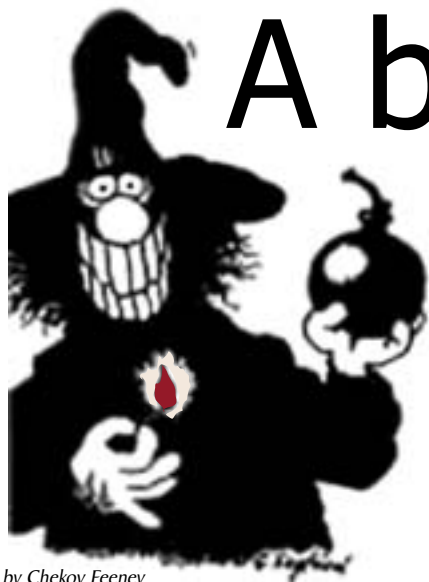


SOLIDARITY

Number 79 - January / February 2004

Twenty Years of Irish Anarchist News

<http://www.struggle.ws/wsm.html>

by Chekov Feeney

A busy year for the Anarchist Bogeyman

2003 was a vintage year for the anarchist bogeyman. He could be counted upon to appear whenever public discontent reared its ugly head. Thankfully, our politicians and media were eternally vigilant to the threat that he posed and were able to spot his plots and warn the easily-led 'ordinary person' to steer clear of him and his ilk.

In the Spring, as tens of thousands of US troops poured through Shannon airport on their way to beat the crap out of Iraq, things were getting a bit hot for Bertie when people started smacking planes with hammers and threatening to pull down fences. The bogeyman provoked a media frenzy, when he announced plans to protest at Shannon. Apparently these anarchists were capable of such 'violence' that thousands of Irish soldiers and gardai, and even the US military were powerless to resist!

Summer came and the World Economic Forum - the global elite's talking shop - announced that it would come to Ireland. Up popped the bogeyman, threatening to bring thousands of his foreign friends to cause mayhem on our peaceful isle. The brave and enterprising journalists of the Evening Herald managed to infiltrate his movement and splashed the news of a "Sinister" Anarchist plot on their front page. Apparently the bogeyman was planning "to destroy Dublin". It all proved too much for the poor government and they had to cancel the summit in the face of this terrible threat.

Autumn saw the bogeyman busy in the bin tax campaign. This

time it was the Sunday Independent that warned the public of the dangers that he posed. As the blockades and protests reached their height, they revealed how anarchists had "infiltrated" the campaign in significant numbers.

Then, with the chill of Winter, he got a few ideas from his cousin, the phantom terrorist, and started posting letter-bombs to European bureaucrats. With Ireland about to take over the EU presidency, the bogeyman was now a real threat to us all.



On virtually every occasion that anarchists were mentioned in the media in 2003, it was in the context of a scare story about threatened violence. The reality of anarchist activity was far, far different. While we were arrested, fined, injunctioned and jailed in significant numbers for taking part in peaceful protests, we did not throw a blow at a single person. Never once were we given a chance to give our side of the story.

However, it's not that much of a surprise that the media paints us in such a negative light. For a start most journalists are lazy hacks who prefer sensationalist scandals to real reporting. More importantly, the handful of rich and powerful people who control the media want to hold onto their power and are extremely hostile to anarchist ideas, which are based on equality, freedom and democracy. This is why we produce our own publications such as this newsletter - to give ourselves a chance to explain what we believe and what we do - and you're not likely to find that in the media.

Irish Anarchist News and Analysis Inside

The Fight for a Free Iraq >> EU Presidency >> The Bin Tax: where to now?



Anarchism on the Move

2003 saw a big upsurge in anarchist activity across the country. A small but growing number of anarchists are building opposition to the status quo based on the politics of freedom and equality. We want, and know it is possible, to create an alternative to the politics of bluff, lies and shady deals. Justice will not fall from the sky- it will have to be fought for here and now. That's why anarchists are involved in a wide range of campaigns and are active in the day-to-day struggles of our communities and in our workplaces. We also know that to build a different society requires imagination and initiative and so we are not content simply to criticise what is- over the past year we showed what can be achieved through grassroots democracy and direct action.

Throughout the year anarchists were busy organising meetings, demonstrations and direct action against the war. The main focus of this activity was the use of Shannon by the US military on the way to wage war on Iraq. Anarchists and other activists decided to publicise this fact and undertook to stop the misuse of Shannon. A peace camp was established and following the smashing up of a military plane by Catholic Workers and Mary Kelly, and other security breaches during demonstrations, three of the four carriers responsible for shipping the US military through the airport temporarily pulled out of Shannon. The government responded by deploying the Irish army and riot police at Shannon to defend the use of a civilian airport by a foreign army in a "neutral" country. Anarchists were also involved in a series of actions against Top Oil, an Irish company that directly benefits from servicing the US war machine.

In Dublin when the council tried to impose a bin tax as the first step to privatising the service, direct action was once again the order of the day. People all over Dublin, including anarchists, set about resisting the non-collection of bins through blockades, demos and pickets. This has, so far, stopped the full implementation of the bin-tax.

Predictably, the state has victimised activists involved in these campaigns and a lot of energy and time has been put into the defence of those dragged in front of the courts. A group called Anarchist Prisoner Support has been established to offer solidarity and support to those imprisoned for their political activity.

Irish anarchists took part in the protests



against the G8 in Evian and the EU in Thessaloniki and the WTO in Mexico. The mistreatment of protesters arrested in Thessaloniki resulted in five of them going on hunger strike and there was a welter of activity internationally, including Ireland, to put pressure on the Greek state to release the prisoners. This was successful and the protesters are now out on bail. A demonstration at the Italian embassy was organised to mark the second anniversary of the killing of an anti-capitalist protester in Genoa and in solidarity with the protesters in Evian. Anarchists also attended the Irish Social Forum, which promotes discussion and debate about globalisation.

Reclaim The Streets threw three street parties with a point in 2003 and the police response to dancing in the streets was muted in comparison to 2002- no Garda riot, just over the top surveillance. The Mayday party was so successful that it inspired some of Dublin's inner city residents to launch their own version of RTS.

The CAZ provided a space for Cork radicals to discuss and plot by the lovely Lee. The organisers of the CAZ are currently looking for a new venue. In Dublin the Magpie squatters transformed, with a bit of imagination and hard work, a derelict house into a home, a library and a social centre where people can meet and organise. Towards the end of the year Belfast anarchists opened up a series of temporary squat cafes.

2003 also saw workplace and union activity including support for firemen on strike in the north, Palestinian and Latin American

solidarity work, anti-corporate initiatives, anti-racist activity, eco-activism, the defence of archaeological heritage in Carrickmines, lots of free grub courtesy of Food Not Bombs, events held by TCD and UCD anarchists and the UCG ecology society, the defence of the commons on the old head of Kinsale, the formation of a new anarchist group, Organise! and the further development of alternative media. And if all that sounds a bit too worthy there were a load of social events as well- gigs, cabaret, films, the annual anarchist summer camp and anarchist picnic and hundreds of people attended the three Grassroots Gatherings held in Limerick Dublin and Galway for the workshops, debates and booze.

To build on the successes of the past year and ultimately to build a genuine anti-capitalist, non-hierarchical movement we need more people to get involved in 2004. So find out about anarchism and help us build an alternative to a world dominated by greed through solidarity and direct action.

To get in touch with Irish anarchists, see the list of events and contacts on page 6.

Internal Exile for Shannon Protester

In Shannon, one of the protesters, a resident of Shannon town, charged with blockading the airport road at an anti-war demonstration, was fined €200 and ordered to leave his home and Shannon Town whenever the gardai inform him that a protest is happening at Shannon Airport. The last time we heard of courts handing down sentences of internal exile was in Stalinist Russia!



Health Service Shambles

Less than one third of the 12,000 cancer patients each year who require radiotherapy in the 26 counties actually get it.

Education: for the Rich

In 2001 UCD, the country's biggest university, had just 937 students whose parents were in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs. 8,354 students, however, came from employer, professional and managerial backgrounds.

Screwed for Housing

According to Bank of Ireland chief economist Dan McLoughlin, in 1995 25.3% of an average wage was required to make payments on a 25 year mortgage. Today that has gone up to 33.1%. Good for profit hungry landowners and builders, and there is always a few bob for corrupt politicians who look after getting the planning permission. Nice to know that capitalism works exactly as it is supposed to.

Accident? Too Bad!

30 workers died on building sites in the 26 counties between January 2002 and last July. Just 8 of these were in the pension scheme. At least 22 families were denied any compensation for the death of their partners and fathers. It is unknown how many workers who died off-site were not covered. Nor do we know how many out of work through illness are not getting any benefits.

Criminal Employers

Employers are legally obliged to register their staff for the Construction Pension Scheme. Yet at least 50,000 of the estimated 103,000 construction workers are not registered by their employers. The bosses, both small builders and major firms, are pocketing the money themselves. At least €35 million a year is being stolen, yet not a single boss has ever been jailed.

MEPs - Top Notch Window-dressing

In the mid 90s a report into the European parliament estimated the cost to the public for each sitting MEP for one year to be in the order of €1,300,000 – that's right, well over a million euros per year per MEP. The EU presidency is also set to cost the Irish taxpayer well over €90 million. In return for all this money, we get to vote every 5 years for an MEP who disappears off to Brussels to talk a lot of hot air and be ignored by all. What a deal!

Bertie's European Act



Over the next six months you will be hearing a lot about the European Union (EU). Part of the reason for this is that Ireland is taking over 'The Presidency' of the EU, but the other part is that in June elections will be held for the European 'parliament' in Brussels. This election of MEPs will be heralded as 'your opportunity' to have a say in the way the EU is run. TV and radio time will be expended on 'convincing' you that you should get out to vote and that voting for your MEP is a valuable activity. Nothing could be further from the truth. Over the last number of elections, voter participation has declined and it's not too difficult to figure out why.

To better understand the functioning of the EU you need to go back a couple of decades to when the EU was more aptly named the European Economic Community (EEC). This name describes more accurately what the EU is all about – economics. It also gives us a clue to who and what is behind the drive to 'enlarge' and 'create a single market' in the European geographical era. A single large market rather than a multitude of small independent markets (based in all the different countries of Europe) has the advantage of allowing European manufactures to mass produce and cut costs. This is a situation that has been forced upon Europe's large manufacturers due to increasing competition and the drive of capitalism to cut costs at every opportunity. The creation of a 'single market' allows European capitalists to compete more effectively with their principle rival – the USA.

The National Interest?

The arrival of the 'Irish Presidency' is often touted as an example of the EU's participatory style. But it also underlines one of the fundamental fault-lines of the Europe-wide alliance. The EU was set up as an alliance 'between independent states' – Germany, France, Ireland, Spain etc.. A lot of what it does is formulated in terms of our 'national' interests. For example in the area of fishing where Ireland's traditionally weak presence has been under threat from larger fishing interests based in France, Spain and Portugal. But this concentration on 'national' interests hides the real division of classes in all issues related to economics and policy in the EU. To go on with the example of the fishing industry: although there is a lot of talk about 'who gets what share of the Irish Box', and whether or not 'Spain is robbing Ireland's fish quota' there is no talk about the exploitation and harsh conditions

within the fishing industry. Very little attention gets paid to the issue of the Irish, Spanish and French fish barons and the money they make from their workers.

The situation in the fish industry is repeated in all areas of the European Union. We are encouraged to see Irish employers as our 'allies' against the larger 'sharks' in the EU market. In other European countries the same applies.

Privatisation

The European Central Bank is one of the most powerful institutions in the European Union. It directs policy and strategy and it does so with the interests of European big business in mind. The make up of the ECB is by appointment only – economists, government advisors, and appointees from the various national central banks. It is overseeing a long term plan to introduce 'neoliberal' values into the single market. These values involve maximising 'competition' and 'privatisation' in the economy, with a view to making the EU a 'more competitive economy'. In practice what this means is an assault of working conditions and trade union rights. It has also led to a massive crackdown on migrant workers. Thousands have already died because of tough border controls and anti-immigrant laws.

The EU may be all about 'bringing Europe together' but we must look at in what way and in whose interests. Right now the EU is a Europe for big business - Bertie and Co. will lap that up in the next few months.

Another FF councillor plays racist card



The Mongan family of Travellers in Miltown Malby, Co Clare had their caravan burnt out. After spending time living under canvas they were able to borrow another caravan to house their 11 family members. Then they were offered a council house. But they turned it down and moved 12 miles away to Lahinch.

Mr Mongan claimed he was threatened by three men who told him to "get out of Miltown if you know what's good for you". Fianna Fail councillor Michael Hillary said "That is welcomed. Miltown is not a traditional area for Travellers and housing them in the Ballard estate would not have been suitable".

The final victory will be the people's

by James O'Brien

Farzad Safavisaleh, 22 years old fled with his brother from Iran after they were arrested and tortured for demonstrating for basic civil liberties. He spent months hiding in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey before he made it to Ireland where he was granted refugee status within 5 months. I met Farzad in his flat in Dublin and asked him about his experiences in Iran and Ireland.

Why did you leave Iran?

Because after my brother and me were arrested and tortured my family decided it was safer to leave.

Why were you arrested? Were you acting violently, throwing rocks at the police or anything like that?

It started with demonstrations at the university in Tehran. There were big student protests for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the freedom to meet. They lasted for days. We would be at the gates of the university shouting and chanting. We didn't use any violence, we just had rolled up newspapers to symbolise our desire for freedom of speech. Then the special police, the religious police came and dispersed the crowd. They had shields and weapons like sticks and chains and knives which they used to attack the crowd. My brother and me were arrested.

What was it like in jail?

You [anarchists] in Ireland think your police are bad, but they are nothing like the police in Iran. First you are put in a room this size (15' x 15') with 30 other men and left for days. Then they bring you to another room and torture you. I have cigarette burns on my back, and look at my wrist (It's twisted out of shape). This comes from when they hanged me from the ceiling while I was handcuffed. The worst part was when they would bring in my brother and torture him in front of me.

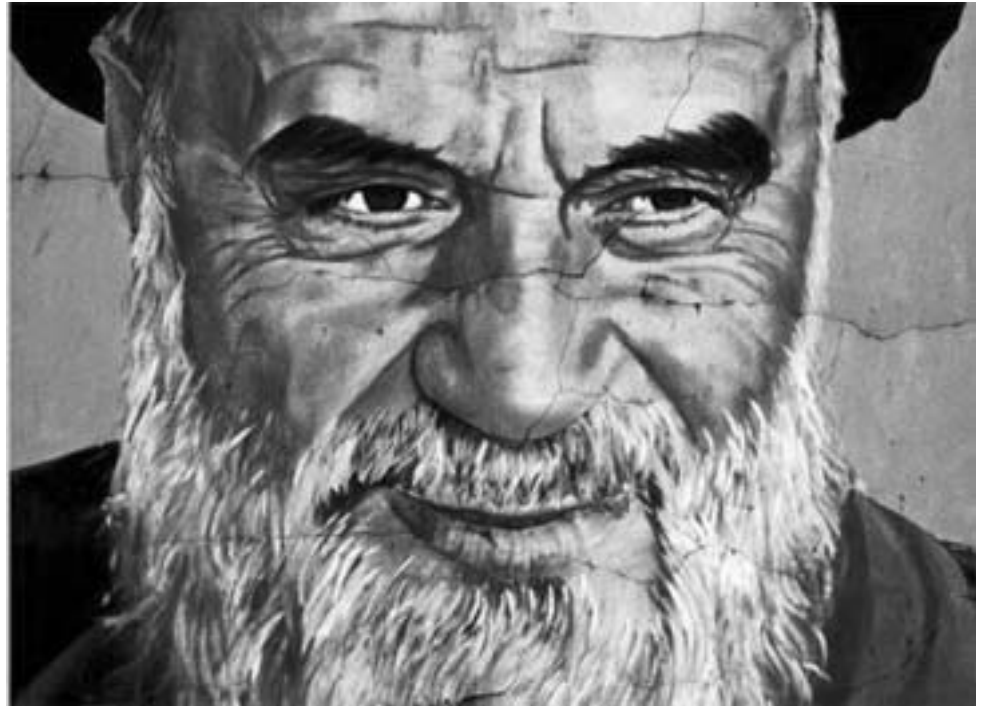
How long were you in jail?

We were in jail for six weeks, then we were released but would have to come back for trial later. We decided it was better to leave and my father gave us money and we went to Azerbaijan. The Iranian government tried to bring my father to trial over us leaving the country and in the end all the family had to leave the country.

Have you heard from your family recently?

Last spring I heard that they are ok. My brother is in prison in Azerbaijan because he has no travel documents.

Did you come to Ireland after going to Azerbaijan?



No after that I went to Georgia and then illegally by boat to Turkey. Then to Ireland by plane.

Why did you pick Ireland?

I didn't know I was coming to Ireland. I just wanted to get to Europe. Germany or England or any country. When you leave your home like I did your thoughts are to save your life not on where exactly you're going. The trafficker put me on the plane with a fake passport and told me to claim for refuge when I arrived.

So you claimed asylum at the airport?

No, the trafficker told me to tear up my documents when I landed or I would be sent back to Turkey. But I couldn't find the toilets before the gate. But the officials just waved me through no problem. After that I got a bus to the city-centre and walked around for hours. I asked a policeman that I wanted to claim asylum and he said "That's your business, not ours"

What did you do then?

In the end I got a taxi and said to the man. "I have €10 and I am a refugee" (my English was very poor at this time). He brought me to the Irish Refugee Council and they found me somewhere to stay for three weeks. Then I was sent to Cork where I stayed for a year. Now I am in Dublin.

What is your attitude towards Islam now? Do you go to the mosque regularly?

No, we've suffered so much at the hands of people in the name of Islam that it's difficult to go back to it so soon. After a religious dictatorship you have a hatred of religion. We

would not trust the Shia centre here, they are spied upon by the regime. Not all Iranians who live in Ireland are against the regime. Some who have Irish citizenship from the 1980s travel back to Iran to their families and have an interest in not opposing the regime. After torture we are careful about who we talk to, because if you don't know them well, they might be reporting to the regime. For me this doesn't matter as much as for others because my family is now outside of Iran and the government can no longer hurt them as revenge for my actions.

There were major anti-government protests last summer in Iran. Have they finished do you think?

There are protests and there will be more in the future. It is not easy to go on a demonstration in Iran. If you go on one, you don't know whether that night you will sleep in your bed or a police station. Or maybe even death. The people don't win against the government on the first day. You need big numbers and this takes time.

What role, if any do you think the western countries could play in helping the people get rid of the regime? Would you support an American invasion?

No, never to invade the country. Genuine help is ok, but we don't want any other country inside Iran after the fall of the regime or any exploitation of the oil by the west again. It must be sold for a fair price. We don't want Iran to be like Iraq is now. The first thing Western countries can do to help the people is to stop supporting the government.

Continued on next page

Restlessness in the Andes

Popular uprising in Bolivia against neo-liberal privatisation of gas resources forces government out

The history of Latin America is one of revolt, hope and resistance. Its most recent chapter was written by the Bolivian people in the turmoil of September and October last year. The Bolivian people suffer from one of the most blatant and shameless exploitations in the world by both their local and foreign rulers. They have a long tradition of organisation and direct action. That means solving the deep problems that affect their impoverished society with struggle by their own means and forces.

For centuries they've been robbed of their natural resources and their labour, and as the silver from Potosi[1] was filling the palaces of the aristocracy and the rich bankers' wallets in Europe, misery, starvation and death in the mines[2] was the reward for Bolivian slaves and workers. But the straw that broke the camel's back came a couple of months ago, when the government lead by Sanchez de Lozada (El Gringo[3]) wanted to sell the natural gas (of which that country has the biggest resources in the world) to the USA at a ludicrous price. Only 18% of the profits were staying in Bolivia. The people were angry because of the fraudulent way the Gas was sold, because the decision was made by the president alone without consultation with the people and because they wouldn't stand for their resources being sold before their own needs were satisfied. Was it logical for the Gas to be sent to the US, while many people in the Bolivian countryside still heat their homes with cattle excrement?

The people's anger was first expressed by the union leadership. Then, on the 15th of November, marches and strikes started to be made by the unionised rank and file. The peasants united with the movement in the cities, and the roads were blocked in protest. That

movement soon spread over all the country, but it was especially strong and militant in the Aymara[4] regions, particularly in El Alto (La Paz). The country went on general strike on the 28th of November, and all the voices of Bolivia became one single yell: "Down with the President." They've had enough with the corruption of the ruling class, with their robbery, and with capitalist policies. Now the general demand was to attend to people's needs before serving the market.

The media lied about the real cause of the struggle, and tried to show that the people in

both countries still distrust each other.

El Gringo's government accused the whole mass movement of being infiltrated by a bunch of "evil agitators" and replied in the traditional way to the just demands of the people: repression. The military came on to the streets and shot participants in the people's struggle, leaving in their wake at least 85 victims. The people fought back with courage, consciousness and organisation. Bolivia has a very well organised working class, with high levels of unionisation and it was the unions and indigenous groups who were the leading forces in the struggle. It was a real rank and file mass movement that after many days of strike, direct action and struggle forced the unpopular president to quit and go back to the USA, on the 17th of December.

It is true that changing the president is no real solution to the deep problems of Bolivian society. It remains a country with an enormous concentration of capital and property in the hands of a tiny elite and there has been no change in a system that excludes the majority from the decision-making. But El Gringo's fall from power strengthened the people's awareness of their capacities. And it is also true that the movement continues with growing

demands among the people for stopping the looting of their resources and labour, for developing local industry, against the bosses dictatorship, for bottom-up rule, expressed by some through the Constituent Assembly but more clearly expressed in the direct democracy forms of mass organisation and by the Aymara independent movement, which utterly rejects the current system in favour of an egalitarian and non-hierarchical society. As long as exploitation and misery persists, there is going to be struggle.

by Paddy Rua

Footnotes are in the web version at:
<http://struggle.ws/worksol.html>



the streets simply opposed the Gas being sold through Chilean ports[5]. To oppose this narrow view - useful for capitalist interests - the popular slogan was that the Gas should be sold neither from Chile nor Peru[6]. Instead it should be processed in Bolivia itself and then could be sold and used to bring gas to the households which lacked it. A miner in Potosi told me they (the politicians and the media) say that Bolivia is poor because of Chile; but the rich men from both countries share business. The Bolivian army called experts from the Chilean army to help slaughter Bolivian people protesting in the streets; they all behave like old good friends, while the people of

Interview with Iranian Exile continued

The West trades arms with Iran and supports their economy. This is a green light to the government to repress the opposition. France should not arrest members of the opposition living there just because the Iranian government wants it. It was very bad for opposition morale to see the foreign ministers of the EU (Straw of England, Villepin of France and Fischer of Germany) joking with the rulers of Iran. It makes them seem just people when in fact they are tor-

turers. If the countries of the world stopped supporting the government the people could deal with them ourselves.

What is your opinion of reformers like Khatami within the regime?

We don't support reformists in the government. They are former revolutionary guards and they have come back to save the government not to change it. Khatami is no different. It's just a play to save them.

The number of jailings and stonings has increased since Khatami came to power. The government has taken some of the money given by Europe for the earthquake. The people don't have enough blankets yet millions was given. That is robbery.

Do you think the Religious Dictators can be overthrown soon?

The strongest dictatorships don't last forever. The final victory will be the people's. I can't predict whether it will fall soon. But we believe we must be active and do something rather than be silent.

Workers Solidarity

PO box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland Web: <http://struggle.ws/wsm.html> Phone: 087-7939931
email: wsm_ireland@yahoo.com, cork_wsm@eircom.net

Workers Solidarity is a bi-monthly publication of the Workers Solidarity Movement. We hope it can contribute to spreading knowledge about anarchism in Ireland and abroad. 6,000 copies of each issue are distributed for free in our neighbourhoods, trade unions and in the campaigns that we are involved in. We are a small organisation and we rely on people volunteering to get involved and help us out, in whatever way they can. If you are interested in contributing to this paper, there are a few things that you could do to help us get our side of the story out:

Write an article and submit it to us at the address above, or by email. Or, if you'd like to respond to an article in the paper, send us a letter.

Support the paper. Supporters of the paper commit to donate a small sum (€5 - €10 per month) towards the cost of printing the paper and take at least 50 copies of each issue to distribute. We don't just want your money and time though; we also want your input to make the paper better. Anybody who becomes a supporter of *Workers Solidarity* is entitled to participate in the editorial process and to elect delegates to sit on the editorial group.

Subscribe to *Workers Solidarity* and our magazine *Red and Black Revolution*, which is produced annually and contains longer and more detailed articles. Rates:

Ireland » €10 for next 9 issues of *WS* and next 2 issues of *R&BR*, **Britain** » £5 for next 6 issues of *WS* and next 1 issue of *R&BR*, **Europe** » €7 for next 6 issues of *WS* and next 1 issue of *R&BR*, **Rest of world** » US \$10 for next 6 issues of *WS* and next 1 issue of *R&BR*

We also distribute information over the Internet. Our website (see above) includes a huge archive of articles about the history of anarchism and Irish struggles. We also have a low-volume Internet news service, called *ainriail*, which allows you to stay in touch with what we are doing by email. There are a maximum of 5 mails a week on this list. To join just visit:
<http://struggle.ws/mailman/listinfo/ainriail>

Book Review - Voices from the Ecological Resistance

Do or Die - vol 10

'Do or Die' is a hefty book-sized magazine that has been published about once a year since 1992. Issue ten, the most recent issue, is also, due to accumulating debt, the last issue and if you haven't seen it yet I strongly advise you to check it out.

With its roots firmly in the British Earth First! (EF! - radical eco-activists) scene *Do or Die* has been an incredible source of information and analysis. Containing articles on theory, discussions about practice and accounts of actions as well as reports on various struggles and movements in different parts of the world the magazine has been probably my favourite read of the last few years.

The beauty of *Do or Die* is that it doesn't fall into any narrow category, it's neither an abstract journal of theory, where various intellectuals throw furniture around their ivory towers, nor is it merely a place to report on events that have taken place. Therefore, actions aren't just publicised, they're discussed, their merits and pitfalls are highlighted and the lessons to be learned are pointed out.

Throughout its history in Britain, *Earth First!* has developed from a direct action environmental movement into 'a network of revolutionaries'. *Do or Die* has mirrored this change and its pages have been one of the few places where the effects of change have been articulated and developed. The series does more than just document history, its pages show

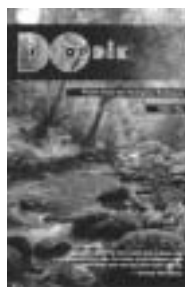
the different (sometimes contradictory) currents of thought, the events which provoked change and the reasons why certain tendencies or tactics came about.

Coming in at over 380 pages the latest issue is no exception. Contents include a history of EF! In Britain and ideas on how it should develop, accounts of campaigns and resistance movements across Central and South America and beyond, and various debates and articles about the 'scene' in the UK: the advantages and disadvantages of legal and squatted social spaces, campaigns against genetic engineering, peat extraction and animal abusers, the need for prisoner solidarity and a great section on zines. Top this off with articles on Palestine Solidarity, feminist health projects, an introduction to Insurrectionary Anarchism, a sometimes hilarious letters section and more reviews than you can shake a stick at and you have something well worth reading at a very reasonable price.

It's not all perfect however. There's an interview with an activist which focuses on spirituality and another which overly romanticizes the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, both of which I had problems with. There's a couple of other small things but on balance the positives far outweigh the negatives and I'd urge everyone to have a look.

by Padraic O Sullivan

See <http://www.eco-action.org/dod> for ordering information and online articles.



EVENTS & CONTACTS

ANARCHIST GROUPS

Workers Solidarity Movement

Revolutionary Anarchist Organisation
Publishes *this paper and an annual magazine, "Red & Black Revolution" as well as being active in many campaigns*
PO box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland
<http://www.struggle.ws/wsm.html>
wsm_ireland@yahoo.com cork_wsm@yahoo.com

Organise! Working Class Resistance

Revolutionary Anarchist Organisation
Newly formed Anarchist Organisation.
Publishes "Working Class Resistance"
Po. Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ
organiseireland@yahoo.ie

Cork Anarchist Group

Anarchists Active in Cork
Publish "The Cork Anarchist Conspiracy"
corkanarchists@yahoo.com

Anarchist Prisoner Support

Anarchists Supporting our Prisoners
highlighting the importance of prisoner support - it could be any of us at any time.
<http://www.anarchistps.org>
aps@anarchistps.org

LIBERTARIAN NETWORKS

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

Magpie Collective

Direct Action / Squatting Collective
Dublin collective taking direct action on housing issues and many others
iwannaspace@wildmail.com

Grassroots Gathering

Non-hierarchical Direct-Action Network
Gathering of grassroots activists from around the country. Founded campaigns such as Grassroots Network Against War.
<http://grassrootsgathering.freeseverson.com>

Indymedia Ireland

Irish Branch of Global Media Collective
Open Publishing web site where everyone has a voice. The place to find Irish campaign news. Also publishes "Printflare"
<http://www.indymedia.ie>
imc-ireland@lists.indymedia.org

EVENTS

8pm - Late, Thursday February 5th
Chaplains Bar, Dolier st, D 2.
Dublin anarchist social night. Open to all

2 pm, Saturday February 7th
Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Sq.
Dublin Grassroots Public Meeting to organise protests during the EU presidency
<http://www.geocities.com/eufortress/>

8pm, Monday Evenings, Dublin
Dublin WSM anarchist discussion evenings. There are also meetings in Cork.
Contact WSM for topics / venues

EMAIL/WEB

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

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

<http://www.anarchomedia.cjb.net/>
Anarchist media website

<http://anarchism.ws/ireland.html>
Index of Irish anarchist Internet resources.



An important principle of anarchism and one that more than any other differentiates it from other types of socialism is its emphasis on freedom and non-hierarchical social relations. Central to anarchism is the rejection of any power hierarchy between men and women. Anarchists believe that the liberty of one is based on the liberty of all and so there can be no true anarchist society without an end to all existing structures of domination and exploitation, including naturally the oppression of women.

As anarchists we believe that the means determines the end. This means that we do not wait for some future revolution to tackle the problems of sexism but instead see that it is important to struggle against it in the here and now. As anarchists we strive to ensure that both our own organisations and also those campaigns we are involved in are free from sexism and power-hierarchies and that all members have equal decision-making power.

We recognise that the full participation of women within the anarchist movement and social struggles of today is very important. In order to shape the future society women must be involved in its creation and, of course, without the participation of half of the population there will be no social revolution. Just as we believe the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class themselves, we also see that, essen-

tially, women's development, freedom and independence must come from themselves. Becoming involved in political struggle is in itself an act of empowerment. Many women in today's society do not believe that they could have a role in fundamentally changing things. However by getting involved, by assuming our place - agitating, educating and organising- we begin to take control of our own lives in the process of actively fighting to change the unjust society in which we live.

Only in an anarchist society will the basis for the oppression of women cease to exist. This is because women, due to their reproductive role, will always be more vulnerable than men in capitalist society which is based on the need to maximise profit. Abortion rights, paid maternity leave, crèche and childcare facilities etc., in short everything that would be necessary to ensure the economic equality of women under capitalism, will always be especially relevant to women. Because of this, women are generally viewed as being less economical than men to employ and are more susceptible to attacks on gains such as crèche facilities etc.

Also, women cannot be free until they have full control over their own bodies. Yet under capitalism, abortion rights are never guaranteed. Even if gains are made in this area they can be attacked, as happens with abortion rights in the USA. The oppression of women under capitalism has thus an econom-

ic and sexual basis. From these root causes of women's oppression, stem other forms of oppression like, for example, the ideological oppression of women, violence against women etc. That is not to say that sexist ideas will just disappear with the end of capitalism, but rather only with the end of capitalism can we rid society of an institutional bias that continues to propagate and encourage sexism.

As an anarchist society will not be driven by profit, there, for example, will be no economic penalty for having children or wanting to spend more time with them. Childcare, housework etc., can be seen as the responsibility of the whole of society and thus give women and men more options in general.

Anarchism/Anarcha-feminism* joins the fight against class exploitation and that against women's oppression together. True freedom, both for women and men, can only come about in a classless society, where workplaces are self-managed, private property is abolished and the people who make decisions are those affected by them.

Clearly the struggle for women's freedom requires a class struggle by the workers. And in turn, the class struggle can only be successful if it is at the same time a struggle against women's oppression.

**Anarchism and anarcha-feminism are the same thing - anarcha-feminism just emphasises the feminism that is inherent to anarchism.*

The Fight for a Free Iraq

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the only de-facto recognised organisation at the workplace. Getting legal recognition out of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council however, is another matter.

David Bacon, who travelled to Iraq as part of a delegation from U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW) reports that the Occupation authorities have kept Saddam's anti-union legislation on the books. What's more "in June, Bremer issued another regulation about 'prohibited activity.' Item B under prohibited activities is encouraging anybody to organise any kind of strike or disruption in a factory or any kind of economically important enterprise. And the punishment for this is being arrested by the occupation authority and being treated as a prisoner of war."

Ewa Jasiewicz, of the International Occupation Watch Center in Baghdad described the struggle of workers at a brick factor near Baghdad In October ¾ of the workforce who are paid \$1.50 for a 14 hour day marched on the management's office and demanded a wage increase, a formal contract, on-site medical facilities and retirement payments.

"The owner had no idea that a union had been formed and told them, 'Fine, strike go, I will

dismiss you, others will come to take your place.'" "The workers responded by going to their homes, bringing out their guns and spontaneously forming an armed picket line.

"Manned with machine guns and Kalishnikovs, workers guarded the factory and defended their strike from demolition by scab labor. The owner, overpowered, ended up granting the workers a raise of 500 dinars - 25 cents- and agreed to enter negotiations regarding social and health benefits. The strike was regarded all around as a massive success".

She also "visited a worker unaffiliated to the trade union but working for the Southern Oil Company in his company supplied home. His wages have improved but still amount to just \$10 per day. He can't and never will be able to afford to move out of his 2-room caravan, unless he gets a raise. He tells us that the management, the same dictatorial and murderous Ba'athists responsible for the ordering of hundreds of oil workers dead, are still running the show. 'We threw them out, every single one, but the Ministry of Oil / CPA ordered many of them back in'.

As might be imagined the US/UK occupying force is not too happy that Iraqi workers are

organizing themselves rather than obeying the puppet Iraqi Governing Council. U.S. Labor Against War circulated an appeal in mid-December from Iraq which described how "The American occupation forces, using a force of about ten armored cars and tens of soldiers, attacked the temporary headquarters of Iraqi Federation of Workers Trade Unions (TFTU) in Baghdad) at 10.30 am, Saturday 6/12/2003, and arrested 8 of its leaders and cadres, who were handcuffed and taken away to an unknown destination.

The attackers ransacked and destroyed IFTU's possessions, tearing down banners and posters condemning acts of terror, tarnishing the name of WTU and that of the General Union of Transport Workers (on the building's main front) with black paint and smashing window glass, without giving any reason or explanation." Those arrested were released the following day, this is part of a series of arrests by the occupation armies of trade union leaders and protesters.

Iraq is to be made safe for capitalism one way or the other. For over 20 years the job of caretaker was given to Saddam Hussein until in the 1990's he got too big for his boots. Now the occupation forces are searching for another suitable strong man they can leave in charge when they depart for other wars.

See www.occupationwatch.org for many of the articles from which these quotes are taken.



Wages Up 23%!

(of course not - only the bin-tax jumps up like that)

The anti-bin tax campaign fought a long, hard struggle in 2003 involving pickets, blockades in estates and outside depots. Many activists were injuncted, and some brave people even went to jail for having the sheer audacity to protest against the wishes of the council. We succeeded in delaying Dublin City Council's attempt to implement non-collection. *by Dermot Sreenan*

But the city officials aren't going to sit around forever. Sooner or later they'll be back for round two. They signalled their intentions by repeating their shenanigans of the year before by raising the tax by another 23%. It's a pity they don't raise wages by 23%! So now many of us are facing a larger bill for our public service and a backlog of outstanding bills going back for three years. As the French say, the more things change the more things stay the same.

The campaign has already achieved a result in making an issue out of something that was previously ignored by the political parties. We made some of the biggest news of the year by shutting down the city's services. People flocked out of their houses and stopped bin trucks. I've spoken to the workers in the depots and they are in no doubt that privatisation is on the way if the council succeed in getting us all to pay. Sadly, but not surprisingly, the trade union leaders have not helped the workers carry the fight. Instead, they have been busy undermining their own members' opposition to the charges by denouncing the campaign in public and not supporting bin workers when they refused to break the pickets in October.

Ultimately this last year has also brought some of the failings of the campaign to light; at the last few blockades the fight was left to the dedicated activists. To defeat the Council in their push for privatisation of our services the campaign needs to recapture the broader participation of the earlier days. If the campaign is to win this year people have to take responsibility for getting involved in



their neighbourhoods and, just as importantly, at the central co-ordination level.

This is your opportunity to put a halt to the Thatcher-like privatisation of your services. Do not leave it up to others to defend you from the future nightmare of having to pay private contractors for your waste-collection, water, and whatever other ways that they can successfully screw money out of us. This fight is too important and we need you in order to slay the dragon of double-taxation.

The Fight for a Free Iraq

by Andrew Flood

George Bush's claim that the war in Iraq was won last May now seems very premature. Saddam may have been caught but US troops are increasingly confined to their bases or to mounting large patrols out of them, at constant risk of ambush. But what is life like for the Iraqi workers caught under the occupation and all too often in the cross-fire?

A United Nations/World Bank report issued in October estimated that in a

country of 26 million people, 50 percent of Iraq's workforce were unemployed or underemployed. The economy has been destroyed not only by three wars but also by over a decade of sanctions. The occupation forces have brought back many of the Ba'athist death squads who kept workers down under Saddam. But despite all this Iraqi workers are organizing to improve their lot under the new regime.

Trade Union delegations from across the globe have been visiting Iraq to observe events. One such British trade unionist, Alex Gordon (of the NURMT) reported:

"In the Baghdad Bicycle Factory, for example, they held a one-day strike on 27th September and raised their wages from 17,000 to 60,000 Iraqi Dinar a month" (about £30). He went on to describe how in the Railway Works several weeks ago members of the US civil administration turned up to meet with the management and representatives of the former Ba'athist 'yellow' unions.

In response 600 railworkers at the depot held a mass meeting and elected three representatives to inform the US occupation authorities that the railworkers wouldn't tolerate being represented by former Ba'athists and to demand recognition for their own democratic union. The US troops pulled guns on the workers who stood their ground with the result that their union is now

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