

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

January / February 2012

Twenty-Eight Years of Irish Anarchist News

## The Household Tax: Don't Register, Don't Pay

**Mid-December saw the eventual publication of the long-threatened household tax legislation. The first three months of 2012 will present every household in Ireland with a choice: whether to succumb to this new home tax, which along with the proposed water tax will rise to approx €1,200 per annum within a couple of years, or to refuse to register, refuse to pay and make a stand against the costs of bailing out bankers and developers continuing to be hoisted on our shoulders.**

**Gregor Kerr**

Much has been made in the media coverage of the threatened €2,500 fine for people who refuse to register for this new tax. But as the Campaign Against Household and Water Taxes (CAHWT) organises throughout the country we can all stand together and ensure that individuals cannot be targeted by the government.

There is no legal obligation on anyone to register for this tax until 31st March. So if we don't register through January, February and March and arrive at late March with at least a million households unregistered (government plans are to make 1.6million households pay), we will then be in a massively strong position.

As a group, as a collective of households standing together, we will be able to say to the government: 'your tax is unwelcome, we're not going to pay it. Are you willing to take all of us on?' The legal system will be incapable of processing cases against one million householders for refusing to register. Other government threats such as stopping the money from our wages, social welfare payments etc. can also be dealt with by us as a million-strong group.

### Achievable

A 'Not registering, Not paying' collective of one million plus households by mid-March might seem like a mammoth task. But it is in fact very achievable. Already the CAHWT

has begun organising throughout the country. In areas outside the main cities and towns, the campaign is also taking on the issue of resistance to payment of the new septic tank registration charges. Public meetings have been held and organising groups established in many areas and are planned in many more for the coming weeks.

The key to achieving the target of a million plus households resisting this tax is mass participation, we need huge numbers of people involved, not just in refusing to register/pay themselves, but in convincing and organising others to do so as well. This campaign cannot be built by a small number of 'leaders' or politicians, no matter how well intentioned they might be. Building it needs a lot of ordinary people, just like you, to get involved.

Imagine its building as being like a giant benign pyramid scheme in operation. If during the month of January 500 people get out in their local areas and knock on 50 doors each, we will have spoken to 25,000 households. (If the average conversation takes approx 5 minutes that will involve a maximum of 6 – 8 hours work for each of those 500 people). If we convince 20,000 of these 25,000 households to agree not to register and not to pay, and then convince 1 in 4 of these to themselves get out and knock on another 50 doors each, we could conceivably have knocked on and organised 250,000 households by the middle of February and 1.25million by early March.

Of course if we can start off with more than 500 people at the beginning of the pyramid, we will get to the base of mass participation even quicker. But the key to this happening is that we don't all leave it to 'someone else' to do it but that we each get involved in organising the campaign in our own areas to the extent that each of us can.

### Support

Many people might feel intimidated or nervous about the idea of knocking on neighbours' doors about something like this. But among those involved in getting the campaign off the ground there are many people

Window Poster - Please Display Prominently

## WE'RE NOT PAYING THE HOUSEHOLD TAX

Campaign  
Against  
Household &  
Water Taxes



[www.nohouseholdtax.org](http://www.nohouseholdtax.org)

who have previously been involved in similar campaigns such as the successful battle against water charges in the 1990s. These people are available to support or help the establishment of campaign groups in any area and to provide help/support/training to people to do the necessary door knocking.

So if you feel that this tax needs to be defeated, it's over to you (with help and support of course). If there's a campaign group established in your area, get involved and do your bit. If there is no campaign group established in your area yet, please contact the campaign through its website ([www.nohouseholdtax.org](http://www.nohouseholdtax.org)), facebook page (search for 'Campaign Against Household And Water Taxes'), by phone/text (086 7389943) or through the Workers Solidarity Movement.

You will be put in touch with other people in your area, given whatever support or help you need, provided with material (Leaflets, newsletters, 'We're Not Paying' window posters and car stickers and campaign membership cards are all available) and you will do your bit to defeat this tax. Victory can be ours!

# Referenda: A Strategy for Success?

**The idea that calling for a referendum is a good strategy for winning significant reforms often crops up in campaigns. It seems logical, as a referendum is a chance for the population to directly make a decision on the issue to hand. But the reality is that the demand for a referendum is seldom, if ever, the best way to build a struggle for a reform. Here are five reasons why:**

**Andrew Flood**

## Lobbying

Under the Irish constitution a referendum can only be held after a bill has been passed by the Dail and the Seanad setting out the proposed amendment to the constitution. In other countries and some US states a referendum can be called if enough people sign a petition. That is not the case in Ireland. So in Ireland a referendum will only happen if you convince the government parties to call one while allowing them control over the wording that will be voted on.

## Influence

The nature of a referendum debate is such that it will be almost completely dominated by those with money, power and influence. Independent media group, which owns the Evening Herald, Irish Independent, Sunday Independent, Sunday World and the Irish Daily Star, as well as 14 regional titles and two free newspapers, has been dominated by the O'Reilly family since 1973 and has the ability to put the equivalent of a long leaflet in everyone's hand every day.

## Isolation

The nature of referenda is that we make our decisions in the isolation of the ballot box, an isolation designed to amplify the influences of the political parties and media. Outside of family & pub arguments

there is no process of collective debate and discussion. We observe the opinions of the wealthy 1% and their hirelings and then choose between them.

## Result

The nature of a referendum is that once the vote has happened the vast majority of people will consider that issue to have been settled for a number of years. That means referenda are not good ways of building a struggle because if you fail to win them many will see it as being all over. From that point of view, there is no point in a referendum being called unless there is reasonable confidence of winning.

## Power

A referendum is only another state process by which we face the power of the 1% and, like all the other processes of that type from court cases to elections, has been designed to maximize the influence of those who have power and money over the results. All these processes are designed to give the impression that all are equal before them but in all cases this is not true.

Our struggles for change that are based around using tools designed by the masters will be weak and powerless. We need to develop and use tools that do the opposite, that build on our strength and make us powerful. These are the sort of tools that are based on mass collective discussion and action rather than either listening to or following the actions of the few.

Our tools are the strike, mass demonstrations, assemblies and mass organisations that we build and have some control over. When we fight for reforms it may well be that when we show our strength, the state will seek to compromise and diffuse that through offering referenda but, if so, that is something we have won not through seeking a referendum but by frightening them into calling one.

## Contacts

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[organiseireland@yahoo.com](mailto:organiseireland@yahoo.com)

### Derry Anarchists

<http://derryanarchists.blogspot.com/>

### Revolutionary Anarcha-Feminist Group

PO BOX 10785, Dublin 1.  
<http://ragdublin.blogspot.com/>

### Indymedia Ireland

*Alternative user-generated Irish news.*  
<http://www.indymedia.ie>

### Seomra Spraoi

*Dublin Social Centre*  
10 Belvedere Court, Dublin 1.  
<http://www.seomraspraoi.org>

### Just Books

*Belfast Radical Bookshop*  
13-15 Clarence Street, Belfast.  
[justbooks@rocketmail.com](mailto:justbooks@rocketmail.com)

### Shell to Sea

*Campaign to move Shell's gas pipeline offshore from Co. Mayo.*  
<http://www.shelltosea.com>

### Hands Off the People of Iran

*Anti-imperialist network for solidarity with Iranian trade unionists & the women's rights movement.*  
<http://www.hopoi.org>

### Choice Ireland

*Abortion rights action group*  
[choiceireland@gmail.com](mailto:choiceireland@gmail.com)  
<http://www.choiceireland.org>

### Residents Against Racism

*Opposing racism and deportations.*  
24 hour helpline: 087 666 2060

### Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign

01-6770253 | [info@ipsc.ie](mailto:info@ipsc.ie)  
<http://www.ipsc.ie>

### Free Education for Everyone

*Active in colleges around the county, North and South.*  
[www.free-education.info](http://www.free-education.info)  
[stopfees@gmail.com](mailto:stopfees@gmail.com)

### Campaign Against the Household and Water Taxes

[www.nohouseholdtax.org](http://www.nohouseholdtax.org)  
(086) 738 9943

# The Budget, 3rd Level Education & the Student Occupations

The changes to third-level fees and the maintenance grants system for new postgraduate students in Budget 2012 come as no big shock. The €250 increase in the student contribution charge means students will pay €2,250 from next September, with other increases likely to come in 2013 and 2014. In relation to postgraduates, no maintenance grants will be paid for new entrants from the 2012/13 academic year. These changes come into effect after months of campaigning by the grassroots student campaign group Free Education for Everyone (FEE) and the Union of Students Ireland (USI).

## Kieran O'Connell

The €250 increase in the annual college registration fee will have a serious impact on families across the country, with the burden falling largely not on students themselves, but on families across Ireland who are already suffering from other Budget measures.

FEE is a broad campaign group that campaigns for the abolition of all registration fees/student contributions in favour of it being funded by a central progressive taxation system, as well as opposing all recent cuts to the education system.

Following the large USI protest of November 16th, occupations began on November 29th, when representatives of the USI occupied two government department buildings. The group, including USI President Gary Redmond, occupied the Department of Enterprise and Jobs and then the Department of Social Protection. The students had brought enough food with them to last for several weeks, as well as a portable toilet, to the enterprise ministry on Kildare Street. The first



occupation ended quite quickly with the threatened use of pepper-spray by the Gardaí on the occupiers. However the 2nd occupation lasted for approximately four hours, with the four occupants arrested and brought to Store Street Garda Station. FEE released a statement of support for these actions.

Actions continued the next day, when approximately fifteen members of FEE Galway (<http://free-education.info/fee-galway-occupation/>) occupied the constituency office of Fine Gael TD Brian Walsh. NUIG Equality Officer and FEE representative William O'Brien stated that "protests, marches, lobbying are not working so we're upping the ante, to obstruct TD's and ministers as they are intent on obstructing us in the pursuit of education. Students are very angry, particularly at the Labour party". Labour party Minister for Education Ruairí Quinn had signed a pledge promising to oppose any increase in fees or cut to the grant in the run up to February's general election.

The Maynooth Students Union then occupied Fine Gael T.D Anthony Lawlor's Naas office. The group of eight students

said it had come equipped with a chemical toilet and enough food for a week. FEE Maynooth members also visited the occupation, which lasted for 4 days, before Gardaí ejected them at 2 a.m. on the morning of the fifth day. Come Budget Day, students in Dublin (<http://free-education.info/occupation-4/>) occupied the Ranelagh offices of Eoghan Murphy (FG), urging him to vote against any education cuts and rises in student fees in the budget.

Lorcan Myles commented on FEE's support for student union led occupations that "there is a need for a mass campaign that can win, and occupying is one of the best tactics at the disposal of the student movement".



*International Anarchist website with news & discussion from all five continents.*

# Organise for a General strike

Up to 200,000 public sector workers took part in the largest one-day industrial action in Northern Ireland in decades along with millions across the UK, demonstrating that when we withdraw our labour and stand together in defence of our rights we have real strength. Belfast was a sea of red and colourful rainbow coalition trade union flags for a change, as up to 15,000 workers rallied outside the city hall against the cuts and attacks on pensions. From the early morning, picket lines involving public sector workers from transport workers to teachers dotted the city's landscape in a show of unity.

**Sean Matthews**

The WSM, Organise! and Derry Anarchists attended pickets from the early morning as striking workers but also in support and solidarity, and later took part in the main rally on the day, including a banner drop as feeder parades arrived from all parts of the city. The mood throughout the day was one of confidence and defiance. However, on its own, a one-day strike will only express our anger and let off a bit of steam. It is not enough if we want to actually defeat the ongoing attacks on our pay and conditions - attacks which are affecting all workers and the unemployed. This was again highlighted on the eve of the strike when the Chancellor announced a further pay freeze for two years and a rise in the state pension age to 67.

Solidarity and support for strike action needs to be built across all workplaces - unionised or not - and in



our communities where we are feeling the impact of these devastating cuts on our standard of living, if we want to win. In the short-term we need to be organising for rolling strike action including go-slows and ultimately an indefinite general strike. Such action is needed because history shows us that those at the top will concede little of significance without such mass resistance

Lobbying politicians and marching from A-B has limited returns and can even add to the pervading sense of powerlessness. Politicians, like our trade union leadership, cannot be trusted and will work to police and sabotage any effective action; sitting down for tea and biscuits on the hill in Stormont is delivering nothing but more of the same: the hammering of working class people. Taking back control of OUR unions from below is part and parcel of the fight to defend what we have won over the years.

Stormont serves the rich and their masters in London offering us no alternative. Despite their rhetoric and intention to not cross any picket lines, all our local political parties are committed to imple-

menting these vicious anti-working class cuts and the wider neo-liberal agenda of slashing and privatising public services by making us pay for the greed and crimes of the 1%. The battle lines have clearly been marked and the next weeks and months will be crucial in building a militant mass campaign which is opposed to all cuts and attacks on services, controlled by rank and file workers and independent of all opportunist political parties who are only interested in elections. A victory on the pensions for public sector workers builds towards the fight needed to win a victory for all workers.

If we want to win, we need to recognise that being right isn't enough. Unfortunately, our society is not a debating chamber where everyone is given an equal voice, and the decisions that affect our lives are not taken on moral grounds. Our rulers don't care about doing right by us. What they care about is power and wealth, and supporting the interests they represent. If we want to change the world, we will have to empower ourselves through direct action in every aspect of our daily lives.

## solidaritybooks



43 Douglas St., Cork

Solidarity Books is a radical bookshop in Cork open for the past 2 years. It has a wide selection of books on anarchism, socialism and Irish history. It also holds regular radical film nights and is a meeting space for progressive groups in the city. It is run by WSM.



## Irish Anarchist Review

The Workers Solidarity Movement is very pleased to announce the fourth issue of *The Irish Anarchist Review*. This magazine is dedicated to understanding the contemporary political, economic and social situation that confronts us, and finding ways to advance alternatives.

Contact us with your postal address if you would like to receive a copy or download a PDF from <http://www.wsm.ie/c/irish-anarchist-review-4>

[www.anarchistblackcat.org](http://www.anarchistblackcat.org)



A friendly and respectful online discussion board for anarchists of all stripes and those just interested in seeing what anarchists think.

## Thinking About Anarchism: Direct Action

The idea of direct action is sometimes misunderstood as meaning anything violent, anything from a brick through a window to a full-scale guerrilla war. Our political opponents go out of their way to spread confusion because they know that in a “battle of ideas” they would lose. That is why they portray anarchism as a ludicrous system of chaos and disorganisation.

When the phrase ‘direct action’ was first used at the end of the nineteenth century it meant no more than the opposite of trying to win change by trusting in ‘better’ politicians. In the context of modern trade unionism it means using industrial action – strikes, work to rules, occupations – rather than trusting in the supposedly impartial Labour Court, Rights Commissioners and mediators.

In the community it means tenants and residents associations organising non-payment of water and household taxes instead of trusting in the local politician to get rid of them. The point is that action is taken, not indirectly by representatives over whom we have little control, but directly by those who are affected. It is action intended to succeed, not just to gain publicity. It rejects the notion that ordinary people are

stupid and powerless and so must leave all the important decisions to someone else. It recognises that most improvements for our class will not be handed down by the bosses; they have to be fought for. That is how we have gained nearly everything we have, from the eight hour day to the right to join a union.

Anarchists hold that genuine socialism cannot be created by the actions of any small minority or elite. If we are to create a socialism based on the grassroots democracy of workers and community councils a lot of people will have to be involved. A lot of people will have to believe that they can destroy the present system and build a better one.

Through engaging in direct action we learn by experience that there is no need to depend on some ‘expert’ or professional politician. We learn that we can manage our own struggles in our own interests. We learn the need to link up with others in the common cause. For example, if we want to win on the household tax, we have to involve more than just one area of the country. This is when the ideals of solidarity and mutual aid become real. There is no precondition for revolution more important than working class self-confidence. If this does not exist then the running of society



will be taken over by whatever party is able to put across the image that they are the “professionals” and “experts”.

When this happens we can forget about socialism. A minority is in the driving seat and it is only a matter of time before they develop from a grouping with their own interests into a new fully-fledged ruling class. This is what has happened every time a minority has been trusted to rule a country after a revolutionary upheaval. Only a confident working class can create the true democracy that will stop this happening.

## Anarchism &amp; the WSM

As 2011 came to a close, political activities continued apace for WSM members. Countrywide we remain active in the anti-household tax campaign as it builds a non-payment strategy in advance of its introduction in January.

In Dublin we formed part of a small but lively (thanks to the Occupy Dame St sound system just ahead of us) libertarian/anarchist bloc on the Dublin Council of Trade Unions pre-budget protest in late November (See <http://www.wsm.ie/c/dctu-anti-cuts-demonstration-11nov>). Continuing the theme, our members attended the Spectacle of Defiance and Hope, organised by community organisations from across Dublin, on Dec 3rd (<http://www.wsm.ie/c/spectacle-defiance-hope-parades-through-dublin>). Finally we were outside the Dail on budget night itself as the latest Fianna Fail/Green / Fine Gael / Labour /EU / ECB / IMF programme of austerity was announced.

Also in Dublin we participated in the Free Education for Everyone (FEE) section of the USI (Union of Students in Ireland) demonstration against cuts in education funding (<http://www.wsm.ie/c/students-demonstrating-dublin-education-cuts-usi-betrayal>). This event was notable for USI stewards preventing FEE members from rejoining the main body of the march having held a peaceful sit-down protest outside Fine Gael HQ. We continued our involvement in Occupy Dame Street (see <http://www.wsm.ie/c/occupy-crisis-wsm-occupy-movement>) while also holding two more “Conversations about Anarchism” events.

Solidarity Books in Douglas St remains the mainstay of our Cork Branch, where they hosted a screening of “Colombia: the new wave of social protest and the dirty war against the people” and discussion with



it’s director, Javier Orozco. Our members there also remain involved in Occupy Cork and attended its “Parade in Defiance” (see <http://www.wsm.ie/c/occupy-cork-marches-against-austerity>) in early December. We are also active in the ongoing Independent Workers Union (IWU) campaign targeting Lidl.

In the West, our Galway branch is successfully up and running, having had a great turnout at their public meeting titled “Another World is Possible”. WSM members also attended two further Shell 2 Sea days of action as the struggle in Rosport continues (<http://www.wsm.ie/c/shell-compound-aughoose-shut-solidarity>). In the North, we took part in and leafleted the protests held to coincide with the large-scale strike held on November 30th (<http://www.wsm.ie/c/n30-strike-round-northern-ireland>).

Finally, the WSM launched its supporters programme on foot of realising that there

are many people who broadly agree with our political positions and the organising we do but for one reason or another are not yet looking to become members. We want such people to have an ongoing formal relationship with the WSM that would involve some participation in internal discussion, helping us out financially and working with us in areas of activity they have a particular interest in when they have time. With members we expect a commitment to a minimum level of such activity, but we are not expecting the same from supporters, rather we hope they will help us out when they are able (<http://www.wsm.ie/c/wsm-supporter>). So, if you agree with what you have read in *Workers Solidarity* and would like to help out in some way then you now have no excuse!

For further information on the above and other breaking news, check out <http://www.wsm.ie>

# Occupy X!

Over the last year, from Tahrir Square in Cairo to New York, a new movement sprung from the discontent of millions. It brought down a dictatorship in Egypt, re-awakened the libertarian spirit in Spain and affected a sea change in American politics. The Occupy movement, as it has become popularly known in English speaking countries, shook the world in 2011.

Marcas MacCaoimhin

Based upon the idea that the 99% should control the world's wealth and reviving the method of direct democracy, it struck fear into the hearts of the ruling 1%. Very few people, however, believed that such a movement could spread to Ireland. The Irish, after all, don't protest.

Even when a group calling themselves Occupy Dame Street (ODS) acted upon their intention to set up camp in front of the Central Bank on October 8th last, many people believed the protest would be over within the night. No one, even the most determined of the campers, thought they would still be there when the frost hit in December.

The occupation began with three central demands: that the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund stay out of Irish affairs and the debt be lifted; that the oil and gas reserves off the Irish coast be returned to "sovereign" control and finally, crucially, that we implement "real participatory democracy - where the people's interests

come first, where the people decide what happens".

It was in the pursuit of this last demand that ODS provided a practical example. From the outset, general assemblies (GAs) were held twice a day (later reduced to once a day) where decisions affecting the movement could be made. Decisions were made by consensus rather than by majority vote.

At first GA's were badly organised but the creation of a facilitation working group helped refine the process. Within weeks GA's were getting through several proposals per session. Protests were organised and policy was altered, all through a process of collective decision-making.

The consensus process that successfully prevented groups or political parties from packing assemblies to further their own ends also caused some problems. A proposal to work with the Dublin Congress of Trade Unions (DCTU) to organise a march was blocked at a GA by a small number of people. This created a rift and some people went on to do this work on their own.

This proved to be a turning point for ODS as attendances at GA's fell, but those who stayed around did not lose their enthusiasm. A series of direct actions were undertaken, including human microphones or "mic checks" at banks around the city. People from ODS also took part in the recent Union of Students in Ireland demonstration and the Spectacle of Defiance and Hope.

As ODS heads towards its third month, the heady enthusiasm of October may have waned but the resolve of the occupiers has not. They will continue to camp and organise protests for the foreseeable future. But the most important contribution of ODS to the Irish political landscape may be its influence on other protests.



The idea of occupation has taken firm root among those aiming to force a change in government policy on a wide range of issues. Student groups have occupied TDs' offices and government departments, as did protesters on budget day. As the winter continues and camping becomes less and less of an attractive prospect, indoor occupations could take the movement forward and provide spaces for assemblies and organising protest.

Whatever the fate of ODS, there is no doubt that those who were brave enough to pitch their tents at "Liberty Plaza" on the eighth of October have altered the popular imagination when it comes to protest. ODS in isolation will never achieve its core demands but it has drawn a new layer of people into political activity who had never considered it before and it has popularised the ideas of direct democracy and occupation. For that it must be considered a success.

## Fighting Back - Time to Get on the Bus!

If the recent budget highlighted anything, it was the fact that the working class in Ireland is under severe attack. Services, too numerous to mention here, are being cut or removed entirely, while the real living standards of many of us are being driven down and down. Meanwhile the banker-thieves and investment-gamblers still live the highlife.

Kevin Doyle

It's not that different in many other countries across the world now. In Spain, in Italy and in Greece, of course, the same bleak reality is staring people in the face. Except for this: in many places the fightback is much more pronounced. We know about Greece, but in countries like Portugal and even in Britain (and in Northern Ireland) huge strikes have taken place. If nothing else, these show that resistance to cuts and austerity has not gone away.

But important differences are emerging too. A significant one is in the USA while the other is in Spain. First we turn to the USA:

### SUPER RICH

Despite the hot air that is often talked about 'living standards' in the US, the gap between the rich and the poor is at a level not seen since before the Great Depression in 1929 (and that was bad). As significant though is the ongoing and sustained attack on workers' wages and working conditions. In particular, trade union conditions have been targeted - as in Wisconsin - and many workers have been coerced into accepting new and worse conditions.

But the Occupy Movement (OM) in the USA

has challenged this and offered a new way forward - one that has struck a real chord with union and non-union workers alike. The OM and its various offshoots are proactive about who the problem is - the very wealthy - but also fundamentally the OM is about 'self-organising' - or what we sometimes call over here 'grassroots organising'.

A core idea of the OM is this: if you want help or solidarity from other workers or citizens, go to them directly and ask them yourself; explain your position and ask for support. In doing this the OM has chosen to side-step an important barrier to building a movement or winning a struggle. This barrier is the layer of union officials and 'left' politicians who sometimes control unions and political movements but actually do nothing worthwhile.

In the US this new mood of self-organising and direct action has already paid dividends. In November a one day blockade of the Oakland, San Francisco port - one of the largest in the that country - was supported by dock works and was a major success. The port action cost the bosses huge losses and happened in solidarity with the Occupy Oakland movement which was under attack from the police and under threat of eviction. This example at Oakland and the manner in which it was achieved has spurred a further round of grassroots solidarity organising in December, which aimed to build more links between OM protestors and union activists; this was also a huge success. For example, in Los Angeles, where unionised port workers are under attack, they have spoken about their admiration for direct action methods of the OM. These same dockworkers have condemned their own union officials who are afraid to sanction any strike action against the port bosses in case it lead to the union 'being sued'. Where have we heard that before?



A second and different example of the changing climate of struggle lies in Spain. Last year saw a groundswell of anger there over the economic crisis and the cuts. People took to the streets and occupied central areas of Madrid and Barcelona proclaiming that 'the system' was broken. As it was.

In November, Spain was offered its usual round of parliamentary elections. Just like here the electorate was told 'now is your chance to choose'. But for huge numbers of ordinary Spaniards this offer of parliamentary election was condemned for the sham that it was. 'There is no choice' proclaimed many voters. In Spain the 'Socialists' had implemented massive cuts. The alternative at election time was the PP party who were also promising massive cuts. So?

The Indignados - the grassroots movement in Spain - advocated that people either spoil their votes, abstain or vote for smaller

left wing and regional parties in the elections. As a result the number of spoiled votes or abstentions actually doubled from the previous election and numbered almost 11 million! Much more than the number that voted for the PP who were declared 'winners' in the election.

To summarise. There is no doubt now that the crisis is deep and getting deeper. But there is also clear evidence that this is changing politics too. Many of us are beginning to rediscover that our real strength lies in our own organising capabilities and in our own abilities to build solidarity among our own ranks. This is what anarchists have always argued for, and it's how big struggles have always been won over the generations. It's time to push on, nurture these new methods and spread the word.