FREE!

Workers Solidarity

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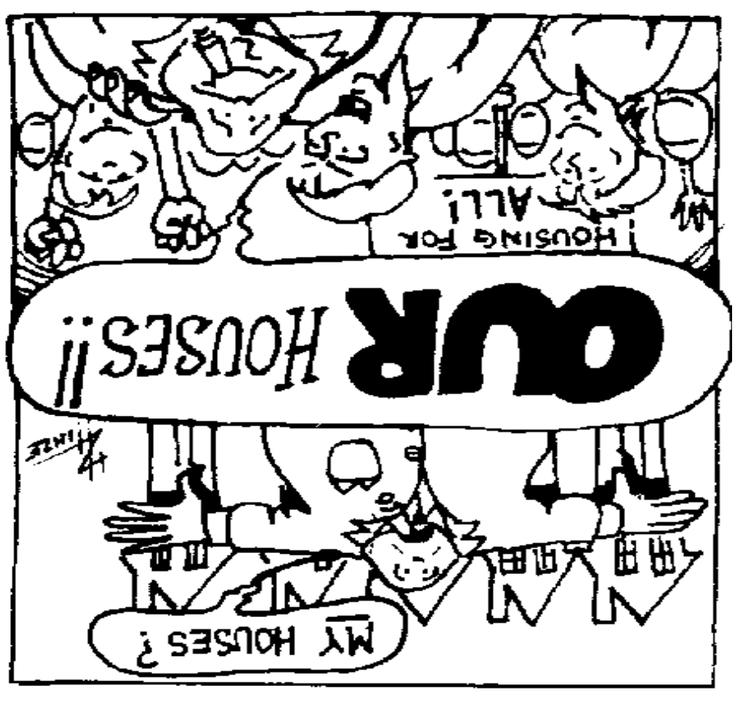
Property Developers expect us to bail them out

The recession in the economy means that working people are having to come to terms with growing house repossessions, below inflation pay-increases, and a steep rise in the cost of living. Meanwhile, property developers and banks are busy using the credit crunch and the downturn in the housing market to get Government bail outs, despite the fact that it was their speculative policies that helped created the mess in the first place." ??



According to Brendan Cunnane, a spokesperson from the Construction and Property Group, the developers will be "asking the Assembly, the Executive, and the local banks as key enablers in the sector, to work with us and resolve those issues by finding a zone of possible agreement to move forward" (Belfast Telegraph 31/07/08).??

The serious situation is compounded by the fact that thousands of construction jobs have been lost in the industry over the last year as a result of the greed and 'risk' taken by property developers and building contractors.??

The 'risk' factor and scare-tactics of further major losses in jobs is also being used by developers to force the government to intervene to support them. So much for the success of the "iron will of the market" leading to the trickledown effect.??

Yet we are constantly told by the politicians and their lackeys in the rich club to accept the huge profits that they make when times area good as they are the ones who are taking the risks. In fact, it is ordinary workers who support them, whether through the generous tax-breaks handed out by the government or simply through the low-wages and high prices that we lumbered with. Despite the fact that the super rich often have millions tucked away in offshore accounts, hidden from the prying eyes of the tax system, they come running for a bail-out as soon as a downturn hits. Some risks they take.??

All this underscores the ethos of capitalism, where equal opportunity only exists for the few. The only risk takers are the vast majority of humanity who are forced to sell our labour and liberty to a boss. It is the employers who reap the rewards of the labour of others through the profits they make.??

In addition, working conditions are often poor, with the International Labour Organisation reporting that over 2 million people die each year from workplace accidents and work-related diseases such as those stemming from contact with asbestos.??

Despite the housing boom, many people have no access to social or affordable housing, never mind a mortgage. It's worth remembering that it's ordinary workers and not property developers who actually go and build the houses.

What can be done? Firstly, the thousands of empty properties across the North could be immediately brought into use and provided to those in need. This requires building a movement from below as it would be futile to rely on the promises our MLAs, many of them are actually landlords themselves. Such a grass-roots movement can only be built from below and would link fighting tenant and workplace groups using direct action that will force the Government to capitulate. After all, decent housing should be a basic right and everyone should be able to live in a decent level of comfort. We shouldn't have to support a small class of parasites who live off the labour of others due to their private ownership of a resource they didn't do anything to create, and don't even use themselves. ??

In an anarchist society socialised ownership of housing maintained and run by a federation of community/workplace assemblies would allow for people to take control over their own homes; existing owner-occupiers would be able to keep their houses without paying out tens of thousands to banks, and the only people who'd lose out would be the capitalists and landlords but even they'd have somewhere to live.??

Sean Matthews

Anarchist News and Analysis Inside

The World Trade Organisation, keeping the world 'badly divided'

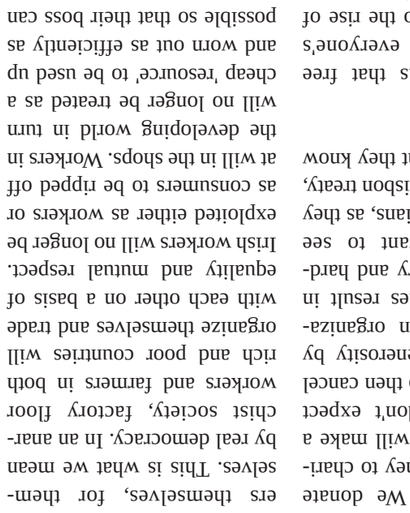
The recent bitter collapse of the Doha round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks has put the WTO back in the news around the world. The latest talks failed in large part because rich countries refuse to reduce subsidies to their own farmers, while insisting that the poor countries should reduce theirs. But what is the WTO, and how is it relevant to our everyday lives here in Ireland?

The purpose of the World Trade Organization is to reduce barriers to global free trade around the world. It has done this over the decades through rounds of talks between member states. The very first round of negotiations took place in 1947, under the guise of the WTO's predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Twenty-three countries were involved in that round of talks, a figure that is dwarfed by the current 153 countries involved in Doha.

Ireland is a member of the WTO, as is every other EU State. WTO policies have an impact on every aspect of our lives, including the most vital issues such as how much we pay for our food. Yet Irish people themselves have no say in how the WTO is run. Neither do the poor of the developing world who are affected even more severely by WTO policy. The reason is that the WTO is not a democratic institution but rather is run by the elites of the richer countries. They use it for the sole purpose of making it easier for their financial and industrial markets to exploit more and more of the world's population for profit.

Irish people support sustainable development in poorer countries and improvements in the quality of life for those who live there. We donate huge sums of money to charities that we hope will make a difference. We don't expect our government to then cancel out all of our generosity by contributing to an organization whose policies result in more of the misery and hardship that we want to see ended. Our politicians, as they showed with the Lisbon treaty, always believe that they know better than we do.

The WTO claims that free trade improves everyone's lives and points to the rise of the economies of India and China as success stories. Why then do we see Indian farmers poisoning themselves in despair over debts to international GM seed companies? Or Chinese workers treated like slaves in their factories and beaten when they object? The reason is that globalisation has benefited some in developing countries. They are the ones who always benefit - the multinational corporations, the factory owners, the rich investors. After the recent collapse, India accused the United States of sacrificing the world's poor to protect America's own commercial interests. The truth is that the poor are always sacrificed to make profits, whatever the outcome of WTO talks.



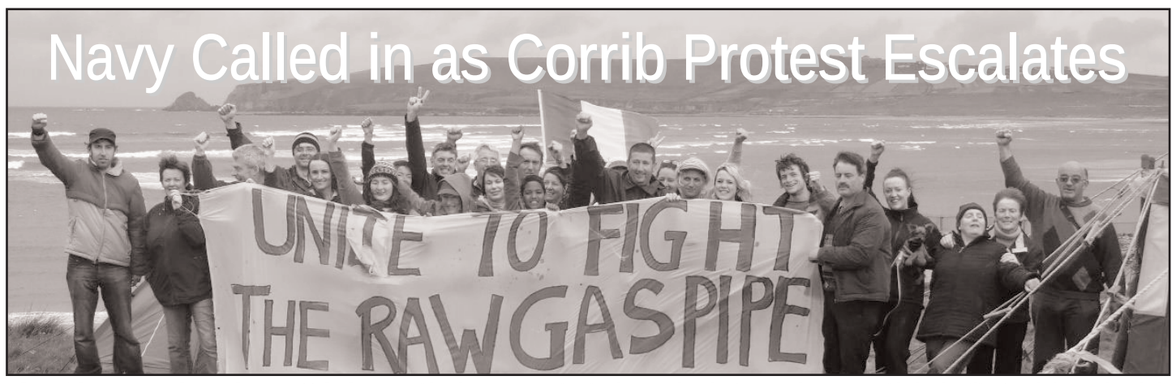
Lucy Parsons

Anarchists argue that world trade can only be fair and free if it is conducted by the workers themselves, for themselves. This is what we mean by real democracy. In an anarchist society, factory floor workers and farmers in both rich and poor countries will organize themselves and trade with each other on a basis of equality and mutual respect. Irish workers will no longer be exploited either as workers or as consumers to be ripped off at will in the shops. Workers in the developing world in turn will no longer be treated as a cheap 'resource' to be used up and worn out as efficiently as possible so that their boss can demonstrate a good bottom-line to his investors. In the world that anarchists want, we won't need to give donations or to pay a hefty price for a 'Fairtrade' label to feel that we're supporting the poor.

Get involved, check out www.wsm.ie

Informacje i artykuły w jezku polskim dostepne na stronie www.wsm.ie/polska

Navy Called in as Corrib Protest Escalates



The Irish navy gunboat, the LE Orla has been mobilized in the latest escalation of the standoff between Shell, the Irish state and Shell to Sea campaigners in County Mayo. The standoff comes after a relatively quiet period in the campaign and centers on attempts by campaigners to halt Shell's pipe-laying work in Broadhaven Bay and on Glengad beach, where Shell intend to bring their high-pressure gas pipeline ashore. The Irish navy gunboat has been called in after a request by Gardai and will support Garda facilitation of the Shell's works in the bay.

For campaigners on the ground the presence of the LE Orla, an ex British gunship, in Broadhaven Bay is yet another example of the Irish state's commitment to protecting Shell's discredited Corrib project at their expense. Spokesperson for local opponents of the Corrib project Pobal Cill Chomáin, John Monaghan said "The navy coming in shows what the State intends to do. They literally want to crush any opposition to their botched plans for the Corrib project."

The current standoff began at the end of July when 13 local people were arrested for demanding that Shell produce proof of permission for work at Glengad, at what is a public beach and special area of conservation, and for interrupting Shell's work when they could not produce the proof of permission. Numerous campaigners have since been arrested in the recent series of protests with opponents of the project blocking dredging activity in the bay with inflatable dinghies and occupying Shell's compound near the beach at Glengad. Local Fishermen have been keeping around the clock watch on their lobster pots which Shell had attempted to remove earlier without permission. Pickets and blockades of Shell's compound at Glengad have been met with the familiar Garda heavy-handedness witnessed at the gates of the refinery site at Bellanaboy over the last two years.

Shell's arrogant disregard to the rights of local community and the Irish state's support for Shell in the form of Garda and navy backing continues. An overall awareness that this is not a localized issue but an attack on the right of people to the collective ownership of the natural resources is necessary. Profit hungry large corporations such as Shell has nothing to offer to local communities as they make billions from these energy sources as ordinary workers struggle to pay their gas bills.

Updates on the struggle against Shell in Mayo can be found at www.indymedia.ie or www.shelltosea.com

Why can't socialists get together?

The Irish Socialist Network is talking to a half dozen other groups about unity. The Socialist Workers Party, always in a hurry, simply wants everyone else to join their People Before Profit creation. Every few years we see the same game played, "why won't the Judean Peoples Front join the Judean Popular Front?"

Across the sea the Scottish Socialist Party and George Galloway's RESPECT coalition were the latest examples of 'socialist unity'. Both ripped themselves asunder as massive egos fought to be leaders of small parties.

Interestingly, after these disasters, there is no discussion about what sort of 'socialism' all this effort is in aid of. Nobody is asking the most important question - what do we mean by 'socialism'?

Should the country be ruled by a parliament, by workers' councils or even by a one party dictatorship? Should it be old-style left Labour or libertarian socialism? Should it be sympathetic to the regime in Cuba, or even to the totalitarian Stalinist dynasty in North Korea? Where would freedom fit into things?

Anarchists have a good record of working alongside others to win whatever victories are presently possible and of using methods that encourage working class self-confidence rather than reliance on personalities or leaders.

However when it comes to the proposals for 'left unity' we need to look at what is on the table - most immediately it's an alliance for the 26 county local elections next summer.

The failure of the left in the last century was, to a very large extent, that it adopted the political organisation of capitalism in promoting a system of choosing some person or party to govern the working class.

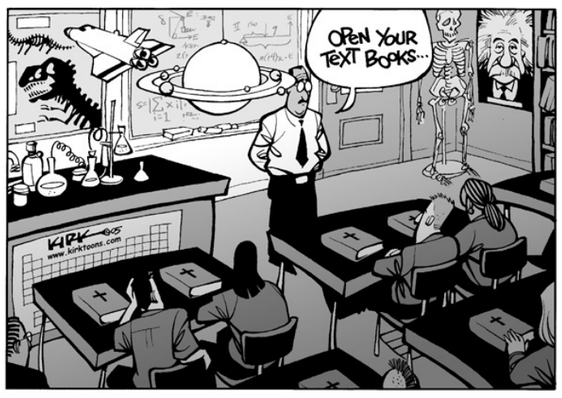
This emphasis on leaders and parties is also a legacy of the failure of 20th century 'socialism'. Let us not forget that practically all of this left takes its inspiration from the Bolshevik party and its state capitalist dictatorship in the old Soviet Union. What we need today is not some sort of united front of existing minor parties, but rather a break with that whole methodology.

Most importantly, real socialism is inseparable from freedom and direct democracy. Freedom to speak, to discuss, to travel, to organise, to take control of our own lives. All those effected by a decision should have the opportunity of taking part in making that decision. We reject as contrary to our political project any vision of socialism that does not explicitly oppose the division of people into rulers and ruled.

Joe King

The Thicker Wing of the Ruling Class

Senior members of the DUP have been busy embarrassing themselves over the last few weeks. Comments by Ian Paisley Jr that the PSNI should shoot dissident republicans on sight indicate the ingrained right-wing stance of the party. Meanwhile his colleagues have been outdoing him in making their party a laughing stock. Iris Robinson repeatedly put her foot in it by describing homosexuality as an abomination while Edwin Poots and Meryvn Storey clambered somewhere back to the bronze age in their bid to have Christian creationism taught in science class.



The purpose of schools is to educate kids. Teaching them stuff that is true would seem to be an obvious place to start. After all, we don't tell them that 2+2 = 5. We don't tell teenagers that Santa Claus really exists. Anything that even remotely hints that the earth is 6,000 years old or that evolution is anything other than biological fact is on a similar level of idiocy. So, in the 21st century, it's a bit odd, to hear ministers advocate creationism be taught in schools.

It needs to be clearly said that evolution is accepted as being an outstandingly supported idea. Poots and Storey talk about equality of access for various theories. Presumably they will support the teaching that the earth is flat.

Lest there be any confusion that Protestant fundamentalism has a monopoly on twaddle, it's worth stating that the Catholic Church isn't any better. Although a little more sophisticated when it comes to dodging the implications of evolution, they still make every effort to ensure that they run nearly half the schools in the North and over 90% of those in the South. In effect that amounts to a daily propaganda session for doctrines that have zero basis in reality. Not exactly a quality 21st century education.

The DUP are the child of fundamentalist Christianity. Their very loyalty to the British Crown was based squarely on the State's historic support of Protestant domination.You might think this is a pretty stupid - and increasingly irrelevant - way to govern any society. And you'd be right. Apart from the grotesque sectarianism that such politics inevitably fosters - it's not as if a few centuries of discrimination was due to a few bad apples - running a modern society on the basis of a bronze age text book is not a recipe for blinding success.

James O'Brien

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Anarchist Organisations

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

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

Libertarian Networks

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

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

Seomra Spraoi
Dublin social centre, reopening shortly at 113 Cork Street.
www.seomraspraoi.blogspot.com

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

Campaigning Groups

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

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

Choice Ireland
Abortion rights action group
choiceireland@gmail.com

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

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

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