

WORKERS SOLIDARITY



Irish narchist Paper

No. 76 - August 2003 - PDF
www.struggle.ws/wsm.html

Bosses want to privatise buses and trains



= more profits for the bosses
= traffic jams, pollution and crap service for travellers
= worse pay and conditions for workers

The FF/PD coalition are pushing ahead with plans to privatise buses and trains. Should we worry, does it matter who the boss is? Bus and train workers know what's at stake. The vote for industrial action over the summer was 83.2% in Irish Rail, 87.9% in Bus Eireann, and 90.6% in Dublin Bus.

We have a poor public transport service because it is not really intended to be a service. It's not there for our convenience. Its primary goal is to get us into work and into town to spend our money in the shops. When the private transport firms were taken over and merged into CIE it was because they could not even do that.

Years of underinvestment in CIE brought it close to bankruptcy by the mid-1990s. The government subsidy (much of it to fund less used but necessary routes) had dropped from £24 million down to £5.6 million.

Only in recent years has the subsidy been rising again, but it is still a long way behind most European countries. The average is 50%, in Ireland it is a mere 11%. Despite all this, and thanks to lots of changes agreed by bus workers, Dublin Bus made a profit of €3.4 million last year.

NBRU and SIPTU workers refused to collect fares on July 18th. This was a great way to hit the government in the pocket without inconveniencing the rest of us. According to Metroline chief executive, David O'Farrell, "*a promise of free fare days and one day strikes is not what the public wants*". Well he was wrong about that!

Full support for the bus and train workers is in all our interests. We don't need privatisation - we do need a free public transport service, operated for passengers and run by the people with the best knowledge, the transport workers themselves.

See *The consequences of transport privatisation* on back page

The consequences of transport privatisation



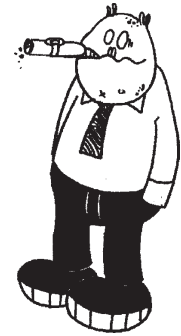
There is nothing wrong or “inefficient” in subsidising public transport. It’s a lot cheaper to provide regular, dependable and affordable (or free!) buses and trains than to have even more car usage. More cars on the road means more road building, more road repairs, more traffic jams and more air pollution.

Transport Minister Seamus Brennan now intends to sell off 25% of Dublin Bus routes from January, and another 25% each year after that. Waiting eagerly is Metroline, a part of the Delgo multinational. They have already bought up Aerdart, City Link and started a Galway to Shannon route.

They are an anti-union firm who have shown their true colours in Glasgow and Edinburgh where they have made working conditions worse than before and cut back the actual bus service. After all, their only interest is in making as much profit as possible.

The private companies will seek to underbid Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann for the routes by employing non-unionised workers on fixed term contracts, with lower pay and little in the way of pension or other benefits.

After an initial honeymoon period the less profitable services will be cut back. To expect anything else is to expect that greedy fat cat capitalists will suddenly decide to put our needs before their wealth. Some chance!



Thinking about Anarchism Movement What is Imperialism?

Imperialism is one of those words that often seems to be little more than an effective way of making people stop listening to you. However, despite the frequency with which it is thrown around by left wing groups, with little or no explanation of the ideas behind it, it does have real meaning and is something that we can all recognise in the world around us - especially in this age of US wars against third world regimes.

To put it succinctly, imperialism is the process whereby powerful groups try to extend their power and increase their wealth by bringing ever more of the world under their domination. Although the word comes to us from Roman times, imperialism has been around for a lot longer. In fact, pretty much every well-known ancient civilisation was an imperialist power, sending armies abroad to conquer new lands, from the Egyptian pharaohs, to the Aztecs and Incas. Even Athens, birthplace of democracy, had its empire and there are several recorded instances of Athenian armies massacring their subjects in order to ensure they didn't get any notions of independence.

Imperialism is a direct consequence of hierarchical organisation. Power corrupts and leads to a thirst for more power. Thus, in any hierarchical society, once a group has attained power in their own realm, they will start to look outwards and continue to extend their influence through imperialism until they are toppled from within, or encounter a more powerful imperialist rival.

The modern history of imperialism dates from the 15th century, when technical advances in navigation and sailing suddenly opened up vast areas of the world to the

European powers. This came at a time when their expansion to the East had been blocked by the Ottoman empire, and they had fallen into a prolonged period of inconclusive warfare amongst themselves. Their technical advantages over the people of the newly accessible lands, especially in warfare, made expansion in that direction a very attractive prospect. European armies and gunboats travelled the world. The British, Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese slugged it out over 4 centuries in a race to conquer these new lands and to appropriate their resources. Where they could, as in the Americas and Australia, they simply took over the land and slaughtered the population or put them to work as slaves.

Elsewhere, in Asia and Africa, the native societies were too powerful to be militarily subjugated, so they relied on their monopoly of naval technology to impose ever more uneven terms of trade. West Africa provides a good case study. In the 15th century the trade was a relatively even exchange of goods. Cloth, tools, wine and horses were exchanged for gold, pepper and ivory. By the mid 16th century this trade had become entirely one-sided as the European powers traded decreasing quantities of weapons and iron in exchange for vast numbers of

slaves to work their American plantations. This underlines the fact that trade relations, as well as conquering armies, have always been a powerful weapon in the hands of the imperialists.

Today we can see this pattern repeated. The world's major capitalists define the global rules of trade through such international bodies as the WTO, IMF, World Bank and UN. Although these are presented as being neutral bodies, with voluntary membership, they are in fact imperialist tools. They oversee the transfer of vast quantities of resources and wealth every year from the poorer parts of the world into the bank accounts of the super rich. After centuries of exploitation and theft, they tell us that Africa apparently owes the West \$227 billion [1]. The force of arms, although normally hidden, is never too far away. If a local ruler is weak enough, and not sufficiently compliant with the rules of global capitalism, they will be conquered through force of arms and replaced with a more willing servant.

Although imperialism is often seen as one country oppressing another, this view clouds the picture. In this age of global capitalism, the group with real power are the big capitalists. They will use whatever political vehicle is most suitable to impose their power. In this era, the US is the undisputed centre of political power in the world and so it is through the US that the capitalists flex their muscles. The people of the US, sent out to kill and die for Chevron and GM, are victims of this imperialism as well as the Iraqis, Afghans and Somalis whom they kill. So, rather than the US oppressing the rest of the world, we can best understand imperialism, and indeed fight against it, if we see it as the global class of capitalists oppressing the rest of humanity.

[1] Episcopal news service:
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/ens/99-093D.html>



Iraq war aftermath Slaughtering democracy

While most people understand the word democracy to mean that the people hold power, there is another meaning. According to the second meaning of the word, democracy means that the super-rich make all of the decisions while the people's job is to do what they're told, and to put a piece of paper in a box every few years. This 'democracy' is extremely hostile to any notions of popular involvement in politics. The US/UK war against Iraq, trumpeted as a war for 'democracy', illustrates what this 'democracy' means in practice.

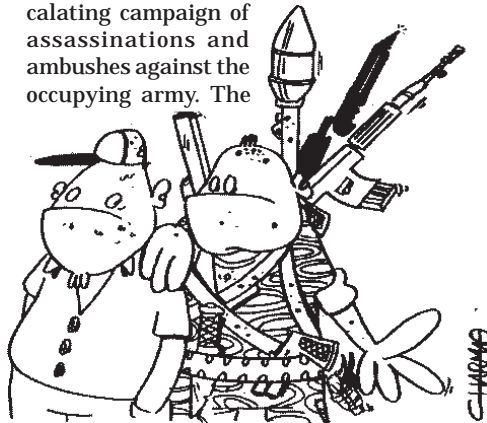
Instead of being driven by public opinion, Bush and Blair decided to go to war at a time when there was no public support for a war. They then launched an enormous propaganda effort to convince their own public, which started by largely opposing the war. In Britain, it was only after the war had actually started that opinion polls showed a majority supporting it. In 'convincing' the public, Bush and Blair deceived them massively as to the scale of the threat that Iraq posed. They used fake evidence, and deliberately produced inaccurate dossiers to build up a sense of danger. It succeeded to the extent that, by the time the war broke out, a majority of the US population believed that Iraq was behind 9-11 (up from 3% after 9-11). And, although the US army were able to invade Iraq and pulverise their army in a matter of weeks while Iraq was unable to hit the US with so much as a single bullet, a majority of the US population believed that Saddam Hussein posed a real and imminent threat to the US! So, according to this version of democracy, the rulers decide what to do and then manipulate the population into backing them by using deliberate lies.

While the US and UK were able to succeed in terrifying their populations to a certain extent, public opinion in the rest of the world remained massively opposed to the war. Bush and Blair's response to this tells us a lot about their conception of democracy. They applied every available pressure to persuade governments around the world to defy their populations and support the war. In their efforts to garner the support of the UN Security Council, the US talked openly about massive payments in return for votes and was even caught bugging the apartments of diplomats on the council. When that failed, those governments that did actually follow the will of their people were systematically attacked and vilified in the media. When Turkey's parliament finally sided with over 90% of the population and refused to allow the US to use their airbases, they became a target of US denunciation. The government lacked "*democratic credentials*," according to former US Ambassador Morris Abramowitz, now a distinguished elder statesman. The government is "*following the people*," he wrote, instead of following orders from Washington and Crawford Texas. That is plainly unacceptable in this new version of democracy.

Another feature of this democracy is that, by no means must people be allowed to rule

themselves. Even before the war started, the Bush junta were making it clear that the Kurds would not be getting independence. Recently Donald Rumsfeld stated that "*an Iranian-type government with a few clerics running everything in the country*" "*isn't going to happen*." Not even if the majority want it. They also emphasised the importance of preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq, without even pretending to care if that is what the Iraqi people want. It seems that in this form of democracy, the people get to choose neither the form of the state, nor the content of its government.

Once the invasion had succeeded, we had another chance to see what this democracy - or liberation - meant in practice. After destroying the country's infrastructure and killing thousands of people, the US was surprised to find itself still opposed by many Iraqis. This opposition has been shown in frequent demonstrations as well as an escalating campaign of assassinations and ambushes against the occupying army. The



US response to this has been to attempt to crush it with overwhelming force while dismissing it as "*terrorist groups seeking to spread chaos*" and "*foreign fighters*" linked to al-Qaida. Yet, the overwhelming message from the scene is that hostility to the occupying forces is growing for the most simple and compelling reasons. In the latest of many examples, Amnesty International has documented the inhumane treatment handed out to young Iraqis picked up by US forces. Being tightly bound with plastic handcuffs, and denied access to water and toilets, is not the best way to win hearts and minds.

Britain's failure to account for some 4,000 prisoners-of-war who are entitled to the protection of the Geneva conventions is also most disturbing. US troops have fired into crowds of demonstrators, killing dozens, and every time that a US soldier is killed,

scores of Iraqis, selected almost at random, are slaughtered in response. Therefore, in this democracy, opposition is to be crushed by massive use of force.

Then there is the question of how Iraq is ruled under this 'democracy'. Currently the country is ruled by appointed US administrators without any mechanism whatsoever for consultation with the Iraqi people. The US has put no timescale on this direct, military rule and, despite the fact that they initially talked about a brief occupation, Bush recently referred to it as a "*massive and long-term undertaking ahead*". It is clear that, however long it turns out to be, the decision to end the occupation will be taken by the US alone, and the Iraqi people will have absolutely no say in it.

What next for Iraq?

Although they now seem settled in for a long occupation, it is likely that the Bush administration will try to install an Iraqi government at some stage. From a PR point of view, it would look much better to have a native government and some type of formal democracy. However, it has already been made abundantly clear that the Iraqi people will have no say in this government. The various departments of the US government will be the electors and will install a government that will do their bidding. We have already seen their attempts to build up Chalabi as a future Iraqi ruler. His backing comes entirely from branches of the US government, while being virtually unknown in Iraq. Whatever government is finally picked, it is certain to be a puppet of the US.

So, the Iraqi people are facing a situation where they have no say in how their country is governed, and certain political groups are to be absolutely excluded from power (like Kurdish leftists and pro-Iranian Shi'ites). Their country is subject to an occupation of indefinite length and all opposition is to be crushed with overwhelming force. Meanwhile their oil is taken over by US multinationals and their cities lie in ruins. At some stage in the future, they will probably be given a government carefully selected by the US. This is what they mean by democracy. A world run by the powerful where every step must be taken to systematically exclude the people from having any say whatsoever in the running of their affairs.

New history of anarchist organisation

Alexandre Skirda: *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organisation from Proudhon to May 1968*. (AK Press) 19 Euro incl. postage from WSM bookservice

***Facing the Enemy* kicks into gear with a look at Bakunin's ideas on the necessity of anarchist organisation and thereafter studies individualist anarchism, syndicalism, the *Organisational Platform* of Russian exiles, a quick chapter on the Spanish movement and a somewhat bizarrely detailed account of post-war French anarchism. Also, included are almost one hundred pages of original documentation, mostly relating to the *Organisational Platform*.**

Bakunin favoured two types of organisation; a mass based trade union which would gather together the masses, and a much smaller group of committed anarchists who would attempt to influence the larger organisation with libertarian ideas.

Roughly speaking these two types have surfaced repeatedly in different guises in the 130 years since.

Skirda considers the retreat from organisation after the demise of the First International (1870s) to have been a disaster for anarchism: individual acts of assassination may have been understandable given the circumstances of the time, but unfortunately Marxism gained a solid foothold among the working class due to its superior organisation.

The emergence of revolutionary trade unionism (syndicalism) in the late 19th century provided anarchists with the opportunity to engage once again with systematic collective action. This is perhaps the most interesting section of the book as the arguments for the necessity of organisation are described well, particularly those aired at the important international anarchist congress

of 1907.

Thereafter the book alights briefly on the role of anarchists in the Russian Revolution before devoting a considerable amount



of space to the lessons gleaned by some of the participants in it. The primary lesson Makhno, Arshinov et al took was that a

coherent anarchist organisation was necessary if a social revolution was to be a successful one. Their reflections produced the *Organisational Platform*, which in turn became (and still is) the focus for much debate on anarchist organisation.

There's a lot of worthwhile reading to be had from *Facing the Enemy* for the extent of Skirda's familiarity with anarchist history is impressive. And yet... the book frustrates as well as fascinates.

This is probably simply to do with it cramming so much history into too few pages. However one would question the decision to allot double the space to post-war French organisations to that of the pre-war Spanish ones. It is true that much has been written about the Spanish Anarchists, but, to be blunt, that is because they're worth writing about.

It's as if Skirda is alternating between a history of the ideas on anarchist organisation and a history of anarchist organisations themselves. Ultimately the book focuses more on the former, and as such a more straightforwardly theoretical approach may have been appropriate. Skirda, however, includes lots of minute detail and anecdotes which, though interesting in themselves, tend to dominate the theme of the book. The problem with this is that the history itself is told in snatches, and is therefore unsatisfactory.

Worth a read, particularly if your level of knowledge of anarchist history is somewhere between total ignorance and geeky genius.

James O'Brian

As councils prepare to refuse rubbish collection Direct Action is next step for the Anti-Bin Tax campaign

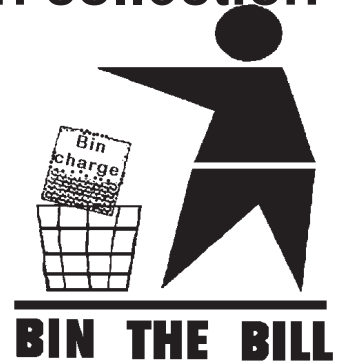
It is a testimony to this campaign that the government has changed the law of the land in their latest attempt to defeat it. The authorities, from the bean counters at City Hall to government level, have been twisting and squirming as they look for yet another way to make us pay this double tax.

Initially they tried taking us to court. That hasn't worked and logistically it proved to be a nightmare for them. In Cork they tried not collecting rubbish from non-payers, and even jailed some campaigners for dumping rubbish outside City Hall.

That didn't work either, as the Supreme Court stated that existing laws placed a duty on local authorities to collect household waste. Now they have rushed through a new law to allow them to use non-collection in their latest attempt to force us to pay.

We shouldn't be frightened by this. But we have to ensure that that we are prepared for this next stage of the campaign. We have to let everyone on our streets and in our estates know that the next trick the Council will try is most likely non-collection. We must ensure that campaign membership keeps growing and that our information is good.

We must send out the message that we intend for every truck



to pick up all the rubbish on their bin run. The Council must understand this, and the government must understand it. If non-collection is attempted, trucks will be blockaded into our estates until everyone's bin is emptied.

The workers are already aware that what is at stake here is their jobs. Privatisation is on the cards if the government can make this industry another source of profit. That's one of the reasons the trade unions are against the bin tax.

The campaign needs to be strong and the links must be made now so that we can come out of this battle with a major victory for the working class people of this island. In the North they are talking about introducing a water tax. Once again the bosses and bureaucrats are on the offensive and this is our opportunity to put them back in their box. Now that's just too good an opportunity to go a-begging.

Dermot Sreenan

Anti-Bin Tax = tax dodger?

According to the latest figures less than 8% of waste comes from our homes. Most waste dumped in landfills is not domestic rubbish, but rather commercial, construction and agricultural waste.

Twenty years ago (in 1983) the Government put an extra 1% on workers' PRSI. This was to pay for local services, after they abolished domestic rates. Under the agreement reached in 1983, the councils were to be allocated money from this extra 1% contribution. But you just can't trust our rulers. Last year, for example, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council only got 48% of the money owed to them under this agreement.

Since then they have been trying to make us pay twice for services. We still pay the extra PRSI. To screw more money out of us and fatten up those services they want to privatise, we had the water charge. A long campaign of mass non-payment and physically stopping cut-offs forced the government to back down and abolish that charge.

Now they are at it again with the bin tax. The government reduces taxes on big business and their profits (Corporation tax is now the lowest tax on profits anywhere in the EU) and then tries to dip even deeper into the pockets of working people. In Sligo, for example, the refuse charge has shot up to €10 per bag - or over €500 per year.

Anyone who believes the government claims about the bin tax being fair or necessary probably also believed Charlie McCreevy when, just before last year's general election, he said "no cutbacks

whatsoever are being planned, secretly or otherwise". Since the election the €10 billion Health Strategy has been shelved, and now Dublin's Mater Hospital has to treat some of its patients in the car park.

The pledge to end hospital waiting lists within two years has been torn up, and former Minister for Education, Michael Woods, was caught instructing his civil servants to lie about the school building budget. Parents were promised improvements to sub-standard schools, in order to get their votes, when a decision not to go ahead had already been taken.

In return for all the cutbacks we get charged more. The TV licence rose by 40%, the tax on bank cards by 108%, ESB bills by 13%, hospital charges by 26%, bus fares by 9%. Thanks to 'social partnership' our wages, on the other hand, are only allowed to rise by 3% in the private sector and nothing in the public sector until 2004.

The politicians (who are currently paying themselves an extra €12,800 each for passing their local authority seats to party colleagues, often family members), the big farmers and the bosses don't hold back when it comes to defending their interests. We should do the same, and no better way to start than by telling them to stuff their bin tax.

Alan MacSimoin

Coca Cola Boycotted for (complicity in) Murder

Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist with intimidation and murders being committed almost daily. Coca Cola is currently being sued by the Colombian food and drinks union Sinaltrainal for its (alleged) use of right wing paramilitary death squads at its plants in Colombia. The company has denied the allegations and predictably claims that it has no responsibility for the actions of the bottling plants.

This problem is not just confined to Coca Cola. Workers in Nestle have also been murdered and threatened. Although the union asked Nestle to publicly distance itself from paramilitary threats, they have so far failed to do so. The state has also played its part with trade unionists being imprisoned on trumped up terrorist charges for six months.

Sinaltrainal took the lawsuit against

Coca Cola because they believe that they can prove that the parent company know what's going on and ultimately bears responsibility.

On Monday 26th May, Ermelina Mosquera, a member of Sinaltrainal came to Dublin to speak about their case against Coca Cola and to seek solidarity from Irish trade unionists. She also asked for support of an international boycott of Coca Cola products starting on July 22nd.

Members of the Latin America Solidarity Centre and other individuals are working to promote the boycott and to raise awareness of this issue in Ireland. Further details and a list of Coca-Cola products will be published on LASC's site at <http://www.lasc.ie/activities/campaigns>

Antóin Mac Aodhagáin
<http://www.killercoke.org/>
<http://www.cokewatch.org/>

Getting involved

Anarchism is a very simple idea - basically society should be organised in a non-hierarchical way, it should not be divided into order-givers and order-takers. We don't need bosses, politicians, bishops or anybody else to tell us how to live our lives. Anarchists look to a society which will be based on the idea of "from each according to ability, to each according to need".

We want to bring about a society based on real grassroots democracy where power remains at local level and is organised upwards through workplace and community councils.

We do not want to become rulers nor do we want to seize power "on behalf of the working class". We have no interest in replacing one set of bosses with another. Instead we work for a free socialist society where everyone can have a direct say in making the decisions that will effect them.

This society will only be brought about through revolution! There is an old anarchist slogan which says that if elections changed anything they would be illegal. The thinking behind it is that real democratic change cannot come from the top down but must be built from the bottom up. Instead of voting in elections and effectively giving someone else control of our lives, we stand for direct action and solidarity among and between workers.

The Workers Solidarity Movement are involved many struggles to both win improvements in the here and now, and to build up working class self-confidence. We do stuff with people - not for them. We are in the unions, in the continuing campaign to reclaim the Old Head of Kinsale from the mega-rich and restore public access, with other abortion rights advocates in the preparations for pro-choice events this Autumn. We produce this paper (Workers Solidarity) 6 times a year and distribute 6,000 of each issue.

We are asking people to commit to donating 5 or 10 Euro a month towards the cost of printing this paper and to take at least 50 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. So anyone who becomes supporter of 'Workers Solidarity' will also be asked to attend an annual planning meeting and to elect two delegates onto our editorial group. If you have email you can ask to be added to the WS production email list where you can comment on articles submitted for publication and suggest topics for articles.

Over the next year we hope that a couple of dozen people will become supporters of this paper. In that case we will be able to expand production to 8 issues a year each with a print run of 8,000. Help us, fill in the form below and become a supporter today.

Argentina - a living laboratory of struggle

"Argentina has become a living laboratory of struggle, a place where the popular politics of the future are being invented" John + Jennifer Whitney www.nologo.org

On Sunday May 18th Argentines went to the polls and elected Nestor Kirchner - widely considered a puppet of the former populist president Eduardo Duhalde. Yet on December 19/20th 2001 Argentines "churned through 3 presidents in a row" as thousands poured into the streets. Their slogan: "que se vayan todos" (everyone must go). Yet quite clearly "everyone", in the shape of an old school populist president, is back.

This begs two questions. Firstly how did such a formidable protest/popular movement evolve, and secondly where is it now?

What happened in Argentina was rooted in the economic crisis bought about through the government's slavish obedience to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund in 1990s. When, finally, the government had to give in and decouple the peso from the dollar there was 40% unemployment (official figure 21%) and those who could afford to save saw 30% of their savings wiped out. Obviously this led to resentment!

Preceding the real crisis, though, was a huge movement which began in the rural interior of Argentina, the Piquettes. These were mass roadblocks involving up to thousands of desperate people - poor labourers and the unemployed. Without even the power to strike they built large community based groups which blockaded highways, forcing concessions from local governors and later from central government. The Piquettes showed the way.

When the economic crisis began to hit hard at white-collar workers, and even the middle class, they quickly began to organise in a similar manner. This struggle led to two vital developments. Firstly

the beginning of neighbourhood general assemblies organised on a street or area basis.

The second was the reoccupation of factories left vacant by bankrupt owners. There are now up to 200 "Fabrica Ocupada", some of which have actually become quite profitable. For example, the occupied Frigorifico Yaguané meat packing plant is now the leading cold storage plant in Argentina.

Though attendance is dropping at neighbourhood assemblies there is still a very large and undefeated social struggle. Occupations and assemblies continue. The Piquettes movement remains strong in many areas.

However there is no doubt that the political parties have swarmed out of their lairs and are busy "reoccupying space". It seems that the establishment have adopted a carrot and stick approach.

On the one hand repression has increased. Recently the occupied Brukman plant was evicted by a massive force of riot police. The 115 female employees, along with 7,000 supporters, attempted to get back in but were beaten back. Hundreds of police chased protestors all the way into a nearby hospital, firing tear gas into wards. This one incident does

demonstrate that resistance is still high and the state is ready to use a lot of repression.

Secondly assemblies have begun to be taken over, first by Trotskyists and Leninists, later by more conventional reformists. Unfortunately the reaction to this points out, for me, the biggest problem: apoliticism

The movement has continuously rejected all forms of "politics" ("que se vayan todos"). This is understandable. However the state and the establishment never ignore politics.

The assemblies and the Piquettes movements have been very localised and fought to preserve this autonomy. Unfortunately by not joining together, federating and strengthening their positions they are losing ground. Many 'real people' are now abandoning the assemblies which were mass, popular and vibrant, leaving behind hollow fronts for different left parties.

The mistake was not to build alternative politics nationally - to federate - unite and coalesce to build an alternative pole of attraction to the state, which is now filling the vacuum. Our anarchist comrades in the OSL (*Organisation of Libertarian Socialists*) have continuously pointed this out.

As one OSL supporter wrote on infoshop.org: *"their critique spells out the danger of apolitical popular organising ... In Argentina the extreme right is organised, have political parties and get government funds. They are shrouded in populist imagery and sentiment and appeal to many in the poorer classes"*.

The popular movement in Argentina has not been defeated. The newly elected president will go on the offensive with all the powers at his disposal. However the assemblies, occupied factories and Piquettes will resist and may even experience a new growth. But until they can organise on a national scale and point to a strong libertarian alternative they face an uphill struggle.

Conor Mc Loughlin



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NEWS FROM THE WSM VIA THE INTERNET

Our email list Ainriail distributes regular news updates and notices of events to subscribers. There are 4 - 8 emails a week. To join the list just visit

<http://struggle.ws/mailman/listinfo/ainriail>

Our web page www.struggle.ws/wsm includes a huge archive of articles about the history of anarchism and Irish struggles.

That's Capitalism



Every day nearly US\$2 trillion changes hands on the money markets (i.e. is gambled by speculators). It can be hard to get a handle on just how much a trillion is. If you stacked a million dollar notes on top of one another it would reach about six foot high. If you stacked a trillion dollars the same way it would reach to over 40 times the height of Mount Everest! Yet the rich tell us there is no money for health care, affordable housing and modern school buildings.

The US military announced, in April, that at least three children aged from 13 to 15 are being held in their prison camp at Guantnamo Bay. Like other prisoners being held at the camp, they are being held indefinitely without trial and are being interrogated by the military. They have been in captivity for over a year, and not even granted access to a lawyer.

Guantanamo Bay has attracted the condemnation of human rights campaigners since the first detainees arrived in January 2002, blindfolded and bound in the intense Cuban heat. As a penalty for being enslaved as child soldiers by the Taliban, children are imprisoned by the US; and we were told that the Afghan war was about 'liberation'!

"I'm not here to answer for the PDs"

PD leader Mary Harney takes the art of politics to new levels when answering a question in the Dail about the reintroduction of student fees (April 2003).

BERTIE'S "ASPIRATION"

The articles in the constitution cited by former army officer Ed Horgan in his challenge to the government allowing Shannon airport to be used by the US military (articles 28 and 29) are "aspirational", said the judge, and so the government's decisions override the constitution in respect of these articles.

It's funny that these parts of the constitution are suddenly "aspirational", when FF and the PDs are in breach of them. Irish governments have been quite willing to use the constitution to justify all sorts of breaches of citizens' rights in the past, and anything to do with property rights certainly wasn't deemed merely "aspirational".

Anyway, even if these articles are "aspirational", isn't the government obligated to attempt to aspire to the standards set down in them? Or is it just one example of the 'golden rule' - those who have the gold make the rules?

Grassroots Gathering 5 - the birth of a movement

The Grassroots Gathering is a weekend series of meetings and social events which brings together anti-authoritarian left wing activists. This summer saw the fifth one in two years and with over 165 people registering for this one (27th-29th June, Dublin) we can finally say that there is a movement of libertarian activists, a movement that has rejected hierarchical ways of organising. The previous Gathering had happened in Limerick in the middle of the fight against the war and suffered as a consequence.

This time the Gathering was organised by an independent group in Dublin and was very successful. The idea of the Gathering is to create a space where activists who are opposed to neo-liberalism (or what most of us recognise as capitalism) can come together and meet, discuss ideas and suggest actions. The GNAW (grassroots network against the war) came from one of the previous Gatherings, and it established itself as one of the few groups prepared to use direct action to confront the refueling of US bombers in Shannon.

What is very noticeable about the Gatherings is the fact that there is a healthy respect for the differing views present. We are coming from different perspectives but it is not a talking shop. You know that the people who attend are intent on making a difference and are actively trying to do that. The non-hierarchical libertarian nature of this event really makes it a wonderful starting point for someone who is interested in finding out more about what they can do if they want to change this world and at the same time don't feel it's necessary to join a Party with an all-knowing leadership.

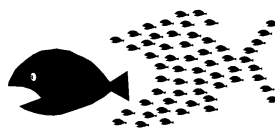
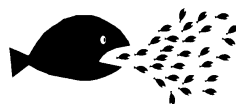
The Gathering got off to a flying start with a puppet show explaining the complex history of struggle in Argentina. Yes, quite a

few were skeptical upon first hearing about it, but it turned out to be an excellent way of letting us know what's going on half way around the world. This was followed up by a question and answer session in which Argentinean activist, Graciela Monteagudo, said that solidarity was well and good but if you are fighting capitalism the best thing that we can do is build the movement at home.

To give a full detailed report on everything that happened would take too long but there were 6 plenary sessions, twenty workshops, a video room, social activities such as soccer and Indian head massage, and a gig on the Saturday night. This event is a social one as well as an educational one. Importantly, we also build for the future and there were many working groups set up to deal with the planned but now cancelled visit of our invisible rulers known as the World Economic Forum.

At the end of the weekend I walked out of this gathering knowing that we were beginning to build the movement here. We came out of this weekend stronger and will hopefully go on from here so that the growth of the Grassroots movement continues. The next GG goes West, Galway in the Autumn.

Dermot Sreenan



More at
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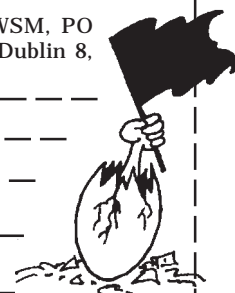
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Disco Disco - occupied and evicted

On Sunday 13th July activists of Autonomous Community Spaces (ACS) entered 42 Parnell Square in central Dublin, a building which had been vacant for 11 years. They were violently evicted the following day. The extracts below from one of their press releases details what happened.

"The ACS spent the night cleaning the building, making plans to use it as a community resource centre (and soup kitchen for the homeless). An evening was planned to invite local residents to contribute their ideas for the use of the free space.

At 2:40pm on Monday the 14th three men arrived at the door shouting and threatening physical violence against those inside and outside the building. No I.D. was shown or papers served. They proceeded to smash a hole in the door with a sledgehammer and attack people inside with a crowbar. One occupant sustained serious head wounds and was later hospitalised. In serious fear for their lives, members of the collective inside and outside the build-

ing called the police.

The police arrived, unsure of the situation and aided the illegal eviction, arresting 2 members of the collective standing

on the pavement. They ignored reports of the assault carried out by the unidentified men claiming to be the previous owners. Both arrestees were later released without charge. The police did not state the law under which they were evicting the occupants or threatening arrest. They ignored the fact that no proof of ownership was given by the 3 men who assaulted the occupants"

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An excellent introduction to anarchism covering topics as diverse as the State, democracy, trade unions, how will public services be managed after the revolution; and a look at anarchism in Italy, Russia and Spain. Introduction by Noam Chomsky. 10.00

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This is the first English translation of Guerin's massive anthology of anarchism: the history and practice of the movement, its writers and activists, the famous names and the unknown. Volume one includes Bakunin, Kropotkin, Max Stirner, Emma Goldman and others - dealing with property, individualism, religion, the state, the disagreements with Marxists in the First International, workers' self-management, the Paris Commune, and more. 19.00

Daniel Guerin (editor)
NO GODS, NO MASTERS (Vol.2)

Volume two includes writings about the general strike, 'propaganda by deed', collectives, the Russian revolution, the Ukrainian insurgent army, the Spanish revolution, and more. 19.00

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How stupid do they think we are?

There is a John Stephens who works in Dublin's Mater Hospital. He is member of the SIPTU Health Professionals branch and was recently elected a shop steward by his colleagues. According to himself, in a paid advert, in the free paper *Citywide*, he will be "fighting to improve the situation for workers within the Mater", "aiming to improve patient services", "directly oppose any further job losses in the health services" and his "key aim is to improve the health services in the area".

John Stephens is also going to be a Fianna Fail candidate in the Cabra/Glasnevin ward in next year's local elections. Yes, the same Fianna Fail which cut jobs in the Mater earlier this year, is imposing yet more cuts in health care, and is even talking about treating patients in the hospital car park. Either John suffers from an intellectual disability or he thinks the rest of us do.

Have your say

Write a letter to us at WSM,
PO Box 1528, Dublin 8.