechanism to achieve equality of opportunity and access over a period of time. It would appear from their calls for a Protestant De Klerk, Britain to 'convince' the unionists and continued investment from Britain that this is what Sinn Féin hopes for.

The bill would be billions of pounds, the problem being that capitalism in recession would have severe difficulties finding this money. Is the British and Southern Irish ruling class prepared to pay such a price? It would seem unlikely.

With the exception of the bombings of the City of London (and they are important exceptions) the ruling class has managed to isolate the problem to the six counties and keep costs down. Thatcher once boasted that there had been more British troops killed in driving accidents in West Germany than in northern Ireland. The British ruling class is not going to support withdrawal unless it can be guaranteed un-interrupted exploitation



• Part of the problem, not the solution

and that it would be cheaper to leave them to stay.

### GAZA MARK II

The second option would be of the type worked out by Israel and the PLO. Token improvements could be made that would redistribute poverty, the local ruling class bought off and any opposition destroyed by massive repression from the relevant side. Perhaps Britain would withdraw politically but possibly retain troops on the ground in a peace 'enforcement' capacity, through the EC or UN. Perhaps they would be U.S. troops. The new regime could then try and create a new stability through force.

Is this a possibility? It's one fraught with difficulties for the ruling class. Britain's policy of Ulsterisation introduced under Labour and stepped up under Thatcher meant replacing British troops with local police and UDR (RIR) where possible, and arming loyalist death squads to do the dirty work. But these official and unofficial forces retain some loyalty to the community from which they come, the Protestant working class. Britain has been testing this loyalty in recent years with its partial (very) clampdown on the UDA. In turn the republicans would have similar problems in getting its forces to police its side of such a deal. Such an option would be far from straight forward for the ruling class (and needless to say disastrous for us).

Whatever the possibilities, and some of them are very unattractive, all Sinn Féin is promising at best is a stability which will include mass unemployment, low wages and all the other features that make Ireland an attractive investment for imperialism. Otherwise how can they expect £1 billion annually from Britain? That is why we have always said that only anarchism can rid Ireland - north and south - of poverty and reaction. That's what we will continue to fight for, peace deal or otherwise; the class war goes on.

Andrew Flood



1994-?? and then junior bosses?

## 1994 Year of the Family - back to your place or 'back to basics'?

# Parents, puritans and poverty

1994 HAS BEEN declared the UN Year of the Family. The Irish Committee for the International Year includes state bodies like the Combat Poverty Agency & the Council for the Status of Women and Catholic ones like the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Family Solidarity were also members but walked out in protest at token places being given to two groups working with single parents. This committee has received £400,000 from Leinster House.

The increased violence in society and fears of social decay have even liberal commentators calling for a return to "family values". Yet what does this really mean? What are those values? In this article Aileen O'Carroll examines the role of the family and the reasoning behind the Back to Basics campaign.

In the nineteenth century Napoleon III went to war to silence popular opposition against worsening conditions at home. In the US, Bush and now Clinton manufactured the 'war on drugs' in part to deflect attention from the US recession. They blamed Colombian cocaine dealers for job losses, pay cuts and factory closures rather than the policies of the Democratic and Republican parties. In Europe all the major parties are pinning unemployment rates on immigrant workers.

### EASY TARGETS

In the UK under the banner of 'Back to Basics', the Conservative Party embarked on a vigorous moral crusade. The first victims of their offensive were single mothers. Why single mothers? They are an easy target. Most are burdened down by poverty and isolated within the home (50% of single parents live on less than £100 a week, only 42% of them work outside the home). Though there are groups who seek to represent single parents, in general single mothers are unorganised. They do not have economic muscle with which to fight back. They are stigmatised and pushed to the margins of society and so it's more difficult for them to form a pressure block.

The government wants to cut down on the amount it spends on social welfare, making us pay for the recession. The changing age profile of western Europe means that as the proportion of old people in society is increasing, so also will the amount of money required by the government to pay out in old age pensions increase. The recovery that the government has been hyping almost since the recession began has yet to arrive, leaving the government with mounting welfare bills.

Alongside the reduction in the amount spent on social welfare the government is attempting to reinforce the Victorian distinction between deserving poor and non-deserving poor. The blame for the cutbacks is shifted onto the poor themselves rather than on the government's



• No divorce allowed. On June 26th 1986 the referendum to allow divorce laws failed. This was despite the pleas of women such as those who chained themselves to the railings of the Dáil protesting that their marriages, like thousands of others, had broken down. The constitution still states that "no law shall be enacted for the dissolution of marriage".

own social and economic policies. They're pitting single mother against old age pensioner in an attempt to divide, rule and deflect attention from the real causes of poverty in society.

It has also been argued that Back to Basics is a bid to drive women into the workplace in an attempt to drive wages down. However the facts don't necessarily agree with this. Trends in western capitalism indicate a shift from full-time work to part-time and contract work.

Women constitute the majority of the part-time workforce. Their wages are less than full-timers and in the case of contract workers they have fewer rights (to holiday pay, redundancy payment's etc). They can be hired when required and let go when the market slumps.

Union organisation has meant that employers haven't been able to drive wages down for existing workers. Instead a new level of lowly paid contract jobs (such as the 'yellow pack' jobs in

Irish banks) have been introduced, which replace full-time work. In Britain the number of women employees will for the first time exceed the number of men with jobs. This trend is mainly attributable to rapid growth in part-time posts (often by splitting full-time jobs) which had gone overwhelmingly to women (Dept of Employment figures). However, such is the level of unemployment in Britain at the moment, the Tories don't have any problem getting people into low paid jobs as it is. The motivation behind Basic to Basics is to drive down the cost of the Welfare State.

Concerns about Britain's ability to continue bearing the cost of the welfare state due to the rising costs of old age pensions have been "greatly exaggerated" according to a study published by the London School of Economics<sup>1</sup>. The scare is used to justify government cut backs. The Irish government also is a skilled master at this line of argument; playing primary schools against third level colleges, the unemployed against the PAYE sector, with not a mention of the money owned in taxes by business (like the £12 million owed by Xtravision)

The Back to Basics drive arises not out of pure economic need alone. The Tory party is deeply divided internally over Europe and is presiding over the worst recession since the 1930's. Back to Basics is an ideology that unifies the Eurosceptic and the Euroliberal. It's a strong united front that turns newspaper headlines away from the recession, away from the crumbling welfare state and the divisions within the party.

Initially single mothers were targeted, now sex manuals are banned, sex educationalists are cautioned and "political correctness" is attacked. Following a series of sex scandals, the Tories are trying to turn the tables around. The state funded Health Education Authority originally commissioned the sex manual 'Your Pocket Guide to Sex'. As soon as it came off presses the Health Minister banned it, describing it as "smutty". The Secretary of State for Education publicly criticised a nurse in a Leeds school for answering children's questions on 'blow jobs' saying he was "incensed" when he heard how she was conducting her classes.

While there are no direct and obvious economic gains in these moves, in the long term forcing people into reliance on the family reduces the cost to the state of social welfare. As Dr John Harris argued in *The Family*<sup>2</sup> "the constant theme of social policy has been the need to ensure stability in family life and whenever social or political elites have felt at all threatened a part of their response has been to argue for a revival of 'stable'

# The Anarchist Idea Socialism and Freedom

**IN THE LAST** twenty years, political unrest and turmoil has been a stranger to few corners of this world. Time and time again mass rebellions have occurred in countries as far apart as South Africa or Poland or El Salvador or Northern Ireland. It is not any wonder. Oppressive regimes are found throughout the world, in the East and in the West. Butter and wheat mountains continue to grow while in other parts of the world famine is an ongoing way of life.

It is a scenario that contrasts bleakly with the fact that the resources and wealth of the world have never been as developed or rich. Every man, woman and child could live in comfort as they wish, if the wealth that is there now could be distributed equally. The United Nations has stated that if the money spent on arms and armaments were diverted into food and health care, starvation and hunger could be eliminated tomorrow from the world. But it hasn't happened. Instead, over the last 15 years, the gap between rich and poor in every country has widened.

Nevertheless, despite the odds and against the immense power of some states, some people have fought back against these injustices. In South Africa, the Phillipines and Korea, collective action by people has made change. In some cases the most repressive of regimes have been stopped in their tracks or even overthrown. But what is often missed in all these events is that millions of ordinary people have done something about the systems they live under and their lives. They have challenged the authority that rules them and won some improvements, through their own actions.

Anarchism is the idea that the mass of people, the working class, can change the world for the better replacing the exploitation, inequality and injustice that are all around today with a new world based on socialism and freedom. Such a society would be radically different from the class societies we now live in where the interests of the rich, who own and control the wealth of the world, comes first. Instead anarchism is the idea of a world where there are no classes - the rich having been sent packing. Where society is run and controlled through councils by those who produce the wealth in society, the working class. Where there is absolute freedom of ideas, of movement and of the individual. Anarchism is a society built on the abolition of all tyranny, in society and in the workplace, based on a belief in the right to freedom of everyone,

Anarchism may at first glance seem utopian, but it has not been pulled out

of thin air. Though it has existed as long as tyranny itself, being based on the idea that human oppression of any sort is unjustifiable, it has grown into what it is today on the experience of workers in many countries. Anarchism first emerged as a workers' movement in the International Working Mens Association in the 19th century and spread from there, particularly to Italy, France, Spain and Latin America. Its ideas played a part in many revolutions, but in particular Russia in 1917 and Spain in 1936.

Anarchism won such influence, in the workers' movement, partly because of

constantly being asked to make sacrifices and to tighten their belts for the "good of the country". The things we most depend on like housing, health care and education are the very things that are being "cutback" by the Government while all the time the huge wealth and profit of private industry remains relatively untouched by taxes. We are no strangers to this in Ireland. Anarchism opposes this situation, which to greater or lesser degrees, is carried on in all countries. Anarchists argue that this doesn't happen because we have "bad" governments but because it is the way that capitalism works. In a society where a small rich class controls things, it is inevitable that they will exploit and make the poor pay for as much as possible. And they do.

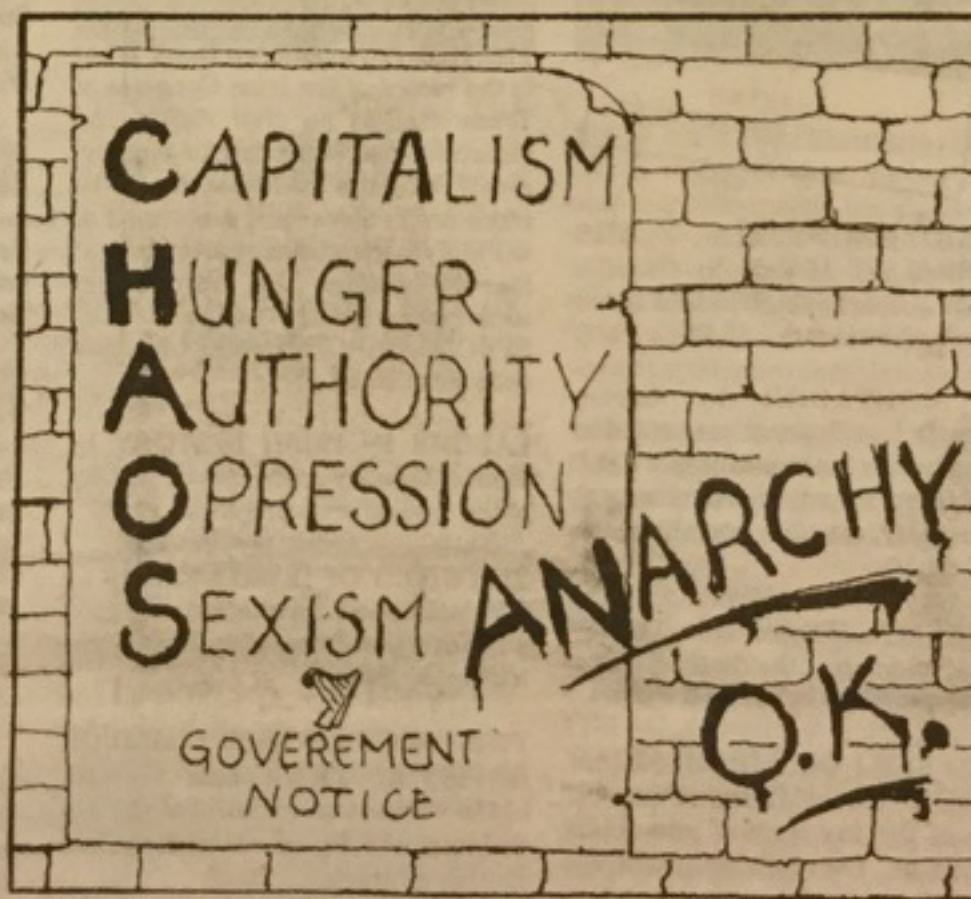
But as was said anarchists also oppose things because it isn't necessary that they be so. Could society be run without the rich? Of course it could. The owner of the Woolworths chain of shops, while away her day trying to decide which of her five mansions in Miami she will live in the next day. It's

Apart from being an idea opposed to capitalism and an idea about the way a better world could be run anarchism is also a practical way to bring about a society of socialism and freedom. The traditional "way", in countries like ours, is through the ballot box. It is here that we are told that changes can be brought about if we want to make them. Anarchists don't agree with this and oppose involvement in the parliament for two reasons. Firstly, real power in society doesn't reside there. It is mainly a talking shop. Even if you did get a socialist party elected to Government that stood for the abolition of capitalism (instead of the normal situation where they stand for simply an increase in dole payments or a cut of two pence in the tax rate) they wouldn't be allowed to do it. The laws of the land enshrined in the Constitution "protect" the way things are, which favours the rich, from being radically changed.

Such a situation was exactly what happened in Chile in 1973 when the Allende Government proposing minor land reforms was drowned in blood after the Army moved in to "save Chile from socialism". More recently the army in Haiti rejected the election of the reformer President Aristide and imposed a reign of terror. In other words then, real change through the parliament is a sham. As long as parliament confines itself to miniscule or meaningless change it will be allowed to function. But to challenge the basis of capitalism - wage labour and private property - is just not on.

But there is also another reason why socialism can't be brought about by electing a socialist government. Anarchists argue that socialism is about the working class running society through workplace and community councils - in other words democracy in all parts of human activity. It is through this that a real equal distribution of wealth can take place. But most Socialist Parties don't believe in this idea at all. Rather they see socialism as something else. For them it is the idea of their Party which "represents" the workers interests taking control of the State and "making it work for the people". Anarchists argue that this is a nonsense. The State is a hierarchical institution based on one section of people making decisions and others (the workers) following them, an idea alien to socialism.

Anarchists also say that no one can actually "represent" workers interests but workers themselves. Once elected to power socialists experience the very opposite to what workers put up with.



its advocacy of direct action by workers themselves in changing things, but also because of its opposition to the authoritarianism of the workplace under capitalism which divides people into a few order-givers and a majority of order-takers. Other socialist ideas have often accepted this side of capitalism.

The essential idea of anarchism is that the inequality and authoritarianism of capitalism is neither acceptable nor necessary. Workers and the poor are

hardly a productive contribution to the world's economy. Unlike the rich, workers alone carry out the daily grind that keeps all services going in society. The other side to things is that rich and poor should not exist in a world that has wealth, food and resources aplenty. The one thing standing in the way of abolishing poverty is the interests of the rich class. For them, the struggle is to keep things the way they are unequal. They have never been richer and they like it like that.

*continued on back page*

# Workers Solidarity Bookservice

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## THE ANARCHIST IDEA

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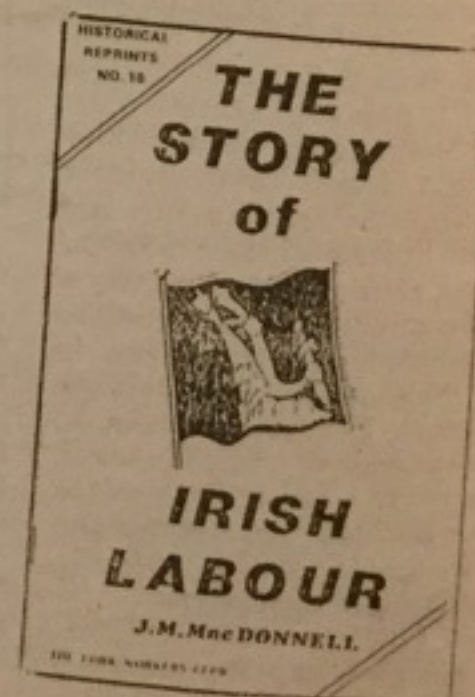
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# Anarchism

continued

Governments are built on privileges (state cars, huge expenses, etc.) and authority - members of them soon become corrupt. Anarchists argue that only those who suffer inequality and injustice can and will at the end of the day see the fight to end it through to the finish.

Governments of socialists on the other hand soon get bogged down "in the national interest" and other compromises once in power. Far from changing anything, things can often get worse for many workers.

Anarchism, then, is an idea based on revolutionary change of society by the direct industrial action of workers. In the everyday class struggle its aim is to build as much working class unity as possible. It argues for workers to strengthen their organisations and their capacity to take control from the bosses. This starts with taking control of their unions at local level. Anarchism looks from this to the situation where workers will be strong enough by virtue of their industrial power to take control. There is no middle ground. At the moment the bosses are strong and in control. But when the time comes when workers are stronger, they must smash capitalism and the State and run things for themselves. Immediately, the decisions affecting the economy, industry and society will be transferred to workplace and community councils. These will freely federate and begin running society by the use of recallable delegates.

It is in the anarchists' demands for the immediate running of all society by workplace and community councils that the notion of "anarchism as chaos" was put forward by many of its opponents. Those who support capitalism say, to do

this would lead to "anarchy" and chaos. "How could the workers run things - they wouldn't be able." But anarchists have complete faith in ordinary people running the affairs of the world. Far from chaos ensuing, things would get much better and moreover people would get the practical experience for the first time of having a huge degree of control over their lives - one of the main purposes of socialism.



But it is also on the question of workers immediately running society that anarchists differ from other revolutionary socialists. Marxist-Leninists such as the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917 believe that the working class isn't "able" initially to run society. In the transition period they need the Party to "guide" them and show them the right road. But apart from the lack of faith in workers' capabilities, there is also another side to the Party in that it sees itself as the most "advanced" section of workers. It argues that it "knows best" for workers and that moreover it has the "long term" interests of the class in mind while workers in their workplaces tend to be shortsighted and/or have less politically advanced views. It ascribes to itself the "right" to make decisions about workers' interests which the workers must follow, since the party is more "politically mature".

Anarchists don't agree with this elitism. In a revolution, made by the workers, which is about achieving their liberation from capitalism there is no other supreme authority than the workers councils. Moreover, a Party that takes control of the State during the revolution, believing itself to be "infallible" and having a more advanced view than the workers about what socialism is about is a recipe for a dictatorship. This is precisely what happened in

Russia in 1917. Rather than encouraging the workers councils in Russia at the time, the Bolsheviks steadily undermined them.

The first economic commission in Russia had no workers' delegates on it at all, only appointees of the Party. Similarly, the Bolsheviks sought to control the ideas workers could hear. They didn't trust workers to support Bolshevik ideas because they best represented their interests but instead banned all other political groups, including the anarchists, from being able to make their views known.

Thus the revolution was stifled and crushed by a Party that claimed to be doing it "all-for the workers". Anarchists argue that the means used to build socialism and ends achieved are connected. Thus a Party which achieves power believing itself to be "above" the working class cannot but end up creating a rigid hierarchical society all over again. In Russia the Bolsheviks created a state capitalism in which the profits and privileges went to the senior Party members - the new bosses. Far from "guiding" the workers to socialism, only tyranny and capitalism resulted.

Finally then, anarchism is the idea of a free socialist society and how it can be achieved by the direct action and strength of the working class. Its conception of socialism is based on the collective ability of the working class and an absolute belief in freedom. Anarchism is different from all other types of socialism. It advocates revolutionary change by the working class, but not so that the anarchist are enshrined in power. Rather its ideas are about the working-class alone creating and running society through new means of economic and political administration.

Anarchists stand uncompromisingly for a new world. It will be organised from the bottom up and production will be to meet peoples' needs, not for the private profit of a few. Anarchist society will make real the old call "from each according to ability, to each according to need". Every individual will enjoy complete control of her/his life with no limitation their freedom as long as they do not encroach on the freedom of anyone else. That is what the Workers Solidarity Movement is fighting for.

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family values.\*

Back to Basics isn't unique to Britain and the Tory party. The 'moral majority' of Regan and Bush in the US has been replaced by Clintons attacks on 'welfare mothers'.

They aim to create a situation where it is socially unacceptable to rely on social welfare for support. Hence they argue it is 'irresponsible' to have children on low incomes. Instead of debate being centred round the state's responsibility to provide for its citizens, it is centred on the individual's requirement to be self-catering.

The agenda being set, is that the problem facing society is the poor themselves rather than the reasons why they are poor. The question being asked is how to contain the burden the poor cause rather than how to eliminate poverty.

The state can reduce the cost of maintaining the social welfare by directly cutting the amount of money it allocates. However, many governments are either in too weak a position to do this, or have already cut as much as they can. By reducing the amount of people actually claiming, spending can be reduced indirectly. The ground is also being prepared for future cuts.

The purpose of this ideological battle is to drive people away from the concept of the welfare state and towards notions of individual responsibility. The family rather than the state will bear the costs of child care as well as support for the old, ill and impoverished in society. A vast unpaid workforce is created by pushing women back into the home.

A single mother claiming benefit will now be forced to name the father of her children. In many cases, rather than be forced into contact with violent ex-partners, women will simply not claim. Instead they'll be forced to rely on their own families for financial support or indeed for child care if they intend to work.

THE FAMILY

So, as well as imposing cuts, the Conservative party is waging an ideological war against single mothers and in favour of the family. In this respect capitalism has changed little since its birth. The industrial revolution saw the expounding of the nuclear family as the only acceptable model in society. Responsibilities for child care, housing, health and care of the elderly no longer lay with the community or with the lord of the manor. Instead it was expected that the smaller unit of the nuclear family would undertake all care for the workforce.

Economic circumstance forced women to act as nurses, childminders, cooks and cleaners. Similarly, men were forced to sell their labour power to provide food and accommodation. The state reaped the rewards of a self-catering, cheaply maintained workforce without having any role in the upkeep of that workforce. Single mothers have been singled out for attack because they do rely on the state for help. Indeed many Conservatives have been quite explicit in saying this. Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, complained that these women were 'marrying the state'; that is depending on the State for financial assistance, rather than depending on a husband.

The entire propaganda of the Conservatives has been consistently aimed at re-enforcing the family as the

# Gas Masks and Pantyhose

The Back to Basics propaganda campaign has been undermined because the Tories failed to meet their own moral standards. In condemning the Tory party we must be careful not to take on their morality. There's nothing wrong with shagging. No one should expect human sexual behaviour to be expressed in only one way. It's strange that while we accept diversity in tastes in food, music, book, films when it comes to sex we talk of rights, wrongs and norms.

Heterosexual penetrative sex in the missionary position is assumed to be the norm. Yet, who would ever assume that most normal people eat meat and two veg every day of their lives? Who would think it was peculiar to consume and enjoy curry or chilli or potato soup. While variety is accepted and unquestioned in every other one of our senses, our sexual behaviour is regulated by culturally (and sometimes legally) enforced rules. Rules so deeply embedded in society we often aren't even aware of their existence.

fundamental unit of society. John Redwood, the Welsh Secretary said "the natural state should be the two-adult family". Virginia Bottomley hypes us up with "without [families], individuals are like a frantic whirl of atoms, attached to no one, responsible to nothing, creating a vaporous society not a solid one". Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, said "we must emphasise our belief that the traditional two parent family is best, best for parents, best for society and above all best for the child". To be more honest he might have added best for capitalism.

However, instead of honesty, the Conservatives have justified their crusade by making up facts and lying about academic research. The Guardian (9/11/93) reported on a paper commissioned by the British cabinet and prepared by senior civil servants. It dismissed three of the key arguments used by the Conservative politicians to support their attack on single parents; that benefit rates encouraged women to have children on their own, that there was a link between crime rates and criminality among children of single mothers, and that there was evidence

The problem with the Tory party is not that they have extra marital affairs or that some of them enjoy cross dressing. Sure they are guilty of hypocrisy and often of lying to their friends and family. However the trouble with criticising these things, is that given that their morality is the dominant one in society it can look as we support their basic viewpoint. It can seem that we would accept the Tories if only they'd be more honest in bed. Capitalism attempts to limit our sexuality in order to keep us in line. Most obviously they've targeted gays and women. If only for our only personal well being, we should be aware of how these factors operate upon us and how they curb the range of experiences available to us. However a far greater crime of the Tory party in Britain and of the ruling class world wide is the way it keeps us the working class in either poverty or wage slavery. Once their economic system tumbles down, their rotten and weirdly restrictive morality will crumble with it. And then we will really start to have fun.

that women became pregnant to get council housing. Yet speeches at the Tory party conference, two weeks after they had seen the paper, showed when the truth is not useful it's just ignored. Blatantly lying, Peter Lilley said "I've got a little list...[of] young ladies who get pregnant just to jump the housing list"

VICTORIAN VALUES

This isn't the first time the Conservatives have manipulated and lied about academic work to justify implementing it's political agenda. Indeed though the Tory party are on a moral crusade to bring back Victorian values, they are particular as to which values they wish to keep, a point which was well made by Gwendolene Stuart<sup>1</sup> in a pamphlet on Thatcher "(they have) picked from that period selectively the sentiments and values of the most oppressive class...deriding the real values of that period, the values of ordinary men and women who struggled to work collectively together to advance their quality of life."

There is nothing new or original about

the present campaign. As Dr. John Harris comments "At the beginning of the 20th century there was already a firmly established belief that the family was in decline and decay as a result of the growth of industrial society". The introduction of women into the workforce, the growth of unions and organisations representing youth removed them from the family environment, giving them greater independence.

The move to the cities brought with it poverty, overcrowding and crime. The changing structure of the family was blamed for this rather than the effects of industrialisation. The response of social planners was to re-define women's roles within society. Arguments about women being naturally suited to domesticity and about their need for protection in a morally corrupt world were introduced. Concern over declining birth-rate raised "motherhood" to a new level in social recognition. The first Mothers Day was celebrated in 1907 with this in mind. The so called sexual liberation that followed World War I was followed by a moral backlash.

On one hand legislation was introduced which removed many restrictions on women working, on the other ideology was created to prevent women from taking full advantage of the new opportunities available to them. Again and again the family values have been used by capitalism as a bulwark against progression and to deflect from the misery caused by it.

NAME THE REAL ENEMY

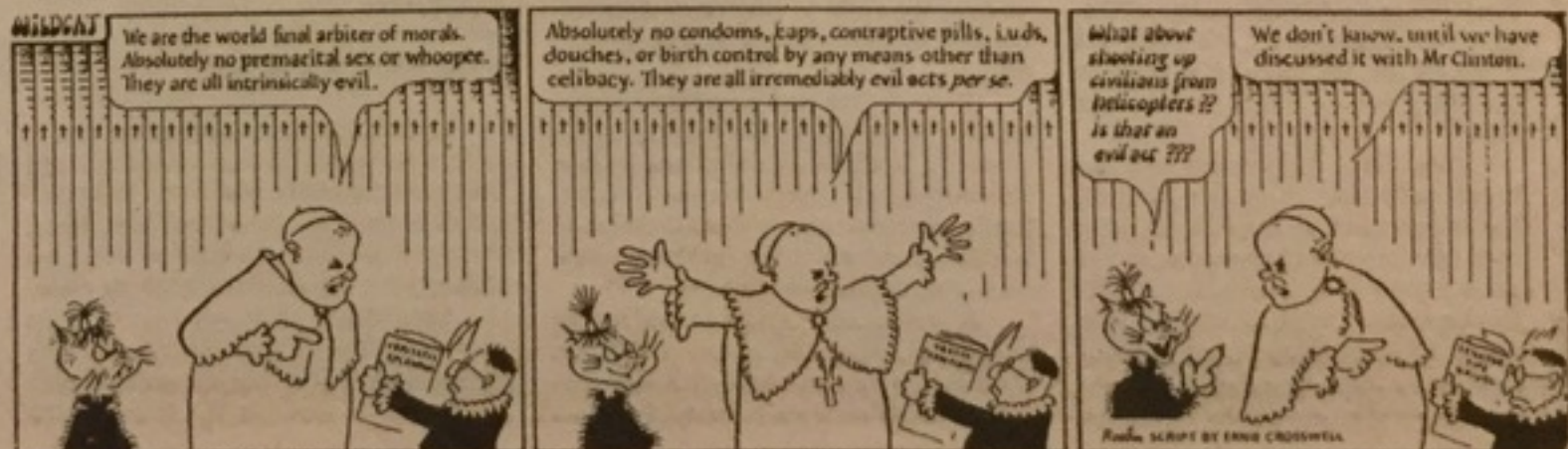
It's true that the scandals have undermined much of the Back to Basics propaganda program, however this doesn't mean the Tories have failed. The Child Protection Agency, despite negative publicity, is still in place. The Agency targets men who are already paying maintenance rather than track down those who pay nothing because this way it is easier to reach target figures. The force of the moral crusade may have collapsed but the policies behind it are still being implemented. More importantly a consensus is being created that the cost of the welfare state is no longer justifiable.

Capitalism is a cruel and unjust system. It has caused people to live in poverty for over 200 years. It couldn't survive without a strong ideology justifying its actions. In England at the moment we can see the repackaging of such an ideology. It is up to us to name the real enemy, not the poor, the weak or dispossessed in society, but rather capitalism.

<sup>1</sup> published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Report in The Guardian, November 9th 1993

<sup>2</sup> The Family, a Social History of the 20th Century, edited by Dr. John Harris (Harraps, 1992)

<sup>3</sup> The Other Side of the Coin; Margaret Thatcher, from a working women's point of view. (Gwedolen Stuart, 1987).



Panel. SCRIPT BY ERIC CROSSWELL

# PCW vote Significant minority say no to union leaders

**AS EXPECTED** the Irish Congress of Trade Unions Special Conference voted to accept the Programme for Competitiveness and Work, by 256 to 76. Unions opposed included the ATGWU, TEEU, MSF, NUJ and the FUGE which represents low paid messengers and cleaners in the civil service.

The vote in favour is a setback for militant trade unionism. The PCW is about pay restraint, job losses and promotion of a fictitious 'partnership' between workers, bosses and

government. It is a continuation of the PNR and PESP which hammered the low paid, unemployed and growing numbers of poor.

A campaign against the deal was mounted by Trade Union Fightback, an alliance of rank & file shop stewards and activists. Sadly the current level of demoralisation among union members meant that their campaign was a pale shadow of the one waged against the PESP in 1991. TUF has since disbanded. However if there was a drop in the numbers campaigning there was no noticeable drop in the numbers opposed to such deals.

Within the largest union, SIPTU,

29,308 (32%) voted against in a turnout of about 50%. In most jobs where even one individual made the arguments for a 'no' vote they were usually successful in winning over the majority. This was done in a situation where the union literature carried only pro-PCW propaganda. In the best tradition of SIPTU style 'democracy' the Branch Secretaries were prohibited by head office from sending out circulars to members notifying them when Branch Committees decided to recommend against but the National Executive was allowed to put their recommendation actually on the ballot paper!

In Trinity College the shop stewards, representing 440 manual & clerical staff, countered the Executive by affixing their own "10 reasons to vote no" to each ballot paper. Here the vote against was 5.6:1. Similar tactics were used in several CPSU branches.

We have to face the fact that mass unemployment, mounting poverty and over two decades of centralised wage bargaining have left many good union activists

demoralised. They are doubtful about the possibility of fighting back against the bosses and bureaucrats. The vote on the PCW hasn't helped.

Rather than get depressed at the failure of TUF we should be aware that large rank & file groupings are created when workers are fighting the bosses, are confident, and then find the union officials are trying to sabotage their struggle. The need for independent organisation within the union is then posed. Struggle creates genuine rank & file movements, not the other around.

At a time when workers are on the defensive and lacking in confidence any attempt to create such groups will attract only small numbers of activists. This is not to decry such attempts (where they arise from a genuine desire to take on the officials) but to warn against any unrealistic goals at this stage.

However all is not bad news. There are activists who want to fight back. Lately we have seen the COLT campaign to get the unions to fight C45s in the construction industry, the anger at threatened pay cuts and redundancies in Irish Rail and the marathon strike at Nolan Transport for union recognition. The struggle is far from over.



THERE ARE so many parachutes in the sky we can no longer see the sun. They are dropping 'personalities' into the June Euro-election. All the major parties in the 26 counties have selected 'names' to run for them. Fianna Fáil got Olive Braiden from the Rape Crisis Centre; Labour got RTE's Orla Guerin; Fine Gael got the Ranchers' leader, Alan Gillis.

None had been members of these parties until literally days before their selection. Olive Braiden had previously been out canvassing for Mary Robinson (an ex-member of Labour) and Frances Fitzgerald of Fine Gael. Now she is going for the hat trick with Albert's gang. Orla Guerin has had no known involvement in party politics. Alan Gillis was too busy pleading for rich farmers to be given yet more EC money to find time to join a party.

Yet they all ended up as party candidates. The only reason they were asked to run was that they are well known. Not because their politics are well known, not because they even have any known political commitment - but simply because their names are well known.

### FORGET THE POLITICS... JUST GET THE IMAGE RIGHT

Braiden is supposed to give Fianna Fáil a more 'liberal' image in Dublin [while they run Catholic bigots like Eamonn O'Cuiv for a Galway Dáil seat]. Lane's job is to hold on to the big farmer vote that Fine Gael has enjoyed since the 1930's. And Guerin is helping Labour to build a new image, the 'modern' party that put Mary Robinson into the Phoenix Park.

Democratic Left didn't want to be left out either. They are running Pat 'triple mandate' Rabbitte because their opinion polls suggested he would get a higher vote than sitting MEP Des Geraghty. With all of them it is a case of personality being a damn sight more important than policies.

All of this shows the contempt

that the parties treat the voters with. There will be little time given over to discussing manifestoes or policies. There will be a lot of time given over to what are no more than personality contests. Maybe the Workers Party should try to recapture a few of their old votes by standing down Tomás McGiolla and getting Bono or Gay Byrne to run instead. Or Sinn Féin could ask one of the Wolfe Tones, and the Progressive Democrats could fly in Clint Eastwood.

Anarchists are not taking part in this charade, we are not calling for a vote for anyone. Not this time, not ever. It is because we are democrats that we do not take part in parliamentary elections. Sounds odd? The key question is what do we mean by democracy?

### WHO HAS THE POWER?

The right to the vote was part of the hard won struggles of workers (and suffragettes!) over the last couple of hundred years. Obviously it is preferable to live in a parliamentary democracy rather than a dictatorship. Even the most flawed democracies are forced to concede rights that dictatorships do not, such as relative independence for trade unions, the right to limited demonstrations, a certain amount of free speech, etc.

However the real purpose of parliament is not to ensure the country is run according to the wishes of all the people, cherishing all their views equally. Parliament instead provides a democratic facade beyond which the real business of managing capitalism goes on.

A seemingly endless series of business scandals, from BCCI to Goodman, gives us some idea how the real decisions are made in the boardrooms

## Thinking about Anarchism



# Don't Vote it only encourages them

rather than the debating chambers. In the unlikely event of a government getting elected which goes "too far" in the eyes of the bosses they are quick to use any means necessary to remove it.

The best known example of this is perhaps the removal of the democratically elected Allende government in Chile in 1970. They had attempted to bring in a limited package of reforms and nationalise some of the larger American industries. The result was a military coup backed by the CIA in 1973.

### WHO WANTS A BOSS?

Anarchists do not believe the sort of change we want can come about through the good actions of a few individuals. We have always argued that the liberation of the working class can only be achieved through the action of the working class.

This idea is obviously the complete opposite to the parliamentary idea. We do not seek a few leaders, good, bad or indifferent to sort out the mess that is

capitalism. Indeed we argue constantly against any ideas that make it seem such elites are necessary. Voting for rulers (whether you do so "critically" or any other way) is supporting the idea that society should be divided into rulers and ruled. We want to end that division just as much as we want to end the division into bosses and workers.

The alternative we support is anarchism, where society is organised to benefit the many and not just the profiteering few. It is an alternative where anyone effected by a decision will be able to have a say in making that decision. Power will come from the bottom up. A system of workplace and community councils, federated nationally and eventually internationally, will ensure that this is done in an organised, efficient and truly democratic way.

Alan MacSimóin

**Making changes happen**

# Evolution and Revolution

**THE IDEA OF evolution has always been important to socialists. Except for a handful of utopians most have thought of socialism in terms of human progress and improvement. This idea was given a scientific basis in the nineteenth century by socialists who saw society as evolving through stages towards socialism (not that it would stop here socialism would just be the end of pre-history real history could then begin.) Most socialists believed that the struggle towards socialism was a striving of people to develop and move forward.**

So socialists have been united by the idea of the human race advancing towards a better society. They have been divided about how to get there. A major division has arisen between those who believe that socialism can evolve passively through education and example and those who believe it has to be fought for.

**CAN CHANGE OCCUR BY ITSELF?**

As capitalism began to develop during the nineteenth century small groups began to question the system and whether it ran in the interests of everyone. Most of this criticism was moral. Capitalism was seen as evil because it denied humans their through potential and freedom. One of the first practical solutions put forward was to build a new society from within capitalism. This was the idea of forming socialist co-operatives.

Some of these settlements were models of socialist ideas in practice with all goods held in common and an equal say for all. For example a Co-op set up at Rahilline Co. Clare in 1831.

This was founded when the owner John Scott Vandeleur donated his 618 acre estate to the original tenants. The Rahilline Agricultural and Manufacturing Co-operative Association was an instant success. All land was held in common and workers were paid in labour notes. These could be redeemed for supplies from the committee but such was the abundance they were hardly required. The committee was elected by all the ex-tenants and was made up of both men and women.

Unfortunately Vandeleur lost all his money gambling and the estate was sold to pay debts. The workers signed a declaration "We the under-signed members of the Rahilline Agricultural and Manufacturing Co-operative Association have experienced over the last 2 years contentment, peace and happiness....." (quoted in P. Berrisford *Elisa History of the Irish Working Class*)

The area quickly settled down to the old pattern of police and landlord violence and agricultural revolts exactly as before. Despite the best intentions of

the co-operativists few wanted to follow their example and just hand land to the peasants. None of their schemes led to socialism though some gave a clue as to how it might work in practice. In Ireland today modern farm co-ops are just limited companies. Many are among the most successful capitalist enterprises in the country.

**ISLANDS IN THE STREAM**

Unfortunately these isolated social experiments are doomed to failure. There can be no islands in the stream of capitalism. Any such group has to enter into economic relations with the modern capitalist economy eventually.

The only other choice is total self containment and isolation like the religious colonies of Hutterites, Menonites and Amish in America. Though these societies spurn war and violence and hold all goods in common they are also conservative, sexist and rooted in tradition. They have basically stood still for 400 years and ignored the world around them. They cannot move forward because progress and evolution is ultimately based on social and human contact.

**IS THAT A BALLOT BOX IN YOUR POCKET?**

So socialism won't evolve from islands within capitalism. Neither will it evolve from example, education or voting to put the "good guys" in power. Only a total idiot (and I've met a few in my time) could believe that voting social democrats into power could bring about socialism. A study of parliamentary democracy in Western Europe between 1970 and 1985 noted that "all European parties of any reasonable size have enjoyed at least one period of power in this period."

"Socialists" have been in government everywhere! Yet through out Europe it has been business as usual. No matter what party was in power economic policy remained unchanged. In the election in Australia last year a panel of leading economic experts could not see any difference between the Labour party and neo-thatcherite Liberal party on economic policy.

The striking thing about parliamentary democracy is its entirely undemocratic character. John Stuart Mill the 19th century liberal philosopher saw democracy as a form of government in which "the intellectual classes would lead the government and the government would lead the stupid classes" Whatever about the intelligence of "democratic" governments they certainly rule in the interests of a minority class. The "stupid classes" get to mark a card every few years and otherwise put up or shut up. Capitalist democracy is merely an exercise in mass disenfranchisement.

**BIOLOGICAL CRISIS**

So how do we anarchists see socialist ideas evolving? Evolution is not necessarily a smooth and even process. The modern view of evolution in biology is a story of long periods of stability with little change separated by brief crisis periods. Within this short periods of evolutionary time there were huge waves of evolutionary change along with mass extinctions. During this time hundreds of species perished and hundreds of new ones evolved. This idea was first put forward by a materialist zoologist; Stephen J Gould. It is to the idea of materialism that we turn to for our view of how societies evolve.

Society does not progress slowly and smoothly but after long periods of evolution there are briefer periods of revolutionary change. Capitalism, for example, evolved slowly from within feudalism. However the actual transition from feudalism to capitalism was marked by upheaval and social revolution throughout Europe. A new class of merchants and capitalists overthrew an old order of lords and monarchs. Democracy and the nation state replaced a network of earldoms and dukedoms loosely bound together by a king or queen.

**REVOLUTIONS**

Our view is that, unfortunately, major social change does not happen quickly or easily. Anarchism won't just happen. It will only succeed when the majority of society have the ability and the wish to run it in their own interests.

In practice we see revolution as building from the ground up. Workers infringing more and more on the bosses' profit margins and eventually questioning their right to make a profit on the backs of the working class and taking over their workplace. As the struggle progresses more workers setup workplace committees, councils and eventually defence militias. Groups begin to federate upwards on the basis of democracy, delegation and recallability. This is a revolution desired by many not imposed by a few (as most past revolutions have been.)

Inevitably when faced with a major challenge the bosses and state will be ready to fight to defend their wealth and power. We have to be ready to fight to defend and forward the revolution.

With good organisation, most people on our side and much of the army coming over we would hope this would not be a long or bloody fight. We are certain the system can't be reformed out of existence. It has to be destroyed. We are revolutionaries not out of blood lust or because we think it sounds cool. We are revolutionaries because it is the only way forward.

*Des Mc Carron*

## Find Out More

The world's wealth is produced by us - the working class. We ought to enjoy the benefits.

The Workers Solidarity Movement is an anarchist organisation that fights for a 32 county Workers' Republic.

We stand for a socialism that is based on freedom and real democracy, a society based on workplace and community councils.

This kind of socialism has nothing to do with the state capitalism that was practiced in Russia, and still is in China, Cuba and other police states.

We oppose coercive authority, and hold that the only limit on freedom of the individual should be that they don't encroach on the freedom of others.

\*\*\*\*\*

As part of our fight for anarchism we are involved in the struggles for higher wages, for trade union democracy, for womens rights, for jobs.

We oppose all divisions in the working class. We fight against all attempts to set Protestant against Catholic, men against women, skilled against unskilled, old against young, heterosexual against homosexual.

We are opposed to the British state's presence and to partition. We defend peoples' right to fight back. But we are not nationalists, we do not merely want to get rid of the border. We want to unite our class and create a totally new Ireland.

\*\*\*\*\*

I want more information about the Workers Solidarity Movement.

NAME

ADDRESS

Return to WSM, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

# Letters

Dear Comrades,

One minute to midnight on Friday 15th April and the rail strike is averted. SIPTU left it to the last minute leaving the company sweating it out. The unions never had problems with negotiations. The strike notice was only served after the company suspended workers for not accepting new training arrangements which they were being forced to take or face being suspended. The company had repeatedly refused to enter negotiations because this productivity deal had been on the table for three years.

The mass media could not hide from this one. It was to be the first national rail strike in over 40 years. But they hid the facts about the dispute and concentrated on one single issue - claims that the drivers earn up to £20,000 a year. A similar claim like this was used against workers in the Waterford Glass dispute. It attempted to portray the drivers as privileged workers and thus divert public support from their cause. They failed to mention the 70-80 hours work per week or spending 4-5 hours on a train with no toilet facilities often endured by the drivers.

If the productivity deal goes ahead drivers will be asked to operate trains without guards, in other words do two peoples' jobs. The guards will be re-deployed to other depots and most likely do other jobs than their own. Drivers could lose their mileage allowance which they earn for long distance runs and also work a five out of seven day week. Saturday and Sunday would become ordinary days and overtime lost.

On Friday at lunch time the company organised, against their will, 17 temporary Draftsmen and Engineers to go down to Rosslare to be used to man the port, tying up boats, erecting the gang plank, and collecting tickets. None of the staff had been trained to do these duties. The company were prepared to put passengers safety at risk in order to maintain profits. Fortunately this did not go ahead. In the short term the workers have won and the company are on the run. Watch this dispute closely. It may develop into massive strike action.

TEEU member,  
Iarnród Eireann

\*Since this letter was written there have, of course, been further developments. For the moment the leadership of SIPTU, which went over the heads of the union's own Rail Council, managed to head off strike action. No surprise that Attley, Browne & co. behaved like agents of management! How far rail workers can be pushed before they fight back is the question.

Send your letters to  
**Workers Solidarity,**  
P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8

# Prepare to Sink the Service Charges

## REVIEW

**The Poll Tax Rebellion** by Danny Burns. AK Press. £4.95 (available from WSM Book Service)

IN THE LAST issue of *Workers Solidarity* we discussed the proposed introduction of service charges in Dublin. We pointed out how they were a grossly unfair form of double taxation on ordinary PAYE workers. How can they be resisted? A refusal to pay campaign in Waterford, Dublin and Limerick beat the water rates in the 1980s we believe a don't pay, don't collect campaign can do so again. Conor Mc Loughlin examines a new book on how the Poll Tax was beaten in the UK.

This book was completed by Danny Burns in January 1992. He was secretary of the Avon federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions and co-ordinated the campaign in the South West. He was also one of the three non-aligned (i.e. non-party members) on the executive of the All Britain Federation. The book is a history of the growth of the non-payment campaign which involved thousands through the Anti-Poll Tax Unions (APTUs).

It is a refreshing change from your typical history book in that the events are seen mainly through the eyes of the people directly involved. It is written as a story beginning with the growth of local APTUs and moving on to courthouse disruption, bailiff resistance and leading to the Trafalgar Square riot and the eventual defeat of the Poll Tax.

In total 17 million people in Britain did not pay their Poll Tax. Some would argue that this was purely passive and that most of the non-payment was "can't pay" rather than "won't pay." This book clearly illustrates how thousands, perhaps millions were very actively involved in the fight against the Poll Tax.

The tax was first greeted in Scotland then Britain by the formation of local APTUs. By November 1989 there were 1000. Most groups started small but many built up memberships of 500 and

more. This was a campaign which drew in thousands who had never been involved in politics before.

### NEW TACTICS

This meant that new tactics and approaches were needed to get people involved. For example in Easton in Bristol the local union was built on a door to door basis. Firstly a group of 5 or 6 friends got together and organised a public meeting to see if there was any interest at all. 50

happening. Networks of kids kept an eye out for bailiffs and sheriffs. Pensioners and parents working at home organised telephone trees and were ready to assemble at a moments notice to defend houses from sheriffs and bailiffs.

In fact bailiff busting became a high art. So much so that many debt collecting firms went bust. In Edinburgh a group called scum busters were equipped with squads of cars and CB radios. Several minicab companies in London performed a similar service. Poindings (whereby a sheriff can value and remove goods) were resisted by crowds of hundreds in Scotland (they didn't have the power to do it in Wales and England). Bailiffs' houses were picketed and sheriffs offices occupied.

The movement was built from the grass roots up. It was based closely on already existing community networks. Capitalism has broken up many traditional communities and created in their place vast estates. However in some cases this has back-fired on them. For example in Mayfield (sounding not totally unlike it's namesake in Cork);

*"Our area is mostly made up of housing schemes. There isn't a big shopping area. It was a mining community but then they*

*closed down the pits so there's a high unemployment rate in this area. The centre of Mayfield is the labour club, everything goes on there. It's a built up area there's not a lot of play for the kids. There's a small community centre, nothing else around here. But we pay high bus fares if we go in to town".* (Chris Mayers, Mayfield APTU)

Necessity had built up community links. People met in shopping centres, outside schools, at laundries, football matches etc. As APTUs worked on new links or tapped into already existing one there were some changes in perception. *"The barriers of age, sex and race began to crumble. Ali, the local Asian shopkeeper, allowed us to stick a huge notice board in his shop window. The local launderette took leaflets. Some people became noticeably healthier. Mary Mc Innes, one of the oldest members of the Prestonfield group, who occasionally needed a ventilator to breathe, and at first needed a lift to meetings, literally ran up the street to be at Paul Smarts house before the sheriff officers".* (Bob Goupillot, Prestonfield Community Resistance.)

Some on the left argued for non-collection of the tax to be fought for within



\* One of the many angry demonstrations outside courthouses when non-payers were summonsed

people turned up and some joined.

The next stage was to drop a window poster into around 2000 households. Posters appeared in about 100 windows. These were then approached directly and asked to join the group. They then carried out a local survey. This was not really a scientific poll more of a pretext to sound out local feeling.

In the end the union had about 300 members. It attempted to keep people in touch by having street reps and a local news-letter. This was useful as it informed people that they were not alone and that non-payers were all around them. Using these tactics APTUs succeeded in changing non-payment from a passive individual act to an active collective one in many cases.

### MOTIVATION

They also recognised the vital role of confidence building and political motivation. The first priority was to convince people to fight. The second to convince them that they could win. The aim in most APTUs was to make all the members feel that they were an active and important part of what was

the unions. However NALGO (the local government workers' union) which was won to a non-payment policy refused to lift a finger to implement it. Those union members who tried to organise workplace campaigns met with hostility from the leadership. The book devotes only a mere two pages in a section on wage arrestment (to pay tax arrears) to the idea of non-collection.

We believe that non-collection of service charges could and should be fought for within IMPACT and the CPSU - the unions concerned with collection in Ireland. If workers can be won over to this idea then they are making a very fundamental statement against the state's right to collect a new tax. They are questioning who runs society and in whose interests.

However given the present state of the unions, the low level of activism on the ground (after years of national wage deals) and the stranglehold of the bureaucracy this won't be an easy battle. In fact the current policy of both IMPACT and the CPSU supports the introduction of a head tax to improve local services and increase employment. They have bought in totally to the "partnership" myth.

In 1986/1987 there was a major debate within the LGPSU (now a part of IMPACT) about hospital charges. The national conference voted for non-collection but the executive found this unacceptable and held several repeat votes until it swung in their favour. This shows that a major union could be won to non-payment but any measure which broke the law would face hostility and non-co-operation from the bureaucracy.

#### THE WORKERS STRIKE BACK

The huge anti-Poll Tax demonstrations of 200,000 in London and 50,000 in Glasgow was in many respects the turning point in the Anti-Poll-Tax battle. The rioting which broke out involved thousands in a spontaneous outburst of class anger. 542 police officers were wounded, thousands of demonstrators were injured as police charged with horses and drove vans at demonstrators.

The "Militant" dominated national executive of the All British Federation of APTUs proved they were totally out of touch with reality. Tommy Sherridan claimed that those "embroiled in running battles had nothing to do with our protest" (post-march press conference)

Steve Nally (on ITN April first) announced "we are going to hold our own internal inquiry which will go public and if necessary name names". However the first opinion poll after the riots showed one third of people felt the fightback against the police was justified.

Norman Tebbit (from his own class point of view) proved more perceptive "if you tell people to break the law by not paying the tax, you're not far off telling them to break other laws as well". Within weeks of March 31st the number of APTUs had trebled.

Overall a great read. I would only have one or two minor quibbles. At one stage the point is made that the strength of the APTUs was their tactical diversity which is very true. However he continues that firebombing Poll Tax offices could be included in this list claiming "the activities of those who were not prepared to break the law were not undermined by the actions of the few who chose to throw firebombs."

This isn't exactly the point though. After all non-payment was breaking the law.

## — Their Morals and Ours —

# THE REASONS WHY EMMET STAGG SHOULD RESIGN

\*1 In February 1992, Emmet Stagg - a self-proclaimed "socialist" closely identified with the left wing of the Labour Party - resigned from Labour's Parliamentary Party, claiming that Dick Spring was preparing to lead the party into coalition and proclaiming that he would "never vote for a right wing Taoiseach from Fianna Fail or Fine Gael."

In January 1993 - less than eleven months later - this opponent of coalition stood up at Labour's Special Conference to second the motion that they enter a "Partnership Government" with Fianna Fáil and duly trooped through the lobbies to vote for Albert Reynolds as Taoiseach.

On formation of the government he was rewarded for his change of heart by being appointed Junior Minister with responsibility for Housing.

\*2 In May 1993, in his capacity as minister for Housing, Stagg was criticised for failing to provide adequate funding for the maintenance of Dublin Corporation housing. His response was to blame the "restrictive union practices..." of Corporation maintenance workers and to threaten privatisation of the maintenance work. When it was put to him by a "Sunday Tribune" journalist that this statement was somewhat at variance with his previous supposedly "socialist" views, he responded - "maybe I wouldn't have said something like that two years ago, but I wasn't a Minister two years ago."

\*3 Stagg's appointment as the first ever Junior Minister with direct responsibility for housing was hailed by supporters of the Fianna Fail/Labour coalition as evidence that the new government marked a new departure and was placing the homeless crisis at the top of its agenda. However the number of people on housing waiting lists throughout the state has continued to climb and Eastern Health Board Social Workers have been in dispute since last year in an attempt to highlight the lack of crisis accommodation for homeless teenagers in Dublin. Stagg's appointment has merely been a window-dressing exercise and the housing crisis continues unabated (See



• Emmet Stagg on the night he was first elected to the Dáil in 1987

"Waiting on the Waiting List", *Workers Solidarity* no.41)

\*4 Emmet Stagg's sexuality is indeed a matter for himself. However a positive statement from him following the Phoenix Park controversy confirming his bi-sexuality could have done a great deal to challenge the homophobic nature of sections of our society. He clearly decided that his position in government was more important to him. He is a member of a government

which has introduced tax on certain social welfare payments, brought in the draconian Public Order Bill, stitched up workers yet again through the "Programme for Competitiveness and Work" and failed to tackle the twin crises of unemployment and poverty. Yet Stagg still claims to be a "socialist". Who's he trying to fool?

Gregor Kerr

### Dublin Anarchist Discussion

All readers welcome

Wednesday June 1st, 8pm

Ha'penny Bridge Inn (top floor), Wellington Quay, Dublin 2

### The Zapatistas of Mexico

...what they stand for

[this talk will be based on the written proclamations issued by the rebels]

speaker: Dermot Sreenan

The problem with isolated and "glamorous" pieces of action like petrol bombings is that they are entirely individualistic. They tend to alienate many involved in the boring hum-drum activism that adds up to a popular fightback. Sometimes such tactics may be justified in the face of all other avenues of struggle being closed by the

state. Here though they served more as a distraction from the real campaign.

Another problem is given the secrecy of this type of action it could not be democratically planned and agreed by most of the members of a particular APTU so it is not fair to claim to "represent" anyone in these actions.

This aside the book is a well written and highly readable account of the struggle against the Poll Tax. It encribes the writing in large clear letters on the wall for anyone wishing to fight our own "service charges". The only way to defeat a community based household tax is by mass community and workplace resistance.

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

MAGAZINE OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT  
NUMBER 42

75p outside Ireland

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## Revolution!

ideas in action

A day of discussion for libertarian socialism

Speakers from  
Class War  
Organise!  
Real Action

Workers Solidarity Movement

On in Connolly Hall, Essex St, Temple Bar  
Saturday 21st of May, starting at 1.00



Debates On

- Organising Towards Revolution
- Workplace struggles and the unions
- Who we are and what we do

Bookstalls, videos and additional meetings

# Shout it loud Out and Proud

**ANARCHISTS believe that most people want to live in a society better than the one we live in now.**

The coming into effect last June of legislation which decriminalised certain male homosexual acts was the subject of much celebration in the gay community. The Minister who introduced the legislation, Maire Geoghan Quinn was awarded the Magnus Hirschfeld award for her contribution to the gay community by the National Lesbian and Gay Federation. For many it was felt the battle for equality had been won. This was certainly the outlook in the national and international press. Champagne flowed freely in the capital's gay pubs and clubs.

The period since then has been virtually silent in the gay political movement. The one exception was the Donna McAnnellan affair. Donna was sacked from her employment in a gym in Cork because she was a lesbian. She lost her appeal in January to the Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT). Apart from a couple of half hearted press statements from the NLGF, publicity Donna organized herself and a very small demonstration, activity was negligible.

Admittedly cases such as Donna's are now covered by a provision in the Unfair Dismissals legislation which place a sacking because of somebody's sexuality on the same level as sacking because of sex, race or religion.

In effect dismissal in such situations is presumed to be unfair but the maximum the employee can obtain is a year's wages. The usual award made by the EAT is a lot less than that. Re-instatement is very rare. Most young gays, lesbians and bisexuals work in poorly paid jobs like most young people in Ireland so even a year's wages will not amount to very much.

What Donna faced is the reality for

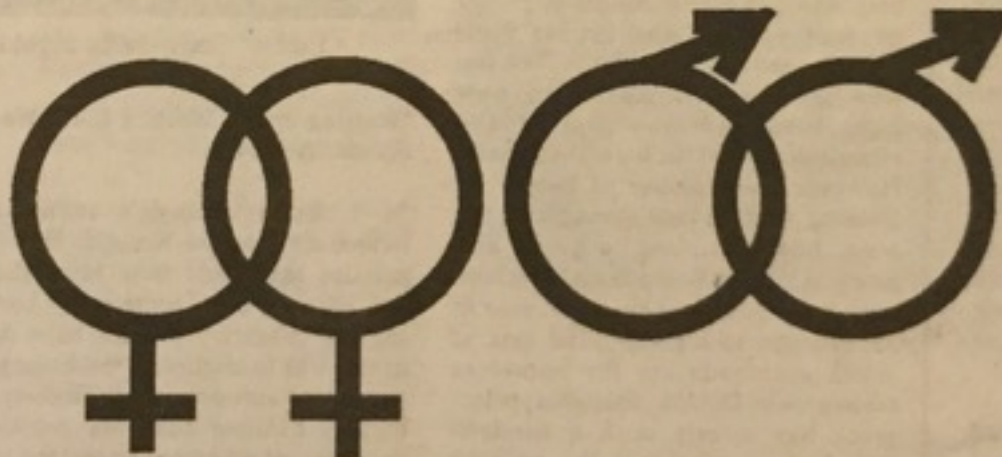
working class gay people. Being gay in working class Ireland is not a lot easier after the legislation than before. Employment appeal legislation only works if you succeed in getting a job and holding onto it for a year. A young "out" gay person is unlikely to succeed in doing that in their local community.

Gay social venues, at least in Dublin, tend to be dearer than almost any other venue and they only exist so long as the people running them are making enough money. Hence rumours that the owner of "The George", Dublin's only major gay

responsibility for the homeless. A large number of homeless become rentboys to survive. He should have been hounded because of his record in housing, not because of his sexuality.

The reality is that a lot more battles have to be fought before gay liberation is won. Even the new legislation is not irreversible. Equality legislation gained in the 1970s is now being rolled back in the United States.

The gay political movement did not always see its interests as lying with the



bar, is about to sell for a million pounds. Fiftis, a gay club, has already been sold for a large sum. The concept of the "Pink Pound" is lauded in the gay press in Ireland and England. Basically the idea behind this is that capitalists should welcome gay people because they have more money to spend on consumer items, expensive holidays, etc., because they don't have children. This idea is largely irrelevant to working class gay people

Most young gay people keep their sexuality to themselves for fear of being kicked out of home. They know that support from the State in such situations is minimal and inadequate. A large proportion of young homeless men are on the street for this reason. In fact one of the ironies of the Emmett Stagg affair recently was that he is the Minister with

government of the day or as being a single issue unrelated to other issues of oppression. They saw the struggle as being linked in with other oppressed groups. For example, Gays against Imperialism was formed in 1981 and identified the struggle for gay liberation with the struggles for "national liberation" around H Block and Armagh prison. Following the Charles Self Murder case in 1982 and the subsequent harassment by Gardai of hundreds of gay men the Gay Defense Committee was set up.

It was people like that who organised the 1,000 strong demonstration in protest against the judgement in the case of Declan Flynn who was murdered in a queer bashing incident in Fairview Park in 1983. The gang who admitted to

killing him and assaulting other gay people were given suspended sentences. This march attracted the support of trade unions, civil rights and left wing groups. At that time the issue of gay rights was taken up within the unions, the result being an ICTU policy document with detail as complete as pension rights for surviving partners. These negotiation guidelines have been incorporated into much of the civil service as well as some private sector companies.

For the gay movement to see its interests as lying completely with the government and the introduction of progressive legislation is a mistake. The struggle for real gay, lesbian and bisexual equality is far from over. Tactically the real needs of the gay community will not be met by relying on the government but the issue is wider than this. Oppression because of sexual identity is but one facet of state oppression.

Gays are not oppressed on of a whim but because of the specific need of capitalism for the nuclear family. The nuclear family, as the primary - and inexpensive - provider and carer for the workforce, fulfilled in the nineteenth century and still fulfills an important need for capitalism. Alternative sexualities represent a threat to the family model because they provide an alternative role model for people. Gays are going to be in the front line of attack whenever capitalism wants to reinforce "family values". The introduction of Clause 28 in England is a good example of this. The government made it illegal for public bodies to "promote" gay sexuality (i.e. to present it as anything other than a "perversion").

This oppression is one reason why the gay and lesbian movement is of particular interest to Anarchists. It is not that we believe that all gays and lesbians are revolutionaries. It is because we believe that the experience of fighting oppression can show people the nature of the state and that it is possible to fight it. It is through fighting that people learn it is possible to win. One group winning a battle gives other oppressed groups confidence. People gain confidence through winning struggles.

NLGF feels quite confident with the coming to Dublin this summer of the International Gay & Lesbian Youth conference, and the sending of an Irish delegation to the twenty fifth anniversary march in commemoration of the New York Stonewall riots, which kicked off the modern gay movement. It should take advantage of this new found confidence to rethink about its politics.

Louise Tierney

# IRISH ANARCHIST PAPER

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