

They Didn't Share the Wealth **WHY SHOULD WE SHARE THE PAIN?**

There is no money left in Ireland. At least that's what you might think after listening to Brian Cowan, Enda Kenny, IBEC and the parade of capitalist economists and pundits who parrot this nonsense. Yes, we are heading into a deep recession but guess who is expected to pay the cost?

The Government has no problem finding money to bail out bankers and speculators, it's only when cash is needed for special-needs teachers, the sick, or to improve run-down schools and hospitals that nothing can be found. The attack on pay & pensions is class struggle by employers and the government against working people.

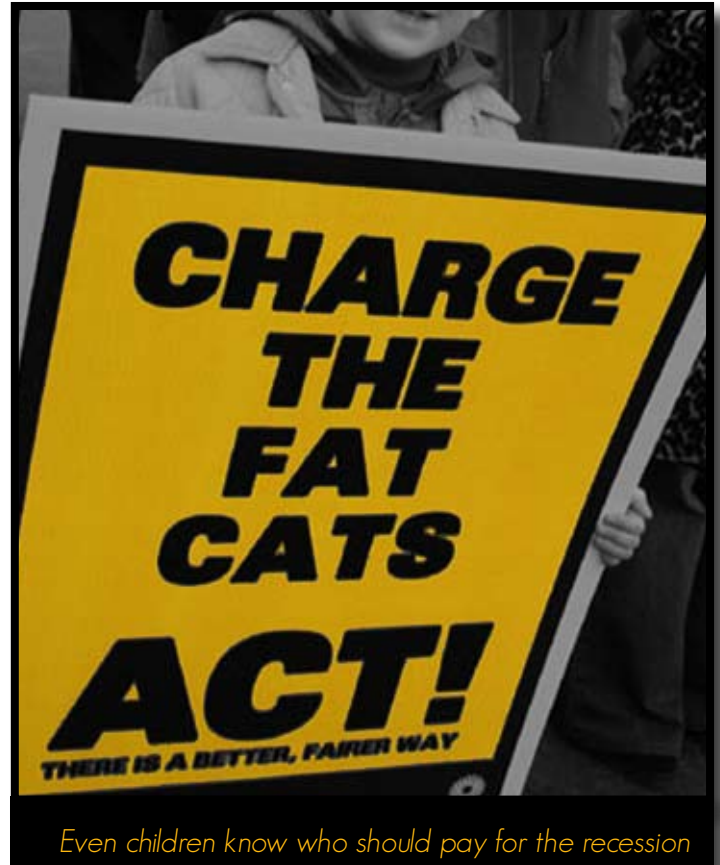
It may sound old-fashioned to talk of class struggle, but what else do you call it when one class wants to preserve its wealth at the expense of the other class? When private sector workers see 90% of pension funds they paid into for years going down the tube, Brian Goggin of Bank of Ireland thinks he is hard done by because he will "take home less than €2 million" this year.

We had a financial regulator, Patrick Neary, who waltzed off with a golden handshake of €600,000 and a pension of €140,000 per year. That pension alone is the equivalent of what four workers and their families on the average industrial wage live on. And what did Neary do to deserve this, apart from turning a blind eye to massive financial 'irregularities' in the banking industry?

Workers in the public service are told to suffer a €1.4 billion cut in wages, those on €35,000 will see their pay cut by €43 a week. Yet the wealthiest 1%, with €87 billion in assets, pay nothing at all. To add insult to injury the government has torn up the Public Sector Pay Agreement, denying 260,000 workers their small but agreed pay increases.

At the same time billionaire businessman Sean Quinn can lose €1 billion and say it's no problem "you win some, you lose some". When you have an annual income of €500 million that's very true!

IBEC's aim is to reduce Irish wage rates and to make us think that a reasonable pension in old age is a privilege rather than



Even children know who should pay for the recession

a right. The attack on the public sector is just the start. Private sector wages are being driven down too. Even the Minimum Wage of €8.65 an hour is criticised as too high by Fianna Fail ministers like Billy Kelleher, who 'earns' a cool €139,266 before expenses (and that's after his 10% cut).

Their goal is to subject working people to a Thatcher-style defeat. They want wholesale wage cuts across the economy. If we don't fight back they will keep coming back to take more out of our pay packets, close down more of our services and give our children a lower standard of living than we had. The rich are good at looking after their class interests – we should take the same attitude. They didn't share the wealth in the Celtic Tiger years, why should we share the pain today?

Inside: Derry Direct
Action

National Strike
NOW!

Waterford Shows
the Way

Campaigning to Defeat College Fees

Free Education for Everyone held its first National Conference on Saturday, January 31st. Over forty student activists traveled from UCD, TCD, Maynooth, Galway, Limerick and Cork.

The morning's session was devoted to an internal debate on what kind of campaign is needed to defeat fees, reports from the five FEE branches around the country updating everyone on their recent activity and a discussion on developing a national structure for the campaign. A public forum entitled "How can we defeat fees?" followed with a panel consisting of Dave Curran, Vice-President of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), Aidan McGrath, chairperson of the National Youth Organisation, Julian Brophy (UCD FEE) and Aine Mannion (Galway FEE).

February 4th saw the long anticipated 'National Day of Action against Student



photo by Paula Geraghty (indymedia.ie)

Fees' organized by USI. FEE put a lot of effort into building for this protest - both to ensure the biggest attendance possible, and to make crucial points about the need to go beyond this demonstration, and build a real movement across the country that can genuinely defeat fees. In the end, a slightly lower than expected but positive number of 15,000 students and supporters marched through the streets of Dublin.

At the end of the protest, FEE led a three hundred strong breakaway march to the Dail where a token sit-down protest was held for just over an hour. Afterwards, the group went en masse to the USI 'campaign training' open meeting in the Dublin Institute of Technology where we made the point that February 4th should be the start and not the end of the campaign to defeat fees. Interestingly, in his speech Dave Curran mentioned the possibility of a one day nationwide third level education shut down, a tactic that FEE had been encouraging USI to take for weeks.

With Batt O'Keefe bringing his proposal for third level fees to cabinet in April, time is not on our side. Get involved, email FEE at stopfees@gmail.com

J. Carax

Contacts

Anarchist Organisations

Workers Solidarity Movement

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www.wsm.ie
wsm_ireland@yahoo.com
cork@wsm.ie | belfastwsm@yahoo.com

Revolutionary Anarcha-Feminist Group

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

Libertarian Networks

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>

Galway Social Space

24 Middle Street, Galway.
[tp://www.galwayspace.org](http://www.galwayspace.org)

Campaigning Groups

Free Education for Everyone

Campaign to stop the reintroduction of college fees and to promote the right to free education for all.
stopfees@gmail.com
<http://free-education.info/>

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
<http://www.choiceireland.org>

Alliance for Choice (NI)

<http://allianceforchoiceni.org>

Residents Against Racism

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

4th Dublin Anarchist Bookfair

Seomra Spraoi **Liberty Hall**
March 6th **March 7th**

Film, debates, workshops, meetings, and lots of anarchist & radical books. Guest speakers include Martha Ackelsberg, author of *Free Women of Spain*; and Ashanti Alston, a member of the Black Panther Party in the 1960's and early 1970's.

Admission is free. More information at www.wsm.ie/bookfair

Organising The Fightback

How do we combat the employers' offensive

A Waterford Crystal worker, Denis Keane (Executive member, Civil & Public Services Union) and Julian Brophy (Free Education for Everyone) share their personal views, alongside a speaker from the Workers Solidarity Movement.

Saturday 7th March, 3pm
Liberty Hall, Dublin

Raytheon: *This time it's 9 Derry Women!*

There was the whiff of something in the Derry air. The constantly rising civilian death toll in Gaza had already produced the same outpourings of rage on the streets of Derry as it had around the world. Thousands of signatures had been gathered calling on Raytheon to be given the boot, while ever larger crowds had gathered for vigils at the cenotaph, marches through the city, rallies at the Guildhall and at a nonviolent blockade of Raytheon itself. Now more and more of us were becoming determined that we do not have to resign to feelings of helplessness in the face of Israel's war atrocities. Our burning rage was igniting something positive.

There was the definite smell of something very good cooking among those who had been to the last Derry Anti War Coalition meeting. There was a buzz about the evening before when text message went around asking people to meet the next day at a location not far from the Raytheon plant. Something serious was going to be done, and there were a hell of a lot more of us around to do it this time. We all made plans to go down there to see if we could support, or perhaps do more.

I was just putting on my shoes the following day when the next text message went around. "9 women from the Derry Anti War Coalition have gained access 2 the building of Raytheon Systems. Please cm 2 Raytheon 2 support them". This was followed by "9 women chained together between doors in Raytheon, get down when you can". Unbelievable! I ran out and jumped into my friends car while sending-on the text to as many people as possible, my shoelaces were still undone.

One of the people I sent the text to was Helen Deery who had asked to be kept informed of protests. Helen had been very pleased to hear about the "Raytheon 9" sabotaging the Raytheon mainframe 3 years ago and was delighted when the Belfast jury acquitted them because it accepted their defence that it was done in order to impede further war crimes being committed.

Helen knows a thing or two about powerful military machines killing unarmed civilians. In May 1972 her 15 year-old brother Manus was murdered by the Brit-



ish military while eating a bag of chips with some friends in the Bogside. As is usual in these cases, the State "investigated" itself and exonerated itself. Helen would have a very keen sense of what it feels like for ordinary people to be treated as expendable sub-humans.

She also knows that the state doesn't just grant justice out of the goodness of its heart. Justice has to be fought for by ordinary people, hard. I knew she'd be delighted with the news of the occupation. And I was delighted with myself for being able to pass-on this information.

At this point I was outside Raytheon, where a large crowd had gathered in support of the women inside. The Police, frustrated that the 9 women had outmanoeuvred them, were trying to re-establish their authority by being heavy-handed. Then my phone rang. It was Helen Deery "I'm in here, ya dose!". The 9 women in there were not your usual suspects, your tie-died Citizen Smiths or your yoghurt knitters; they were 9 ordinary working class women of different ages and political experience!

Outside, the police arrested 5 people, assaulting one pregnant woman in the process. The media would do their usual job in focusing on the arrests instead of the occupation or the reasons for it. After 5 hours, the 9 women eventually emerged

to rapturous applause from the crowd, but only after securing an undertaking from the police that they would not be arrested or charged and that the police would instead investigate Raytheon for its complicity in Israeli war crimes.

No one seriously believes that the Police are going to go anywhere with that, but it allowed the women to make the point that it is the Raytheon Corporation and the likes of the Israeli State that are the real criminals in this world, not the ordinary people who fight back. Not bad for an afternoons work and an unplanned action by 9 women, I said. Not so, said Goretti Horgan of the DAWC, "We had planned it deliberately as 9 women, as a kind of follow-on from the Raytheon 9, who were all men, to show that women of all kinds can also take direct action".

The 9 women have since been told by the cops that a file has been sent to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) with a view to pressing charges for "burglary, criminal damage and common assault (!)" but all are well prepared to fight that, just as the Raytheon 9 fought and beat the charges against them. A great day then for direct action, for women's struggle, for anti-militarism, and for working class politics. More of this kind of stuff please!

Shane O'Curry

This Strike is For Us All: Every Worker Must Be Out on March 30th

The national strike called by ICTU should be just the first day of action in what must become a strike wave across every sector until all pay cuts are withdrawn. The super-rich can shoulder the costs of their crisis themselves.

The bosses have spent months using the media to try and divide one set of workers from another and to set those still in jobs against the unemployed. They know that divided we are weak. March 30th is the moment we can throw that back in their face, a huge demonstration of class unity that can force them to back down or face the consequences.

An effective plan could consist of one day's action one week, followed by two days the following week, three days the week after.

The low paid Civil and Public Service Union gave a lead with their national strike on February 26th. Ballots have been taken by bus workers, civil servants, teachers; and all delivered a resounding vote for strike action.

Whatever we choose to do, we need to work out a strategy to win. Trade union leaders have sold us the myth of 'social partnership' for the last 21 years. We need to build an alternative sense of solidarity whereby workers across all unions support each other. The bosses are not our partners, our fellow workers can be.

The government will be happy enough if all we do is have protest marches and a one-day only strike. They won't even be too upset by isolated strike days in different jobs.

For this reason every worker should be out of work on March 30th, not just those in sectors directly affected and not even just those who are union members.

It is time for the trade union movement to stand up and defend the interests of working people as vigorously as the government and the state is defending the interests of the bankers and the employers. There are 600,000 union members,



together we can take the lead and close down the country. That is the sort of short, sharp action that can force them to withdraw the pay cuts.

On New Year's Day the SIPTU Executive said "In this our centenary year, we salute the courage, personal sacrifice, commitment and solidarity of the women and men who founded, built and sustained this great trade union. We are proud of the organisation of tens of thousands of men and women, the improvement of pay and conditions of work..."

"In solidarity with each other, the members of our Union have confronted exploitation and injustice and have sought to transform society so that all our people enjoy dignity and respect at work and in the community."

That's the sort of tradition we need to build on. Unfortunately, many senior union leaders don't see it like that. They are happy for us to "let off steam" and "make a point", all they want is a show of support so they can go back into talks in the hope of being given some small concession.

People like IMPACT's Peter McLoone with his €150,000 a year, plus €25,000 as chair of FAS, do not share the same interests as their members. That is why the top union officials on the ICTU executive can say, "workers did not create the problem, but will contribute to solving it..."

They accept the system as it is. They aren't

calling for a claw back of the €8 billion in tax breaks given to private for-profit hospitals, or for nationalising the Corrib gas field. Why? Would it be because they think that seizing wealth from the super-rich is going too far?

When ICTU was talking to the government about the 'Framework Agreement', they accepted the need for cuts. When Fianna Fail and the Greens proposed a pay cut of 10%, the ICTU delegation suggested a 'pension levy' as being more acceptable.

These people cannot be trusted. Taking back control of OUR unions is part and parcel of the fight to protect what we have won over the years.

Capitalism is failing us; once more it is dragging us all into a crisis not of our making. This crisis is deep and the recession is likely to last for several years. If we don't fight back, we might as well resign ourselves to ever decreasing incomes. If we don't start fighting to end the rule of the billionaires, we will never get away from the insecurity of the boom/slump cycle.

It is true that if we fight we may not win everything we want, there are a lot of illusions in the ICTU leaders and we have gone through two decades with little experience of struggle. It is absolutely certain, however, that if we don't fight we will win nothing.

Alan MacSimoin

Find out more. Check out www.wsm.ie

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

That's
Capitalism

Private, fee-paying schools for the wealthy received more than €100 million from the 26 county taxpayer last year. €99 million was spent on paying teachers' salaries, and a further €2.1 million on building works in 17 fee-paying schools in 2008. Blackrock College in Dublin tops the list, receiving €3.9 million. Other schools receiving more than €3 million in annual support include Kilkenny College (€3.5 million), St Andrew's College (€3.4 million), Belvedere College (€3.3 million) and Wesley College (€3.1 million). Most of the schools in receipt of this free taxpayers' cash charge fees of about €5,000 per year.

Thai authorities are accused of towing hundreds of migrants out to sea on barges without engines and abandoning them. Reports in the regional news media say that hundreds have died and Indian and Indonesian ships have rescued hundreds more, starving and dehydrated, after days adrift.

Every cent invested in the National Pensions Reserve Fund last year, all €1.69 billion of it, was lost on the stock markets yet the fund managers still took over €20 million in fees.

Of the \$15 billion US taxpayers' money given to Merrill Lynch/Bank of America, at least \$3 billion has been used to give bonuses to top executives.

The government's National Employment Rights Agency has revealed that of firms inspected in 2008 they found one in ten were paying less than the minimum wage. They also found that almost half were forcing staff to work longer hours than legally allowed. Lawbreaking was discovered in 85% of contract cleaning firms, 78% of hotels, 64% of shops and 62% of construction firms.

The United Nations Development Program estimates that everybody in the world could have access to basic social services, clean water, food, housing, health care and education, for \$80 billion per year. The seven richest people in the world have \$1.54 trillion between them.

Thinking About Anarchism : *Are We Irresponsible?*

"People who got mortgages they can't afford to pay back were greedy and foolish and should suffer the consequences... They signed a free contract, they're adults and they have to take responsibility for their actions". This is the kind of thing that gets thrown around a lot in recessions. It conveniently ignores a few things.

The idea that getting a mortgage is voluntary comes from the same people who brought you privatisation and the financial markets. They like to call it a free and voluntary exchange. You exchange much of the work you will do for the next 30 years or so of your life for a home in which to live and one day own.

Your second option is to exchange much of that work for a home which you rent and will never own. Your third option is to live on the street. What you don't have is the freedom to put a roof over your head without making any exchange at all. And they expect us to be thankful for that 'freedom'?

We had no say in deciding that those should be the choices we get in life. We don't have the capital the banks have and we don't have the properties the landlord has. The only thing we have to exchange for a roof over our heads is our labour. It's easy for the banks and the landlords to preach to us about how sacred 'freedom of contract' is. They're the ones with the power to decide what your choices are going to be. It's a completely unequal bargaining position.

They will tell you that this is a coincidence. Or that those who own money and property got it through hard work and cleverness. We've now seen how the property developers and the bankers got their money and it had nothing



to do with their own hard work and less to do with brains.

They got it from people like us who wanted a home to live in. The top 10% of Americans own 90% of the wealth. Ireland's not far behind. In other words, they own the houses we need to rent and the money we need to buy them. If you're in the 90%, the only choices you have are those the 10% choose to give you. That's no coincidence.

Real freedom means having a say in the decisions that affect your life. You have no real say in whether or not you'll have a job tomorrow. You have no real say in how you get somewhere to live. If you lose your job because of

an economy that you can't control then you have no control over whether or not you also lose your home.

The ones who do have control of your choices were the ones who were cheerleading the property bubble up in the first place. Now they're blaming the workers who followed their advice. The wealthy are playing an old game but we don't need to fall for their distraction tactics. The only way we will get control of our lives back is if we refuse to take the bait by turning on each other.

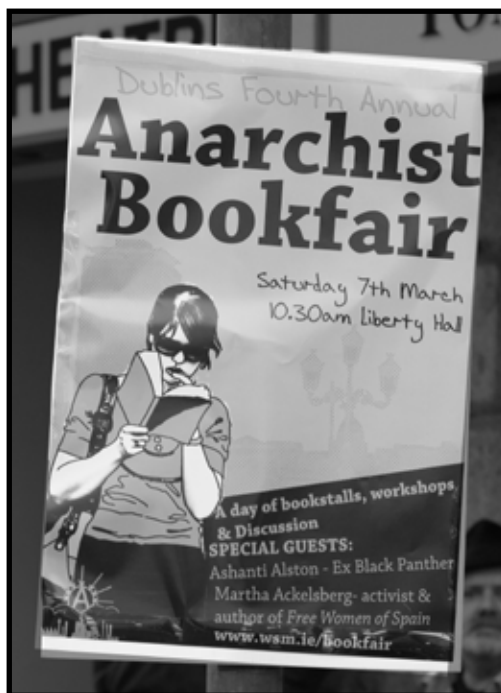
Lucy Parsons

Anarchism & the WSM

In February, the WSM continued its series of public meetings about why capitalism is in crisis and why working people should refuse to make sacrifices to benefit the rich. Limerick and Bray were the latest xxxxx. We will be continuing our efforts to spread anarchist ideas in this vein over the coming months, with meetings planned for Drogheda, Galway, Derry, Navan, Tralee, Tipperary and Ballina. Also, our next radio show will be appearing on NEAR 90.3 FM, a Dublin community radio station, in the near future.

The WSM made its presence felt in a number of protests in early January against the Israeli assault on Gaza. We also supported the anti-fees protest organised by third-level students in February, with a number of our student members active in FEE (Free Education for Everyone), a campaigning group in the universities.

In a leaflet produced by the WSM for the education protests, we argued that "we need to build a national campaign that can fight the battle to prevent cuts at all levels of education, to demand more, not less, investment in our children's future, to stop the further limitation of access to third-level and, ultimately, to push to improve the entire education system." With this in mind, we held a meeting in late February aiming to establish an education workers libertarian socialist network.



In Belfast, WSM members participated in pickets of Subway after management sacked a pregnant migrant worker. The Belfast branch also held its inaugural 'day school' in February, with talks on the history of anarchism and how we can fight the recession.

Meanwhile, we have seen the first signs of workers taking direct action with the occupation of the Waterford Glass plant. Our Cork branch visited the factory to offer their sup-

port and released a statement, an extract of which is quoted below.

"In the last while there has been an unprecedented assault on our living standards. Huge numbers of us have been put out of jobs or put on short time; we have been told bluntly 'Take a pay cut or your job is gone'. Our union leadership has reacted to this with offers of talks and with appeals for calm. While doing this they have leaned over backwards to meet the demands of the bosses and the Government. Against this scenario, the Waterford Glass workers have said NO MORE. The time for talking with your hands tied behind your back are over! Workers did not create this crisis and they sure aren't going to pay the huge price that is being asked to solve it!"

Internationally, as the global recession deepens, there have been signs of increased resistance by working people; with riots in Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria. There was a general strike in France, while the government fell in Iceland. As the economic situation worsens in Ireland, our members remain active in their unions, student organisations, communities and campaign groups to try and fight back against the impoverishment and violence that continues to be imposed on us and our class by our rulers. We need you to join us in this fight.

Clear as Crystal... Waterford Shows How to Fight



The workers at Waterford Crystal occupying the plant are an example to us all. Rather than accept the closure of the business, the loss of all the jobs and the destruction of the area's premier industry; workers seized the buildings making liquidation impossible for the receiver.

The receiver issued notice of job losses without first consulting the union as had been agreed. Hired heavies were shipped in to prevent the workers entering the building. With very little notice the shop stewards rallied as many of their members as possible and seized the plant against the aggressive antics of the "security men". They immediately set in place a rota to keep the furnace functioning and organised staffing for the occupation.

The working class of Waterford rallied to them and provided all forms of support. A quarter of

the population of the city attended a rally organised by the local Council of Trade Unions on February 12th.

The objectives of the workers are to keep the plant operating and protect the maximum number of jobs, insure the security of pensions and get decent redundancy payments for those being let go. Whilst some of the leadership of our unions have been talking 'partnership' with employers and government, others have been taking a more direct approach.

Waterford Crystal is a shining example of workers demonstrating the best practice of direct action and solidarity. They want other workers to imitate their example, we should all take a leaf out of their book.

James McBarron

International Women's Day: Why We Celebrate on March 8th

There are a few ways in which International Women's Day can be approached. It can be ignored. This is what mostly happens in the mainstream media. Unlike Valentines Day and Mothers Day, cards aren't given and presents aren't bought. With no profit to be made out of it, the day is not exactly one that jumps out and grabs the attention.

International Women's Day is an expressly political day. In 1907 women sweatshop workers marched in New York and thus the first International Women's day was born. Often when women are celebrated it is because they are either cute (Valentine's Day) or caring (Mothers' Day).

There is nothing wrong with being cute or caring, but on International Women's day we get to highlight those of us who are politically active, those who are fighting for a better world, those who know that there can be a better world. I don't know their names but I know I have linked arms with women at Shannon Airport protesting against the war. I've

stood in front of bin lorries with women from the estate I live on. I have met women as we marched, leafleted, picketed and posters for the right to have an abortion on Irish soil.

There are many many ways in which life is difficult for women in Ireland, from our pay packets, to the fact that we get little support if we decide to have children and no support if we decide not to have children. We have to wait weeks (and sometimes months) for something as simple as the result of our smear tests. Like men we live in a country which can't provide housing, medical services, and security, basic human needs for all citizens. Yes there is a lot to be angry about and a lot to change.

Thankfully, many of us, like those women who marched in the cold 102 years ago, are not willing to make do with what we have been offered. International Women's day is a celebration of those women who make things better.

Aileen O'Carroll



Dublin Feminist Walking Tour 2008 - This year's tour takes place on Sunday 8th March.

TV Review: *Generation Kill*

In Workers Solidarity 105 we reviewed David Simon's 'The Wire'. His follow on project 'Generation Kill' which features some of the same actors is a 7 episode series following the United States Marine Corps' 1st Reconnaissance Battalion during the invasion of Iraq. It's based on the book published by Rolling Stone journalist Evan Wright.

Apparently the show is pretty true to events in the book and this is probably part of the reason why it hasn't received the popular acclaim 'The Wire' did. There are no big stories beyond the backdrop of the invasion of Iraq itself. As in the real war, while Iraq's both military and civilians are slaughtered in large numbers the marines suffer almost no casualties. Their story is long hours of boredom as they drive through Iraq, broken by occasional firefights against an enemy they massively out equip and out train.

On paper the risks are greater, in particular when their officers order them on missions that would be suicidal if the Iraqi army had stood and fought. But the vast majority of Iraqi soldiers during the war had no wish to



die for Saddam and headed for the hills at the first opportunity.

In the first episode this reality is portrayed when the invading marines collect dozens of Iraqi soldiers who have abandoned their posts and are trying to walk out of the battle area. As in the war these 'prisoners' are abandoned as the marines are ordered

to push on despite the known presence of Saddam death squads in the area who are executing soldiers who abandon their posts.

This isn't an anti-war serial by any means. A supporter of the war could probably sit through it and enjoy the seeming invincibility of the marines as they slaughter their

way to Baghdad. But it does contain a critique of militarism, most openly expressed when one of the marines observes that if they behaved in the same way in civilian life they would go to prison.

The military is shown as a machine, the individual killing units are at first hard to distinguish from each other. Unquestioning obedience is central to discipline, even if those issuing the orders are idiots. As with 'The Wire', although many of the individual marines are deeply unpleasant characters performing terrible acts, including the murder of civilians for kicks, they are human despite this.

The closing scene suggests that on an individual level most of the marines are not comfortable with what they did during the invasion but there is no suggestion of a collective understanding developing. Much like 'The Wire' the sense is of a machine that will simply trundle on, chewing up people and making the same mistakes over and over.

Andrew Flood