

FREE!

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

Twenty Four years of Irish Anarchist News

Number 103 May - June 2008



VOTE NO

Against A Capitalist Europe - Against A Bosses Ireland



www.wsm.ie/voteno

ORGANISE FOR REAL SOCIAL CHANGE!

Socialism - Freedom Workers' Control

Imagine that, leaving the pub on Saturday night, you find a fight outside. The Gardai turn up, grab a load of people, including you, and drag you off to the station, and throw in a beating in the back of the van. Next morning you are taken to an interview room and an old gardai gives you a cup of tea, apologises for the "mix-up" earlier and says you can go as soon as you've signed a 6 page statement he's prepared for you.

Only trouble is, he can't let you read what the statement says before you sign. He assures you it's fine, the statement is in your best interests, you just need to trust him and sign and this will all be over. Would you sign?

If you would, then vote yes for the Lisbon treaty. This is how the Lisbon treaty is being put to us. They've deliberately made it impossible to read, but they assure us that it's for our own good.

If you trust our bosses and politicians to have made an agreement that is in the best interests of ordinary European workers, even if they won't let us read it, then say yes to Lisbon. If, like us, you know our bosses and politicians too well to buy that, then say no.

The Lisbon treaty does have one good side. It makes it clear as day that, at the level of the political elites and capitalist class, European unification has already happened. The fact that every mainstream political party in every EU country has agreed to back this treaty is proof positive of this.

The constitutional anoraks bore us with the trivial details of this recycled EU Constitution, as if the disempowerment of working people was due to some legal trickery. As long as the law of property defends the monopolisation of land, the means of producing social wealth are in the hands of a tiny few and the vast majority of us are forced to sell our labour to them, then no constitution, whether Irish or European, will deliver the promise of democracy - to give power to the people.

The only way to work for this is by rising to the challenge of countering the European unity of our exploiters, by linking together our struggles of resistance to them. We can begin by refusing to sign this blank cheque for the bosses.

Vote NO to Lisbon on June 12th.

NEWSPAPER OF ANARCHISTS IN IRELAND

The Paddington Rail crash in London in 1999 led to 31 deaths and well over 400 injuries. At fault was a simple set of rail signal lights which were difficult to see (from the train driver's point of view). When the crash was investigated it quickly emerged that Network Rail (then called Railtrack), the company responsible for rail line maintenance, had been repeatedly warned about the danger. A number of drivers had been involved in near misses and reported this to management, yet nothing was done. Then two high-speed trains collided.

What led to that crash is not, of course, uncommon. For example in 2003 there was a very serious accident at the Kansai nuclear power plant in Japan. Four workers died and a serious leak of radioactive coolant occurred when a severely corroded cooling pipe broke. In this case it also emerged that, despite repeat warning of the serious danger posed by corrosion, the particular pipe in question – deemed to be critical to operations – hadn't been inspected for 28 years!

Closer to home, many people will be familiar with the ongoing blunders in the Irish health service. There have been many but one in particular worth noting was the death of Patrick Walsh in Monaghan hospital in 2005. Mr Walsh, a pensioner, suffered complications during his recovery from an operation. He should've been transferred to either Cavan or Drogheda hospitals – both of which were properly equipped to deal with his difficulties – however both hospitals declined to accept him on the grounds that they had no 'available beds'.

At the time Monaghan hospital was caught up in a turf war to do with the reorganisation of the health service in the region; it was being starved of resources to facilitate its eventual closure. In the subsequent investigation into Patrick Walsh's death it emerged that there had been a series of other 'near misses' at Monaghan hospital. Concerned by these nursing and hospital staff repeatedly warned management that a serious accident, resulting in death, would eventually happen – then it did.

Why does it happen and what can be done about it? One argument put forward is that it's due to 'bad managers' or simple incompetence on behalf of some of those who make it to 'the top'. There is some truth in this in that being a "boot-lick" is often essential to being

considered for promotion. But incompetence alone cannot account for the sheer scale and seriousness of the problem. Rather, to fully understand why it happens, we have to look at how organisations are set up and run. This is where the anarchist analysis of hierarchy comes into its own.

Look around you: at work there is no

on critical information or the warnings that it receives is very much tied with why the workplace is organised undemocratically in the first place: managers must put profit-maximisation first. Everything else – service to the public and worker safety – comes second. So instead of acting on a warning or being proactive about a problem when they are alerted, management often ignores the issue – until something very serious goes wrong.

Mis-management is crucially tied up with the way work is organised under capitalism. Under the present arrangement management often hold the control levers in a workplace – be that a building site, a factory, a hospital or office – because they control the allocation of resources and flow of information. Safely cutbacks and what we see as 'mismanagement' are a consequence of this particular arrangement.

The most important point is that it doesn't have to be this way. Anarchists want a world where the workplace is organised democratically. So whether you work in a hospital or a factory, you should have as much a say in how your workplace is organised as anyone else. Management is something that we should elect and retain control of: they should do our bidding – not the other way round.

Kevin Doyle



democracy. There is instead a division of people into order-givers and order-takers. Right now, wherever you work, no matter what the job, there is a rigid hierarchy where some people wield power and others have none; where some make decisions and others don't. To put it bluntly, a small number of people ("management") make decisions for the rest of us.

Because of this reality there are certain consequences. One of the most important is the disruption of information flow in an organisation. In the present arrangement information about a problem or a shortcoming often gets to management (eventually) but they don't act on it.

The reason why management doesn't act

You can't believe everything you read from Journalism to Churnalism

Flat Earth News by Nick Davies
Chatto and Windus, £17.99 / €22.65

This is an extraordinarily detailed exposition of how the modern media functions. The author, veteran Guardian journalist Nick Davies, along with a team of researchers from Cardiff University, spent several years monitoring the British media and tracing the sources of the stories that they carried. The results were pretty shocking, even for somebody who already has a very low opinion of the corporate and state media.

a compelling socio-political analysis of the media's function in self-declared democratic society. However, he generally focuses on the "what," rather than the "how", demonstrating that the media operates as a system which, taken as a whole, produces propaganda in support of the powerful.

Chomsky has, however, relatively little to say about the mechanisms by which this propaganda is produced. Flat Earth News fills in the gaps. It provides a wealth of detail which explains exactly how the profit-motive of the industry operates within newsrooms to limit the amount of time and resources available to journalists to establish the truth

THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW



Davies describes how an increasingly single-minded focus on profit has caused the media industry to outsource much of the primary production of stories and content to PR agencies and state press offices. The role of Journalists has been reduced to what he calls "churnalism", copying and pasting from press releases or government briefings.

Amazingly, his analysis showed that, of a sample of 2000 articles from the 'quality' press, only 12% were based on original research and only 12% of the "facts" copied from the hopelessly unreliable PR sources showed any evidence of having been checked. The end result is that the media is increasingly nothing more than a propaganda vehicle for those with the best PR – the rich and the powerful.

American anarchist Noam Chomsky, in works like Manufacturing Consent, has developed

of what they are reporting. As a result, lots of things that simply aren't true become the subject of global news coverage.

In addition to the meticulous statistical analysis of the media's output, Davies presents a series of case studies which draw on his long journalistic experience and network of contacts in the industry to trace exactly how particular issues have been systematically distorted by the media. This is grim reading. The ease with which the security services were able to plant totally fictional material about Iraq in the run up to the invasion; the appalling and illegal activities of the press in gathering personal details about their targets; the culture of virulent racism and xenophobia in the Daily Mail: depressing snapshots of an industry that seems beyond saving.

Chekov Feeney



In April Merck, the pharmaceutical multinational with a plant in Tipperary, was ordered to pay \$2.3 billion in back taxes, interest and penalties in one of the largest settlements the U.S. Internal Revenue Service has ever imposed. Of the \$2.3 billion Merck has to pay, only \$100 million dollars is a fine. No Merck official has been charged with a crime.

U.S. companies increasingly move their profits to tax havens like Lichtenstein, Monaco and the Cayman Islands. The result of this and other sorts of tax evasion is that nearly two-thirds of the companies operating in the USA reported owing no taxes from 1996 through 2000. Latest figures, due this year, are expected to show that big business has paid even less in recent years. Since the 1960s the percentage of federal tax that comes from corporations has declined from around 30% to around 8%.

As Bank of Ireland announced record profits of over €1.32bn, they said thanks to the staff who do the actual work by also announcing 2,160 job cuts.

Staff in the Minnesota Attorney General's Office want to join AFSCME, one of the largest unions in the United States. Attorney General Lori Swanson responded by summoning the workers in small groups to a conference room. With two supervisors and two judges watching, the workers were asked to mark an anti-union ballot. Seemingly, you have the right to join a union but only if your boss agrees!

April saw eight Irish politicians in South Africa to study poverty. They did this from their base in the five star Westin Arabella in Cape Town, where rooms cost €700 a night.

Remembering our victories

Why we celebrate May Day

The 1st of May as International Workers' Day dates back to the struggle for the 8-hour working day in the USA. In 1886 the American Federation of Labour declared that after May 1st, "8 hours shall constitute a legal days labour". Between that declaration and May 1st workers all around the United States went on strike to make their employers agree to a shorter work day.

A general strike started in Chicago on May 1st with 25,000 workers striking. After two days the strikers had doubled in numbers. At this stage scabs had entered the scene, causing fights between them and the striking workers. The police moved in and killed six workers.

In protest at this a public meeting was held on Haymarket Square in Chicago on May 4th. Once again the police intervened by attacking the peaceful protest, and this led to a bomb being thrown (by a person who was never identified). Seven policemen and four workers were killed. After this the ruling class used the bomb as an excuse to arrest those believed to be the eight most active anarchist trade unionists in the city and accused them of being responsible for the bomb and the riot.

Most of the arrested anarchists had not even been present, which was acknowledged by the prosecutor and there was no evidence that any of them threw the bomb. Despite this the court was determined to find the anarchists guilty and in the end it came up with the argument that the arrested anarchists had "indirectly" killed the cops on Haymarket Square by agitating for a labour uprising at meetings and through newspaper articles. This was enough to find them guilty.

The outcome of the

trial was seven death sentences and one of 15 years in prison. Due to an international campaign, two of the anarchists had their sentences commuted from death by hanging to life in prison, but four were hanged and one committed suicide. These five are today known as the Chicago Martyrs.

On the initiative of the American Federation of Labour, the worldwide trade union and socialist movement declared May 1st as International Workers' Day in honour of the Chicago dead and the struggle for the eight hour day. The first time the day was marked in the USA was in 1890.

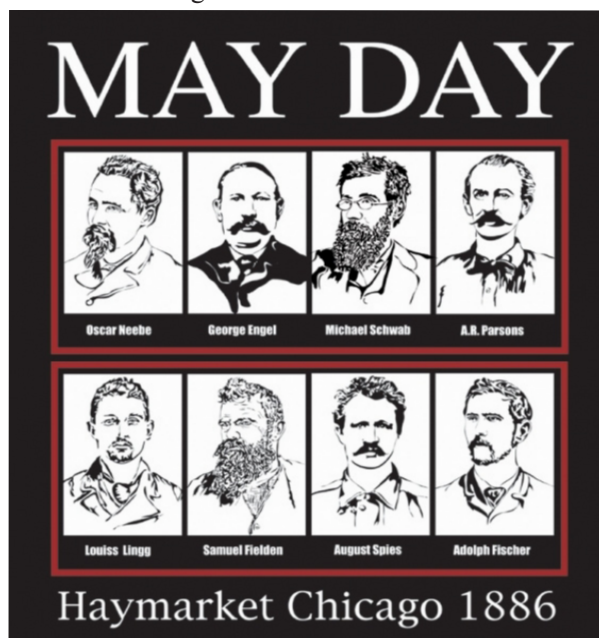
The eight hour day began to be achieved in the USA after often bitter struggles. In 1938 it became part of the government's New Deal and was made a legal day's work. There are several things to be

said about the history of International Workers' Day. One is that the trial shows how capitalism is prepared to disobey its own rules of justice when it comes to protecting the interests of the rich and powerful.

Another is that nothing comes from nothing. Workers of the world would have no rights, if they hadn't been fought for. In Ireland the eight hour workday is upheld by the unions and not the law. Employers can, legally, force you to work up to thirteen hours a day or 48 hours a week. Attacks on our standard of living are part and parcel of life under capitalism.

So long as other people profit from our labour, they will try to make us work harder and longer for less money. Until the day we end the rule of the bosses, we have to stay organised to keep the rights we have gained and win more.

Grethe Christensen



Contacts

ANARCHIST ORGANISATIONS

Workers Solidarity Movement
PO box 1528, Dublin 8
www.wsm.ie
wsm_ireland@yahoo.com
cork@wsm.ie
belfastwsm@gmail.com

Revolutionary Anarcha-Feminist Group
P.O. Box 10785, Dublin 1
www.ragdublin.org

Organise!
PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ
<http://organiseireland.blogspot.com>

LIBERTARIAN NETWORKS

Indymedia Ireland
The place to find Irish campaign news
www.indymedia.ie

CAZ
Radical bookshop and social space
61 Barrack Street, Cork City
centraladminzone@gmail.com

Seomra Spraoi
Dublin social centre, currently moving location
www.seomraspraoi.blogspot.com

Revolt Video
Radical video collective
<http://revoltvideo.blogspot.com>

CAMPAIGNING GROUPS

Shell to Sea
Campaign to move Shell's gas pipeline offshore from Co. Mayo
www.shelltosea.com

Hands Off the People of Iran
Anti-imperialist network for solidarity with Iranian trade unions and the women's rights movement.
www.hopoi.org

Choice Ireland
Abortion rights action group
choiceireland@gmail.com

Residents Against Racism
Opposing racism & deportations
24-hour helpline: 087-666 2060

Anti-War Ireland
Democratic anti-war organisation
www.antwarireland.org

Justice for Terence Wheelock
Died after being injured in Garda custody 087-321 9096
justice4terencewheelock@gmail.com

Anarchist Black Cross (Belfast)
Assists class war prisoners worldwide
www.myspace.com/belfastabc



International anarchist website with news and discussion from all five continents; in English, Turkish, Polish, Arabic, Spanish, Dutch, Norwegian,

LabourStart

for Irish and international trade union news

www.labourstart.org

Workers Solidarity Movement
Belfast branch

Public Meeting **BUILDING THE ANARCHIST ALTERNATIVE**

followed by the film 'Sacco
& Vanzetti'

**Saturday May 24th at
2pm**

185 Donegal Street, Belfast
(beside the Irish News
offices and opposite Front Page)



Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front of South Africa



Their latest journal is now online, along with anarchist news from southern Africa.

They also have lots of pamphlets for you to read or download.

www.zabalaza.net

While in Florida, during his recent speaking tour of Canada and the US, Andrew Flood of the Workers Solidarity Movement attended a local 'Winter Soldier' hearing. These are public meetings where returned United States soldiers testify against the war.

Soldiers begin to organise against the Iraq war

Six US military who had served in Iraq were there to testify to a crowd of maybe 400 in opposition to the war. Five of them were men, one woman and they were drawn from the Marines, Navy (who had been on the ground in Fallujah 2), Armour, Infantry and Supply. Four were members of Vets Against the War which recruited 250 veterans in the previous month.

The testimony they gave was varied ranging from the way the experience had destroyed their lives (there have been 10,000 vet suicides and at least two of the six speakers seemed a little suicidal to the point where, during the Questions & Answers session, one audience member appealed to them to talk to people who could help).

Others talked of the horrors of the war, of dead bodies floating in sewage during Fallujah 2 being used for target practice. Of how they were told they were obeying the Geneva Conventions because it was left to their Iraqi interpreters to torture captives while they looked on.

Of the experience of 'contractors' (mercenaries) driving fleets of top of the range SUVs while soldiers could not get the air conditioner needed to keep their warning computer running all day. Of how dogs and livestock were used as target practice. Of how a farmer irrigating his field one night, because that was when the electricity was available, was deliberately shot

even it was known that was what he was doing.

One of the more interesting accounts was from the veteran who had served in the armoured division. He detailed how soldiers would sit in the base's Burger King and radio in reports as they supposedly passed by landmarks they were supposed to be patrolling. This was the first time I heard a first hand account of the sort of demoralisation that crippled the US army in Vietnam and would be considered mutiny.

Soldiers also had several serious discussions of killing a superior officer and that the only reason nothing had happened was that in the end the officer didn't manage to get anyone killed. The soldiers talked of how if there was a chance they would be sent back to Iraq for another tour they planned to sabotage their vehicles.

Each of the six had different views on the war, some had broken much further with US policy than others. So while one worried about what would happen if they pulled out straight away, another called for immediate withdrawal and compared the resistance to what would happen if an invading army occupied Florida. He also called for the US to pay compensation to the people of Iraq.

Over the summer they hope to open the first 'GI coffeeshops' near military bases just as was done during the Vietnam war to make contact with those still trapped in the army.



Nine Derry people face jail for 'decommissioning' weapons

Nine people from Derry are facing jail sentences for their part in 'decommissioning' weapons of war. The silence from official Ireland is striking. Not a murmur from Nobel Peace Prize winners John Hume and David Trimble, or from Cowan or Paisley, or Adams or Gormley, or Gilmore or Empey. Not even an empty platitude from Bono or Bob Geldof. Nobody was harmed but computers belonging to a multinational arms firm were tossed from windows and destroyed. It seems that the right of arms dealers to make big profits is a lot more important than the right to life of people in the Lebanon.

Raytheon Systems Ltd. is an American defence contractor which specialises in "defence" systems. Their products include Tomahawk cruise missiles, Patriot missiles, "bunker busters" and cluster bombs. They are the world's number one producer of guided missiles. As well as supplying weapons of mass destruction to the generals in the Pentagon and Whitehall, Raytheon arms oppressive regimes like Israel, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Raytheon is the fifth largest defence contractor in the world and has made huge profits in the aftermath of September 2001. As a company, it derives the bulk of its profits from arms contracts with military states and it is a substantial contributor to both the Republican and the Democrat parties in the US, and the Labour Party in Britain.

As part of the so-called peace dividend, Raytheon established a software development centre in Derry in August 1999. Welcomed by John Hume and David Trimble, and supported by the local council with state funding and grants, the company claimed that there was no arms-related production at the Derry plant. However, in 2006 it emerged that Raytheon has contracts with the British Ministry of Defence to develop software for missile targeting systems. Concerned citizens in Derry came together to form the Foyle Ethical Investment Campaign and have been campaigning against this player in the international arms trade, to end the exchange of peace at home for war abroad.

With the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, Raytheon's weapons have been used to destroy the lives of thousands of innocent civilians in the Middle East. Despite all the marketing hype about how accurate their weapons are, their missiles still aren't smart enough to tell the difference between an ordinary working person's home and a military facility.



The Middle East is littered with the remains of vicious cluster bombs, many of which remain unexploded and present a deadly threat to civilians trying to carry on their lives. Unexploded cluster bombs are as lethal and as indiscriminate as conventional anti-personnel landmines which have been banned by the Ottawa Treaty in 1999 – even though some imperialist states such as the US and China refuse to sign the Treaty.

On Wednesday August 9th 2006, nine members of the Derry Anti War Coalition (DAWC) non-violently occupied and temporarily closed down the offices of Raytheon at Springtown in Derry. While computer systems were decommissioned, a larger group of protesters remained

outside the premises to show support and explain the action.

The action was part of a wider campaign against the use of Raytheon's destructive weapons in Lebanon. It took place at the same time that Israel's bombing of southern Lebanon resulted in the death of more than a thousand civilians. Many more were injured or saw their homes destroyed. 100,000 cluster bombs were dropped in the last three days of the 2006 conflict and it was weapons manufactured by Raytheon which were used in the infamous attack on Qana.

The original charges were of unlawful assembly and aggravated burglary. These are scheduled offences under anti-terrorism legislation, meaning that the cases are heard by the infamous jury-less Diplock Courts*. In April 2007, the charges were later reduced to two counts of criminal damage and affray, which means they will be tried in a regular jury court.

The original bail conditions set by the courts were extremely oppressive: The defendants were prevented from meeting with each other, holding meetings in groups of more than three, or from attending anti-war functions.

These conditions – in breach of our supposed basic human right to freedom of assembly – were later dropped. However a gagging order was placed on the media by the Judge, Corinna Philpot, forbidding reporting of anything to do with the action or Raytheon in Ireland. Part of the aim



Dave Mitchell

Raytheon

continued

of the action was to educate local Derry people about the role Raytheon play in the destruction of peoples' lives around the world but the gagging order made it very difficult for people to find out what is happening. Eventually, this bizarre and indefensible gag was lifted in February following an application for judicial review of the gag by Shane O'Curry, a member of both the WSM and the Foyle Ethical Investment Campaign.

After almost two years of being dragged

out, the trial of the Raytheon 9, is due to take place in Belfast on Monday 19th May. The trial will be in Belfast after the Prosecution Service applied to have it moved with the argument that a jury from Derry may be too sympathetic to the action or intimidated by the level of support for the Raytheon 9 due to all the protests held outside at court hearings that took place since the action.

The Raytheon Nine would appreciate messages of support from anti-war campaigners and can be contacted at resistderry@aol.com. Journalist and socialist Eammon McCann has written a pamphlet titled *Resisting War Crimes Is*

Not a Crime: The Raytheon 9 which can be obtained for £2 / €3 from the Derry Anti War Coalition at the above address or from Anti War Ireland (antiwarireland@gmail.com). You can also buy it via Paypal on www.raytheon9.org

Antóin Mac Aodhagáin

*Diplock Courts are jury-less courts set up in the 1970s to deal with political prisoners in Northern Ireland as an alternative to internment without trial.

Anarchism and the Workers Solidarity Movement

March 15th saw Dublin's third annual Anarchist Bookfair. Despite a day-long downpour, over 800 people passed through. Thirteen different meetings were held on topics as varied as the health service, the Lisbon treaty, climate change, feminism and class, and trade union organisation. Interest in finding out more was reflected in the €3,000+ worth of books and pamphlets purchased from stalls operated by Workers Solidarity Movement, CAZ Books, Just Books, Anarchist Federation of Britain, Irish Socialist Network, Oxfam Bookstore and others.

All day long, the film room showed alternative movies. And, in the kids' area, there were crafts and fun aplenty.

Following much debate and discussion, the evening ended with a packed social event in the Clifton Court Hotel. And despite the lateness of events on Saturday night, early Sunday afternoon saw a lively bunch of people participate in a guided walking tour of radical sites in the city centre.

We were also busy helping to publicise the March 29th health protest. As part of our contribution it was the cover story in our last issue, we published a pamphlet called 'Towards a Cure', and we gave out 10,000 WSM leaflets asking people to attend. On the day we marched behind a specially made banner "Workers & Patients Unite: take action to end for-profit medicine".

The Belfast WSM branch has started as they mean to go on, active and outgoing. 1,000 copies of the new northern edition of Workers Solidarity are being distributed, mainly door-to-door. Having their

own edition means being able to feature local stories on the front and back pages, while the inside pages are the same as the southern paper. Belfast also saw about 20 people attend an anarchist fringe meeting at the National Union of Journalists annual

delegate meeting, where speakers included NUJ executive member Donnacha DeLong, Village columnist and WSM member Chekov Feeney, and Jason Branigan from 'Organise!'

Galway saw its first WSM public meeting in April on 'Organising For Anarchism', with 10 people offering to distribute *Workers Solidarity* in their neighbourhoods. To get in touch you can call Sevinc at 087-939 1284.

Throughout May and early June we will be campaigning against the Lisbon Treaty because it endorses and continues the bosses' agenda of militarisation, and privatisation. Unlike some, our opposition is not based on any nationalist sentimentality or worry about the government losing the automatic right to nominate one of their millionaire pals as a Commissioner.

We oppose it because it is not good for working people, that is what concerns us. If you would like to find out more and possibly help out, email wsm_ireland@yahoo.com or write to WSM, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

If you would like to help promote the anarchist alternative, why not take 20 copies of *Workers Solidarity* every two months. There are people all over Ireland who do just that, and put them through neighbours' letterboxes or give them out at meetings and gigs. Simply send us your name and address and we'll get them to you.



Get involved, check out - www.wsm.ie

On the streets for the good of our health

Approximately 6,000 people turned out for the "March for a Decent Public Health Service" held on March 29th in Dublin. Trade unions, patients' groups from around the country and political organisations were represented.

The Workers Solidarity Movement were present with a sizeable anarchist contingent. We considered the march to be an important opportunity to build momentum behind a campaign that would fight for quality public healthcare for all and to end profit-driven medicine. In the week before we distributed 10,000 leaflets explaining why we thought people should take part.



Of course, 6,000 is a relatively small number for an issue as fundamental and topical as health. It would probably have required three times that number to send a strong message that "enough is enough", and to give people a sense that we could force the government to make concessions. Unfortunately, it was very wet right up to the start of the



march which must have had some effect on numbers. Also, the lack of a clear and concrete aim of the march, beyond venting anger at the two-tier system, may have meant there wasn't a compelling reason for people to take to the streets.

Further regional marches have been organised in various towns around the country for Saturday, 26th April. At the time of going to print, it is unclear how



successful these will be. Can they act to build momentum, confidence and a sense of the potential of a national health campaign among workers and patients?

As anarchists, we have argued and continue to argue for a campaign built from the bottom-up. Workers and patients know what the problems are with the health system in Ireland. We know that co-location is the first step



towards an American-style system of for-profit medicine. We know that everyone deserves a medical card. We don't want to be sold-out or bought-off by opportunist union leaders or wannabe politicians. Partnership deals or electing "the right person" have done nothing to stop the drive towards privatised healthcare.

A campaign will only be successful if it based on open and democratic local groups, in towns and suburbs across the country, that come together on an equal basis to make decisions and organise for action. This is the kind of empowering campaign that we are encouraging people to build.



Informacje i artykuły w języku polskim dostępne na stronie www.wsm.ie/polska