

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

*Irish narchist Paper*

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<http://surf.to/anarchism>

## Space Aliens horrified by Earth

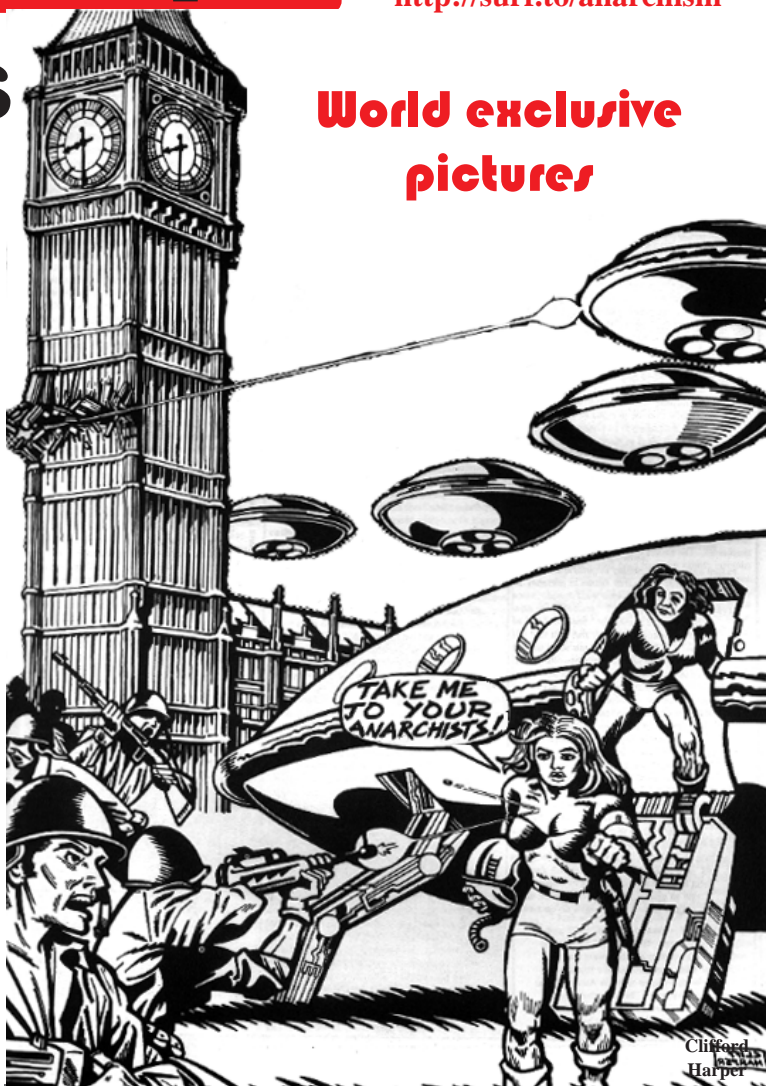
**Westminster destroyed - will Dáil be next?**

An alien spacecraft surveying the earth would surely be astounded by the 'civilisation' that inhabits it. On the one hand it has sent men to the moon and sequenced the human genome. On the other tens of millions die every year because they lack access to basic medicine and clean water. 2.6 billion people have no access to sanitation, 2 billion have no electricity and 100 million are homeless. How can this be?

After some time they might notice that a minute and almost invisible layer of super rich must somehow be controlling the entire planet in their interests. In fact the wealth of the three most well-to-do individuals now exceeds the combined GDP of the 48 least developed countries. 3 billion people live on less than \$2 per day. Microsoft CEO Bill Gates had more wealth than the bottom 45 percent of American households combined in 1999.

And yet, except for small minorities most seem to accept this system. Almost as if in a dream they work the land, the mines and the factories that produce all the wealth but seem unaware that most of what they produce is pocketed by the tiny elite. *Business Week* reported that in 1999 top executives earned 419 times the average wage of a US blue-collar worker. Between 1970 and 1990, the typical American worked an additional 163 hours per year. That's equivalent

**World exclusive pictures**



**Aliens say - you must liberate yourselves - urge formation of workers councils!**

to adding an additional month of work per year - for the same or less pay.

They might wonder how this tiny layer pull off such a scheme. Is it by brainwashing? Is it by repression? Perhaps theories would develop around control of the media, control of education and the huge number in jail for petty theft. But the question remains, why don't the overwhelming majority rise up? What is holding them back?

## Dun Laoghaire Rathdown

Demonstrate: Dún Laoghaire Town Hall

7 pm Tuesday Nov. 21st

# Council on the run over bin bill

**This Summer 60,000 or so householders in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown received instalment two of their bin bill. Inside in bright red ink it declared "It is intended to replace the traditional refuse collection method with a wheeled bin refuse collection to be introduced on a phased basis from September 2000. Wheeled bins will only be allocated to those householders who have a clear account"**

By the end of October every household had been given a wheelee bin. Only 20% have paid their full bin charges bill. Quite clearly this stand down is a major break through for the campaign in Dun Laoghaire. The campaign has also established through talks with bin workers that ALL bins will be collected. It now appears that the council will have to resort to the courts in order to try to recoup some of their charges. As was proven in the anti-Water Charges Campaign this will be messy for them and give activists a chance to publicly fight each case, both in court and by mobilising people outside.

Meanwhile this September South Dublin County Council unanimously rejected charges arguing, as the campaign groups have done, that they represented an unfair form of double tax on PAYE workers. So Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the PDs who have lined up for the charges in Dún Laoghaire have argued passionately

## and in Cork....

Rubbish dumping outside the City Hall has become a regular feature of the campaign against the bin-charges in Cork city. Rubbish has now been dumped on the City Hall steps on every Monday night for nearly three months and this, if nothing else, is a clear warning to the Corpo bosses and councillors that the campaign isn't going to go away.

The Corpo's initial efforts at intimidating protesters with litter fines have faltered and in recent weeks rubbish has been dumped without any harassment from the Corpo's 'Litter Wardens'. With regard to the fines already imposed, Householders Against Service Charges (HASC) has rejected the claim by the Corpo that this regular Monday night dumping constitutes an act of 'littering'. The Campaign is pledged to fighting these 'littering' fines and to defending any member of HASC threatened with prosecution.

As important, the campaign has begun the work of targeting a number of local areas with the aim of establishing local HASC groups. This work will be indispensable to building the Campaign over the next while.

Kevin Doyle

and voted to abolish them in South Dublin County. Clearly once again, as ever, the politicians have demonstrated that they cannot be trusted on this like many other issues. Instead the power of ordinary people in not paying and in signing up to the campaign is beating the charges. In Dún Laoghaire despite mutterings from several Councillors none have come out and argued for non-payment. Clearly, though, the council are reeling though not out for the count! A few more follow through punches could finish the charges in Dublin.

With this in mind the campaign has called for a major demonstration at Dún Laoghaire Town Hall (across the road from the DART Station) at 7 pm on Tuesday November 21st for the estimates meeting. The campaign intends to lobby all councillors with gifts of brown envelopes, as it appears from the planning tribunals to be the only language that they speak. The WSM calls on supporters especially those in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown to come out in support of this protest and to join the campaign.

Conor Mc Loughlin (Watson co-ordinator in the Campaign Against Service Charges in Dun Laoghaire - in personal capacity - phader@gofree.indigo.ie)

Cork weekly protest with rubbish dumped on council steps (right)

## The inflation con - demand pay increases

**Isn't the Celtic Tiger great! This year's pay increase, under the Programme for Prosperity & Fairness, is 5.5%. As we go to press inflation is 6.2%, and rising. When the economy was in recession we were told to tighten our belts so that the economy could recover. Now that it is booming we are being told to accept what is actually a pay cut, in order to keep it booming.**

The union leaders are so friendly with bosses and government ministers (sorry, "engaged in partnership") that some of them don't even want to see us get cash compensation for what inflation has taken away from our pay packets. The SIPTU leadership has demanded an extra 5%, but say they are willing to look at "innovative" ways of paying it. Their idea is that part of the 5% be paid in savings or pension bonds, which can't be cashed for many years. This is little use to us; prices and rents are rising right now.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions has bought the line of capitalist economists that inflation is caused by wage rises. Their argument is that if we get more than few pounds a week extra, the boom will end and galloping inflation will sweep down on us like the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Yes, wages can contribute to inflation. But they are only one factor. Nobody from ICTU is talking about controlling profits, prices, rents, or dividends. Nobody seems to be pointing out that crude oil prices have risen. But the only sacrifice being called for is from the people who do all the work, wealthy idlers are being asked to sacrifice exactly.. nothing.

Ireland's inflation is the highest in the EU, yet our wages have been held down through 'partnership' agreements since 1987. So much for wage moderation bringing low inflation. What we need immediately is a wage rise to recover our spending power from the inflation that has already occurred. The bosses in IBEC fight their own corner very successfully, as do the farmers in the IFA. It's well past time for us to do the same, and this starts with saying goodbye to 'partnership' and demanding more of the wealth that we create.



# That's Capitalism



It may come as a surprise, but the mystery around aeroplane crashes isn't what it used to be. In the mid- 1980s, research by the US navy on its fighter aircraft picked up on a problem with the electric wiring that was used, known as Kaptan. Kaptan was once thought to be safe but US Navy investigations discovered otherwise.

In certain circumstances – not uncommon in aircraft flying conditions – Kaptan can actually explode in a ball of fire. So what did the US Navy do?

They ripped Kaptan out of existing planes and have not used it since! And what about commercial aircraft? Well that's a different story it seems. Kaptan was still being installed by Boeing up to 1993 (long after the warning about Kaptan had become known). And of course a huge range of older aircraft, still in use and manufactured in the 1980s, are alive with Kaptan. Military aircraft are more valuable – is that the message?

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Currently, 24,000 people die each day of hunger or hunger-related causes – 75% of these people are children under five.

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The US Ethyl Corporation sued the Canadian government for \$350 million in damages because it banned the import of MMT, a toxic chemical that causes brain damage. Under the 'free trade' provisions of the NAFTA agreement the Corporation won. The ban was lifted, millions of dollars paid and even an apology given.

\*\*\*\*\*

Hired by the government to advise them about floating Eircom on the stock market Merrill Lynch were well paid. On top of their fees they also got £100,415 to hire a private jet to fly them to meetings with European bankers. Seemingly, even business class on a commercial flight was not good enough for them. Meanwhile many of us wait ages for overcrowded buses each morning.

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According to the latest UN Human Development Report, Ireland spends a lower percentage of its wealth on social welfare than any other country in the EU. Damning statistics just released show that the proportion of GDP allocated for social protection in this country actually shrank as Ireland grew richer during the 1990s, so that Ireland is now ranked 17th on the poverty index of 18 industrialised countries.

# Pogroms in Palestine

An Israeli anarchist on Jewish resistance to the Israeli state

Media coverage of the murderous pogroms unleashed by the Israeli state against Palestinians leaves out some of the story. The so-called 'peace process' like that of Northern Ireland is based on institutionalising sectarianism rather than overcoming it. There are citizens of Palestine and Israel, from both Jewish and Muslim backgrounds, who seek something other than two rival sectarian states. Ironically the ideology behind the pogroms is Zionism - the belief that Jews will only be safe from pogroms in a country run by Jews.

Indymedia Israel\* has reported a number of joint demonstrations including "4,000 Jews and Palestinian-Israelis gathered in Haifa on the evening of the 21st of October for a rally under the slogan 'For A Just Peace & Full Equality.'" The report says "speakers, among other points, called for an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the removal of all settlers, an end to the officially sanctioned shootings by the Israeli Army of unarmed Palestinians in both the Occupied Territories and Israel, and full equality between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis." We talked to Ilan Shalif, an Israeli anarchist who has been active for many years in "persistent and principled opposition to Zionism".

"Before the current round of pogroms about 200 Israelis were really active - mainly around protests related to the demolition of Palestinian homes. In the last two big demonstrations against the suppression of the Palestinians, there were about 500 people. Among the 500 less than 50 of them can be regarded as very radical. This 50 includes anarchists and other libertarians communists.

"Until recently the left anti Zionist flag was raised only by the libertarian communist group Matspen, and we were never more than 30 activists - Jews and Palestinians. In 1972 one of our members was the first to resist conscription from an anti - Zionist position - this struggle was the origin of later political resistance to conscription or refusal to serve in the occupied regions.

"In February 1968 when we had the first demonstration against the 1967 war only 19 participated - including one member of the Communist Party\* whom they wanted to expel for doing so. Even on a May 1970 demonstration of the Communist Party that we took part in, they threatened to attack us if we would not stop shouting "down with the occupation". However just after the 1982 Lebanon war, the anti-occupation movement was finally joined by the Zionist left.

A factor people are not aware of in Israel and abroad is the shift in power balance within the ruling class in Israel. Those capitalists who want to exploit the Palestinian workers and the workers of the neighbouring third world Arab countries are starting to gain hegemony over the old Zionist capitalists and

bureaucrats.

Also the recent demonstrations of the Israeli Palestinians are rooted in contradictory processes. Firstly the Palestinians' morale is much stronger due to the defeat of part of the Zionist project - most clearly the fact they are forced to retreat from parts of the occupied lands. Secondly the legal status of the Israeli Palestinians has changed from barely legal and in fear of expulsion to the status of second class citizens. Many have become disillusioned with the Palestinian statelet and have started to prefer even second class citizenship of Israel, so their struggle for full citizenship has increased immensely.

The only short term solution that will be able to stabilise the region is the end of the 1967 occupations - a solution acceptable to the majority of Palestinians, a solution to the refugee problem, and equality for the Israeli Palestinians. As long as Israel uses its power to terrorise the Palestinians into submission no stability will be possible.

In the longer term Matspen adopted the position in the 60's that the conflict between the Zionist settler colonialists and the indigenous Palestinians can be resolved only in a socialist (i.e. libertarian communist) Middle East and not simply by any arrangement between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians. The name of our new group 'East Mediterranean Anarchist Collective' reflects this. The geographic term "east of the Mediterranean sea" is free from any Zionist Israeli colour or Palestinian nationalist one. It is also different from the Eurocentric term "middle east" or "near east". As a bonus its meaning in Arabic is 'your mother'

\* <http://indymedia.org.il>

\*\* "The Communist party never opposed the 1948 'war of independence' (which formed the state of Israel), in fact Stalin supported it"



Photo (Indymedia): Haifa demonstration, slogans include "dismantle all settlements - the saboteurs of peace"

# Thinking about Anarchism



## Anarchism, Elections & Power

The campaign against double taxation bin charges is reaching a critical point. As the number of people joining the non-payment campaign continues to grow, and as an election grows ever nearer, councillors from all political parties are jumping on the bandwagon of opposition to the charges. No doubt by the time of the election, they'll all be proclaiming their steadfast opposition to the charges, and hoping that the voters will have forgotten their past actions in voting for them.

The election will also see several candidates who have been involved in the campaign against the charges looking for votes and promising change if they are elected. Anarchists have always opposed participation in the sham of parliamentary elections (choosing rulers rather than ending the division into rulers and ruled) and this time around it will be no different. We believe the experience of the anti - water charges campaign in the mid-1990s should be recalled and bears a valuable lesson for campaigners against bin charges.

Ask many people now how the water charges were defeated in Dublin, and they'll reply

that it was due to the performance of Joe Higgins in the Dublin West by-election in 1996. And it is of course true that Joe's near election in that by-election sent a shockwave through the political establishment, laying the foundation for his election to the Dáil in the following year's general election. But is it true to say that it was through Joe's election that the charges were defeated?

We would say most definitely not and indeed we argued at the time that the Federation of Dublin Anti-Water Charge Campaigns should not endorse any candidacy. Our principal argument was that we would much prefer to see the charges defeated by the working class organising on the streets to show their opposition. We argued that people had to seize back control over their own lives and that this was not done by electing some official to fight our corner. Empowerment would come from defeating the combined forces of the state, the government, and the local authorities, by organising together and fighting the imposition of the charge.

It was no empty sloganeering. We had - as had the Socialist Party - been involved for the previous two years in building the

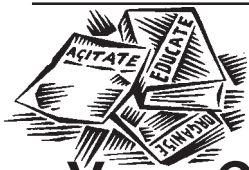
strongest campaign of popular resistance to any government measure for over two decades. Over 10,000 households were paid-up members of the campaign, Council attempts to disconnect water had been thwarted, their attempts to take people through the courts had served only to provide a focus for popular protest. Most importantly, resistance to payment of the charge was steadfast and strong with over 50% of houses not paying.

Put simply, a campaign had been built which had rendered the charge uncollectable. It was a campaign which relied not on any great leaders, but which relied instead on the resistance of ordinary working class people. Our argument was that the election of Joe Higgins to the Dáil to 'argue our case' was in fact an act of disempowerment. The message the campaign should have been giving to people at the time was - YOU have defeated the water charge. By standing side by side with your neighbours and resisting Council attempts to intimidate us WE together have forced the government to back down.

Instead, unfortunately, the message taken by a lot of people was that Joe defeated the water charges, that it was the size of his vote which was the decisive point. This was patently not the case. While Joe's near election was obviously significant, the more frightening thing from the government's perspective was the sight of ordinary working class people refusing to bow down, standing shoulder to shoulder and delivering clear and tangible evidence that Solidarity is Strength.

It's a message that still needs to be remembered. The very act of going into a polling booth and putting a number on a piece of paper is an act of disempowerment. Keep that power and stand together to build a new society.

Sean Maguire



## Your Class Needs YOU

The Workers Solidarity Movement is an anarchist organisation. Anarchism is the idea that we should organise society in a non-hierarchical way without bosses. We don't want to live in a society that is divided into order-givers and order-takers. We stand for a real socialism based on freedom and democracy.

A lot of people know that hierarchies and authoritarianism are bad for us. Remember school? Think about what it's like at work? You're told to do something - so you must do it! But must you? Anarchists recognise that hierarchy and authoritarianism exist to serve only one end - the efficient exploitation of workers. But we believe there is another way to do things - society could be organised through workplace and community councils, through grassroots democracy, from the bottom up.

A lot of people accept that there's a need for change, but not many have any real idea of how change can come about. Anarchists want a revolution! We don't think General Elections make a whit of difference. Remember the anarchist slogan - *Whoever gets in, the government still wins*. We reject any system that is divided into rulers and ruled,

bosses and workers. Anarchists stand for direct action and solidarity among and between workers. We see change coming through our own efforts, by our own strength!

When people hear about anarchism, they often say 'That's a great idea but would it work?' Well, what's so great about the present set-up? Rents and house prices have gone through the roof. Wages and pay have limped along while profits have soared. Everyone is working harder, but the gap between the rich and poor has widened massively in the last while. And what about corruption in high places? And politicians and brown paper bags? Racism against Travellers and asylum seekers? The truth is that the present system is rotten and we need to change it. Would it really be that difficult to do better than what we have now?

There's plenty more that could be said about anarchism. If you like what you have read in this paper, and would like to find out more information about anarchism or the WSM, we would love to hear from you.

This is the second issue to be published in our new format. This change - we are producing

a larger print run and bringing the paper out more regularly (initially 6 times a year) - is the result of a review which we have been carrying out over the past while. We now want to build up a national distribution network of members and contacts who will ensure that the paper reaches anyone taking part in oppositional politics anywhere in Ireland.

For this we need *your* help. Can you take 10/15/20 or more copies to distribute among your friends/workmates? Please get in touch with us and we will send you on some more copies for distribution.

Remember we've got a world to win, but we can't do it without *your* help!!

### Distribute Workers Solidarity

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# The 'polluter pays' & the bin tax

**The attempt to introduce refuse charges by the Dublin area county councils has been welcomed in some quarters. It is, we are told, necessary to fund a local waste management policy, that will increase the amount of waste recycled, and reduce the amount of landfill needed.**

## AN UNFAIR TAX

At first glance this makes sense as a way of making the polluters pay for the cost of their waste. But when it comes to local charges there's one problem - we've already paid. When council charges were abolished in the 70's they were replaced with an increase in other taxes. The extra money this raised for the government was supposed to be passed back to the councils, but wasn't. Is it our fault Charlie McCreevy's tight? Even if the VAT increase was withdrawn, there's another huge problem with passing the cost of waste back to us - we're not the polluters. Of the 42 million tonnes of waste produced every year in Ireland, less than 5% is household waste. Three-quarters of it comes from farmers, the other 20% from industry. If we're going to follow the 'polluter pays' principle, we're the last people who should have to cough up, but apparently PAYE workers, who already pay an unfair proportion of taxes, are just going to have to pay some more.

So the charges are not targeted at those who produce the most waste, but will they lead to a better waste policy? At the moment incineration plays a large part in council plans. But, as they have discovered around the country, people will not allow incinerators to be built in their areas. There are simply too many questions about the dioxins produced by incineration, some of which have been linked to cancer. The other option is recycling.

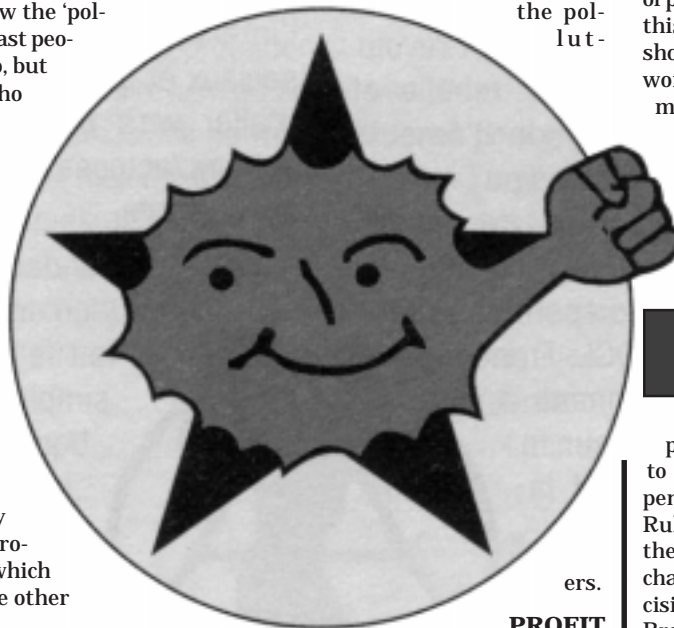
## RECYCLING

The four Dublin councils say they plan to recycle 60% of their waste (5% is recycled at the moment). But how committed are they to the idea? At almost the same time as Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown council announced the introduction of refuse charges, the Kerbside recycling company went bust. Apparently the council didn't think recycling was important enough to give Kerbside the small subsidy it needed to keep going. Of course, we'd end up paying for it either way - either in increased refuse charges to keep the recycling companies profitable, or in higher taxes to subsidise those companies.

If the councils plan to recycle waste, it's because they see it as the easiest option, the one that is most likely to win public support. They hope that we will be less likely to complain about refuse charges if they seem to have a 'green' policy. But still, why are we the ones paying for it?

We have little choice in the (small) amount of waste we produce. Unless we change our lifestyles drastically, we will have to buy the same products from the same companies, with all the excess packaging they include. We have no control over this packaging - you can't go to the supermarket and ask for a refill of your jar of coffee, or bottle of washing-up liquid. The decision to wrap food in a bag in a box in a bag is not ours -

we're not  
the polluter



ers.

## PROFIT OR ENVIRONMENT?

There is a fundamental conflict between our desire for a clean environment and the greed of businesses for profit. As well as unnecessary packaging, businesses spend over 400 billion dollars a year on advertising, to try to persuade us to buy their products instead of their competitors' near-identical product - how much energy, how many resources, are consumed by this industry that produces nothing useful? In industry, companies will happily ignore the pollution they create if it helps keep costs down. It has its own jargon - 'externalising costs' - in other words, putting the cost of pollution onto the

outside community. This is all done with the connivance of government. In the mid 1990's governments met to decide a response to global warming, and agreed a treaty that was supposed to reduce the number of greenhouse gases produced. But these were not the strict limits some of us imagined at the time, because it allows richer countries to buy pollution allowances from countries that don't use them. As usual, these laws are for the poor, they don't apply to the rich.

In this context, the issue of domestic waste is almost irrelevant. It accounts for only a tiny fraction of the overall level of waste, and even that fraction isn't really under our control. But it is this fraction that the government focuses on, telling us we are all equally to blame for the state of the environment, using it as an excuse to raise our taxes and distract us from the real causes of pollution.

Instead of feeling guilty for not recycling teabags, we must act to stop the real causes of pollution. In the refuse charges campaign, this means arguing that the real polluters should pay for the waste disposal, not the workers who already pay enough tax. It means stopping companies from passing on the cost of their pollution to us. It means taking society back, so that we organise production based on need, not profit, and stop using our environment as a dumping ground.

Ray Cunningham

## SIPTU's rulebook

Imagine a trade union where you can't put motions to your conference if you want to change the rulebook. That's what happens in Ireland's largest union, SIPTU. A Rules Revision Committee is elected, and then given the power to decide what rule changes conference (allegedly the highest decision making body) can discuss and vote on. Branches can only ask the Committee to consider their suggestions, it's up to that Committee to decide if the proposal goes any further.

When this Committee asked for suggestions the Dublin Electronics & Engineering Branch wrote off saying that Branches should be able to directly put rule changes to the union conference. Other branches are currently debating similar motions. Let's try to get a good shove behind this initiative. We will never turn our unions into anything great if we can't even change the rulebook.

Alan MacSimóin  
SIPTU Education Branch  
(personal capacity)

# What is Anarchism!

## A review of the Anarchist FAQ

It's good to know that more than porn and adverts for jobs exist on the internet. Coming fresh off the presses - "What is Anarchism - the anarchist FAQ" is the first pamphlet in a series that will attempt to answer all the questions that you wanted to know about anarchism but never got a chance to ask. This pamphlet is section A of the FAQ, the other sections are as yet only available on the internet.

FAQ is netspeak for Frequently Asked Questions. This pamphlet grew from a group of anarchists co-operating on the web to come up with arguments to refute the claim being made by free market capitalists to the anarchist name! It is a testimony to the co-operative spirit of a handful of activists that something this useful and well produced came about when it would have been much easier to just engage in fruitless argument. In 1995 it was decided to turn the FAQ into a general introduction to anarchism.

The FAQ has a great habit of expressing complex ideas in a relatively simple manner and it succeeds in bringing back to mind many useful quotes that capture the idea that they are expressing. Clifford Harper put the idea of anarchism eloquently when he wrote "Like all great ideas, anarchism is pretty simple when you get down to it - human beings are at their best when they are living free of authority."

The second section is one of my favourites as it covers the very essence of anarchism. Why we oppose authority, hierarchies, why we place such a high emphasis on personal freedom, equality and organisation against this society. It also states quite clearly the

kind of society that we are fighting for and it has very little to do with the current chains of capitalism. But we are seeking to develop a society where mankind can be truly free. As Bakunin said he was a "fanatic lover of freedom, considering it as the unique environment within which the intelligence, dignity and happiness of mankind can develop and increase."

Section 3 deals with the various types of anarchism that exist but appears to ignore the Platform. Perhaps this is an omission that will be addressed in future editions. Sections 4 and 5 just give you a flavour of some of the important thinkers and events that have shaped the anarchist tradition.

The FAQ is a great example of what co-operative work on the internet can achieve. It is a foundation stone for laying down the idea of anarchism as the viable alternative that we should work towards achieving. It's our escape route from the rotten system that we survive in today.

Dermot Sreenan

You can also read all the sections of the FAQ on the web at [www.anarchistfaq.org](http://www.anarchistfaq.org)

## Unions - how can the 'democratic deficit' be tackled?

At the October general meeting of my union branch, Dublin City North INTO (Irish National Teachers Organisation), the district representative on the CEC (Central Executive Committee) told the members that the union leadership was in the process of lodging a claim for a pay increase to compensate for inflation. However, he said, he couldn't possibly tell us what the amount of that claim was, as this was confidential. The members were effectively being told 'don't worry your heads, your leaders will decide what's best for you.'

This was simply further proof of the 'democratic deficit' within many unions. The leaderships see themselves as a protected elite, and many union members feel powerless to do anything about it. Rulebooks are often written in such a way as to make it as difficult as possible for ordinary members to influence how decisions are arrived at.

When the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) was being discussed earlier in the year, many unions - including the INTO - witnessed huge campaigns of propaganda by the union leaderships in favour of the deal, and attempts to silence opponents of the deal. Many union members no longer feel that the union is theirs, 'the union' is seen as a faceless group of people in 'head office' and many members feel that they are not in a position to influence what goes on.

However, the fact that 100% of the members of the CEC in the INTO campaigned for the PPF and yet it was only passed by less than 50 votes overall (50.5% to 49.5%) shows that there are people willing to take a stand. That vote came about as a result of people going to their meetings and making the arguments against the deal, not allowing themselves to be intimidated by the bullyboy tactics of the leadership.

There are a number of minor reforms which can be won, and which can have a great effect in terms of narrowing the 'democratic deficit' and taking power back into the hands of the members. A campaign across all unions for equal space to be given in union publications to both 'yes' and 'no' sides on any national vote, and a campaign for a five year limit on elected positions - both Executive members and paid officials - would be a start. They're hardly revolutionary or earth-shattering demands but if won they're the issues which can form a base for moving closer to taking back control of our unions.

Gregor Kerr  
Dublin City North branch INTO  
(personal capacity)

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It's not surprising that the national media - owned by the state or by the super rich - refuses to advertise anarchist news or activity. But now you can bypass the censors if you have access to the internet.

In your web browser go to <http://surf.to/anarchism>

This page, designed to be friendly for new internet users shows you key sites on the internet linked with Irish anarchism, international and Irish radical news and a huge variety of anarchist history and theory.

To get regular news and announcements from the WSM by email send a message to [lists@tao.ca](mailto:lists@tao.ca) with the text **subscribe ainriail**.

This free service is a low volume list with an average of only 4 posts/week





# Anarchists & the Right to Choose

**We envisage an anarchist society as a society where people are free to make choices about their own lives. We picture a society where decisions are made at the lowest effective level. For women, this includes the decision whether or not to become pregnant, whether or not to remain pregnant, whether or not to have children.**

It is possible to be an anarchist and to have a moral objection to abortion. It is not possible to be an anarchist and not support the right to choose. For if the right to choose does not rest solely with pregnant women, where would it lie; with the state, with lawyers and the courts, with police?

The logic of the anti-choice position is that women would be coerced into continuing with unwanted pregnancies. To anarchists this would be unacceptable. Women consider many different issues when they make the decision to have an abortion. They consider the views of their partner, parents and of the society they live in. They consider the

effect it will have on their career or studies. They think about whether they are ready for motherhood. They look at the relationship they are in. They examine their financial and economic situation.

The decision is complex and not an easy one. For anarchists, the best person, indeed the only person, with the right to make that decision, is the woman who is going to have to live with its consequences. So for us, the right to abortion is a basic human right.

For many women abortion isn't a choice rather it is the only option in their circumstances. The right to choose should also include the right to choose to become a mother. While we fight for abortion rights on one hand, we fight for the removal of barriers and stigma, which prevent some women from carrying through a pregnancy, which they would like to continue with.

Our fight for abortion rights therefore is also part of a wider struggle to re-define what sort of lives women are able to lead. It is also part of a struggle for a society that supports parents in their decision to have children. In defending and defining the right to choose in the broadest way possible, we are defending the right to make choices about how to live our lives. In doing this we are setting the agenda for a future society.

Aileen O'Carroll



## NO GODS, NO MASTERS Edited by Daniel Guerin

The first English translation of a massive anthology of anarchism: its history and practice, writers and activists, the famous names and the unknown. Volume 1 includes Bakunin, Kropotkin, Emma Goldman and others, dealing with property, individualism, the state, religion, disagreements with Marxists, workers' self-management, the Paris Commune, and more.

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Life story of a flamboyant and often jailed Japanese anarchist who was finally murdered by the state. £6.00

## BOURGEOIS INFLUENCES ON ANARCHISM by Louis Fabbri

A terrible title for a good little pamphlet which explains why anarchism is not violence, chaos or mindless revolt; and where such misconceptions came from. £1.20

**Send your order, +20% for post and packing, to WSM Bookservice, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8. Cheques/postal orders should be made payable to WSM Books.**



## Events & Contacts

### Open meetings

The Dublin branch of the WSM hosts a monthly informal discussion for people interested in anarchism and libertarian socialism. Please come along and join in the discussion - or even just to listen. These meetings take place at 8pm in the Bachelor Inn (upstairs), Bachelors Walk (beside O'Connell Bridge). The next meeting will be on Monday December 4<sup>th</sup> and will be about 'The anti-capitalist movement'.

In Cork contact WSM Cork, PO Box 31, Sorting Office, Cork or email [cork\\_wsm@yahoo.com](mailto:cork_wsm@yahoo.com) for details of meetings.

### Other Events

#### VIDEO SHOWING

The Dublin Branch of the WSM also hosts occasional showings of videos of interest to anarchists. The next of these is a video on anarchists in the Spanish Revolution and it will be

held on Saturday November 25<sup>th</sup> at 3pm in the Teachers Club (Club na Muinteoiri) 36 Parnell Square, Dublin 1.

#### Anti-Bin Charges demo

Please support the anti bin charges demonstration at Dún Laoghaire Town Hall on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November at 7pm.

#### Contacts

**Anti Racism Campaign** (Dublin) - meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Irish Vietnamese Centre, Hardwicke St., Dublin 1. Tel. 087-6996046 or 087-2338143. On the web at <http://get.to/arc.dublin>

**Immigrant Solidarity** (Cork) <http://go.to/immigrant.solidarity>

**Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown Campaign Against Service Charges** - Ring Richard Boyd Barrett at 01-8788170 or Lisa Maher at 01-4934696

**Cork Householders Against Service Charges**, 55 North Main St. Cork. Protest - Bring Your Rubbish! City Hall, Anglesea St. every Monday night, 7:30pm. Campaign meeting after protest.

**Irish Mexico Group**, 5 Merrion Row, Dublin 2, <http://zap.to/chiapas>

**SIPTU Fightback**, 22 Melrose Avenue, Dublin 3, <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/siptu.html>

#### Workers Solidarity Movement

Workers Solidarity Movement, PO Box 1528, Dublin 8 or email [wsm\\_ireland@yahoo.com](mailto:wsm_ireland@yahoo.com) <http://surf.to/anarchism>

WSM Cork, PO Box 31, Sorting Office, Cork or email [cork\\_wsm@yahoo.com](mailto:cork_wsm@yahoo.com)

# Victory in Prague

## IMF / World Bank shut down

**Any honest account of the September 26 (S26) demonstrations in Prague would start off by saying that the numbers that took part in the demonstrations, some 12,000 people, were a little disappointing. But it should go on to say that those 12,000 people succeeded in not only completely disrupting the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (WB-IMF) congress but in causing it to be abandoned by the majority of delegates on the second day and the last day was then cancelled. In short we closed it down. It says a lot that you would be hard pushed to find any media, mainstream or 'left' that makes these two points.**

The WB-IMF, who met in Prague, are two of the post-war bodies that seek to ensure that people all over the world obey the needs of western capitalism. Previous coverage in this paper has revealed that they use national debt as a way to force national governments to obey their dictates, the 'Structural Adjustment Programs'. For decades these bodies have been opposed in the 'third world'. In the 1980's there were countless anti-IMF riots in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Czech anarchists, in particular Solidarita - ORA, played a major part in organising the S26 protests and more importantly in trying to mobilise Czech workers for them. The weakness of numbers on the day was in no small part due to the refusal of union officials to pay for organised groups of workers to travel to Prague for the demonstrations. But the work of the anarchists did start a much needed debate within the Czech unions about the IMF. It also helped mobilise the thousands of young Czech workers and students who took part in the demonstration.

In the demonstrations before the IMF summit it became obvious enormous numbers of anarchists had travelled to Prague from all over Europe and in particular from Eastern Europe. On S26 itself around 3,000 anarchists marched as a single block at the head of the blue section of the march, another 1,000 formed a 'pink and silver' section and up to another 1,000 stayed with local affinity groups in other sections of the demonstration. This enormous turnout dwarfed the contingents of the various European Leninist parties.

The limited media coverage Prague received in Ireland tended to focus on the

violence in a rather abstract way - as if that was the point of the demonstration. In fact it was an inevitable product of the closing down of the IMF-WB congress. The congress was protected by 11,000 police with riot armour, batons, tear gas, stun grenades, water cannon, attack dogs



Two views of the Red & Black anarchist block in Prague marching on the IMF and World

and even Armoured Personnel Carriers. These were unlikely to step aside and let us through, so we attempted to force our way through their lines. In the circumstances this was the right thing to do, and more to the point it succeeded in closing down the congress.

A report widely circulated on the internet from one of the bankers is worth quoting at length from. It reveals the panic and disarray the furious attempts to storm the centre provoked amongst the bankers. "I saw ex-World Bank presidents walking around not knowing what to do... When I told him about the protests, he became totally disoriented. The following day, very few people went to the Congress Centre. Most stayed away. They just stayed in their hotel rooms. They didn't even want to go out. ... the meeting got cut by a day. ... they denied that the protests were the reason.. The press laughed

at this."

Amongst the protesters on the early evening of S26 the sense of victory was something you could almost pluck out of the air. We marched into the city centre led by an anarchist Samba band from Seattle and fire breathers. Locals waved from their balconies and tram drivers rang their bells as we passed. Later that evening the police, furious at their defeat, ran riot in the city centre. They battered and arrested tourists, curious locals and anyone who looked like a protester. Those arrested were further beaten in jail and denied both their legal rights and access to food, sleep and toilets.

The beating the local bully boys of global capitalism inflicted in the aftermath of S26 could not however overcome the defeat that had been inflicted. Our anonymous banker concluded that "I have a feeling that when the WB-IMF bureaucracy assesses Prague they will wind down the annual meetings." As the whole purpose of these meetings is to demonstrate in a very public manner their uncontested power over us this would be a significant victory.

Of course as he also points out this won't put them out of business. They'll just switch to sorting things out by fax, email and in smaller more protected gatherings. But none of us in Prague imagined that this sort of spectacular protest would bring down capitalism. That is why we have returned home to activity in our

workplaces and communities. Join us in this.

Joe Black

Above: Riot police and water cannon attack the blue block

For detailed eyewitness reports on Prague, background information and the full text of the bankers' report see

<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/wsm/global.html>