

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

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Twenty Two Years of Anarchist News

[www.struggle.ws/wsm](http://www.struggle.ws/wsm)



## ALWAYS QUESTION AUTHORITY

photo by viewerblur, found on Flickr

**“I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless a justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women, parents and children, our control over the fate of future generations (the basic moral imperative behind the environmental movement, in my view), and much else.**

**Naturally this means a challenge to the huge institutions of coercion and control: the state, the unaccountable private tyrannies that control most of the domestic and international economy, and so on. But not only these. That is what I have always understood to be the essence of anarchism: the conviction that the burden of proof has to be placed on authority, and that it should be dismantled if that burden cannot be met.”**

These words come from an interview with leading American dissident Noam Chomsky for the WSM's magazine back in 1995. They are just as relevant today.

The mainstream media, owned by multi-millionaires like Tony O'Reilly and Rupert Murdoch, and does not ask hard questions. The self-serving propaganda of the ruling class is presented as fact. We are not supposed to make a habit of questioning those in charge.

Michael McDowell has used allegations of IRA connections against journalist Frank Connolly in order to wreck the investigative Centre for Public Inquiry. The allegations, made under 'privilege' in the Dail so that he can't be questioned or sued, have never been backed up with any evidence.

Instead McDowell has turned the supposed basis of law on its head, by demanding that Connolly prove his innocence. We don't know whether there is any truth to the claims, and neither does anyone else, as the Justice Minister won't present any evidence at all.

What we do know is that some politicians

didn't like the idea of well-funded people investigating rumours of corruption, especially with a general election due next year. Why did McDowell pay massively over the market price for the new prison site in north Dublin? What is the relationship between Shell Oil and the government? Why have they been given such generous tax concessions?

We need to question what our rulers and their mouthpieces say. Their politicians, their economic experts and their editors want to maintain a system which has been very good to them. While most of us gain somewhat when there is more wealth around, the proportion of that wealth going to the already rich increases all the time.

We should not accept unquestioningly their propaganda that they know what's best for the rest of us, that there must always be bosses, that eliminating poverty is impossible, that some are naturally suited to giving orders and others to just obeying, that working people are not capable of making important decisions, that we must leave the running of the country to a small wealthy minority.



NEWSPAPER OF ANARCHISTS IN IRELAND



# IRISH FERRIES STRIKE

## A GREAT STRUGGLE BUT A TERRIBLE DEAL

**On December 14th the three week dispute at Irish Ferries came to an end. SIPTU claimed that the deal protects a “threshold of decency”.**

Irish Ferries had offered redundancy to 543 crew members, who were to be replaced with staff employed on wages of just €3.60 an hour - less than half the national minimum wage.

The deal, drawn up with the help of the state’s Labour Relations Commission, means a two-tier workforce with those staff who reject redundancy keeping their old wages and conditions but all new staff being paid just €7.65 an hour and having longer working hours and fewer holidays. Irish Ferries can re-flag its ships; a three year no-strike agreement and all disputes to be settled by binding arbitration.

This deal was not a victory but it was not a total defeat either. The Latvian workers have seen their pay doubled; they also have gained a month’s paid leave for every two months they work, originally the company wanted one months leave for every three months

worked.

But this is still a crap deal. SIPTU marine branch official Paul Smyth announced that the deal was “something every SIPTU member should be proud of.” Does this mean that the minimum wage is now a “decent” wage?

The role that was played by the Seafarers Union of Ireland, a small union with a long history of undemocratic practices and not upsetting the bosses, in undermining the strike should not be forgotten. While SIPTU members were occupying, the SUI started a petition in support of the redundancy deal. They just wanted their money and didn’t care about the workers who wanted to stay or the Latvian workers. Now that they have their cash, they are not interested in recruiting and helping the Latvian sailors to improve their lot. Instead they are talking of winding up their union.

It was the militant action of SIPTU members on the ships and in the ports, and the huge numbers who marched on December 9th, which slowed down the attack on workers’ rights. But we only slowed it down, we have not made the bosses back off. Roches

Stores and the Examiner newspaper group are just two of the latest to replace staff with lower paid workers.

What is happening now is an attempt by the employers to boost profits by taking back hard fought for improvements we have won in previous years. Irish Ferries is just the most blatant example so far. If we place our trust in union leaders who prefer ‘partnership’ to combat, we will see a gradual erosion of most of the pay rates and working conditions we take for granted at present.

As more of these struggles break out, we will need to build a network of union activists to organise solidarity action in support of those prepared to fight back. And we need to show that this sort of attack on working people is part and parcel of capitalism. That’s why we want to get rid of this system and replace it with one where power lies in the hands of those affected by decisions and where the economy is organised to satisfy human needs and desires – not to line the pockets of a small class of rich parasites.

*Alan MacSimoin*

## Magnificent show of solidarity

**December 9th proved once again that the old union motto “an injury to one is the concern of all” is taken more seriously by ordinary union members than by many of our “leaders”.**

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, sheltering behind the 1990 Industrial Relations Act which makes strikes in support of other workers unlawful, didn’t call for a national walk-out. We knew they wanted us to strike and march but their over-cautious approach didn’t exactly inspire workers with particularly aggressive employers.

Nevertheless 80,000 marched in Dublin, 15,000 in Waterford, 10-15,000 in Cork, 10,000 in Limerick, 3,000 in

Tralee, 2,500 in Sligo, 2,000 in Athlone, 2,000 in Rosslare, and 1,000 in Galway. When we add in those who walked out of work but didn’t get to their local march and those who attended smaller rallies like that organised at the last minute in Drogheda, we have about 150,000 workers taking part. This included many recently arrived workers from Eastern Europe, who are on the lowest wages.

Most of our unions are run by people who see their role as simply lobbying the government, providing services and dealing with individual members’ problems rather than also fighting to improve pay and conditions. These people have no interest in conflict with employers or government, being the most enthusiastic supporters of

‘social partnership’.

Our unions have fantastic potential. We have the numbers and we have the ability to close down the country. But as long as we place our trust in the likes of Begg and O’Connor that potential will remain untapped. They have us fighting like a drunk with one hand behind our back and the other in our pocket. The more weakness the bosses see, the harder they stick the boot in.

# Ships occupied.

**The dispute escalated on November 24th when goons from a private security firm brought Eastern European seafarers onto the ships. If the ferries resumed sailing the dispute would be effectively over, with Irish Ferries winning hands down.**

Four ship's officers, John Curry, Brian Whitfield, Gary Jones and Vincent Hederington, barricaded themselves into the control room of the 'Isle of Inishmore' in Pembroke. The 'Ulysses' in Holyhead was similarly occupied. The third ship was tied up in Dublin, with harbour pilots and shore staff refusing to let it leave port.

This direct action, as opposed to passive appeals to Bertie Ahern or polite talks with management, is what turned public sympathy into solidarity. When the workers started to fight back the mood changed from one of feeling sorry for them to one of wanting to do something to help them beat the company.

Sadly, but not surprisingly, the ICTU leaders went no further than a half day of action. They used our presence on the streets to strengthen their position for the next round of partnership talks rather than to inflict a decisive defeat on one of the meanest and most ruthless

## ANARCHIST YOUTH GROUP FORMED

**Late last year some younger anarchists in Dublin and Wicklow got together and formed their own organisation. Workers Solidarity asked them why?**

### **How did this group come about?**

The group came about after a number of teenagers decided that a sort of anarchist youth group was needed in Ireland. We talked amongst our friends and posted on a number of anarchist listing and youth centred music forums. Many young people want to learn about anarchism and get involved but feel shy to walk into a WSM or Grassroots Dissent meeting. Hopefully this group can welcome the inexperienced or curious anarchist teenager. Over fifteen people attended our first meeting, talks were given by 3 experienced anarchists on a number of issues and we watched a number of radical films.

### **What sort of activities do you see the collective becoming involved in?**

The collective hopes to provide information on anarchism to Irish youth by organising in our schools and communities. This will hopefully bridge the perceived gap between older anarchists and new comers who can sometimes be intimidated. The collective will work towards providing more creative, inclusive

and militant forms of resistance as well as supporting others in their struggles. We hope to organise benefit gigs and get a freesheet out in the future. We will also be working with other groups in planning protests, walkouts and direct action.

### **What do you feel anarchism has to offer young people today?**

A way out, a community, a political idea which is not boring and outdated, a political idea which is about getting up and doing something about the racist and capitalist society in which we're stuck in. Anarchism has and will always be associated with angry, frustrated youth, tired of getting beaten around by the cops, sick of the world of consumerism and war and just fed up! It's time the youth of Ireland stand up, get organised and fight back!

### **How can people contact you?**

You can e-mail us at [anarchistyouth@riseup.net](mailto:anarchistyouth@riseup.net) or you can join the yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/anarchistyouthireland>. We are planning to set up a website and get a PO Box. We also will post up the details of our (hopefully monthly) meeting on [www.indymedia.ie](http://www.indymedia.ie)

*Thanks to W and Sam.*

*Slaving your life away just so you can make ends meet; having no say in the major decisions that affect your life; criminal politicians and businessmen plundering the country. Try to do something about it and they'll lock you up. Yes,*



### **Bertie - One of ours?**

The average industrial wage in the 26 counties is €30,000. Bertie Ahern received no less than 5 pay rises in the 6 months up to the end of 2005. He now gets €252,000 a year, plus all sorts of perks and 'expenses' - like his €28,000 a year for make up!

### **Sick and sicker**

Hunger and malnutrition are killing nearly six million children a year in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation this is more than were dying 10 years ago. The main killers are preventable diseases like diarrhoea, measles, malaria and pneumonia. The medicines exist; the poor just can't afford them.

### **More Big Earners.**

1,250 barristers and solicitors earn more than €200,000 a year. [from 2002, the most recent year for which figures are available] It also emerged that 80 of the people earning more than 200k paid no tax whatsoever - this includes 5 people who earned more than 1 million.

### **Money for Nothing!**

Although the Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended in October 2002, it has cost taxpayers £78 million (euro 113 million) since then. Each of the 108 Assembly members is receiving £85,000 (euro 123,000) a year for doing nothing.

### **Euro Billions.**

Ireland now has six euro billionaires, up from four last year. The combined wealth of Ireland's 250 wealthiest bosses is €42.3bn. And that's just the money they declare to the tax office! The top six are: Hilary Weston, €7.286bn; Tony O'Reilly, €1.897bn; John Dorrance, €1.857bn; Dermot Desmond, €1.239bn; Sean Quinn, €1.157bn; Tony Ryan; €1.114bn



# Thinking About Anarchism

## What is Anarchism?

by John Flood

***“Rise, like lions after slumber,  
In unvanquishable number,  
Shake your chains to earth like dew,  
Which in sleep had fall’n on you.  
Ye are many  
They are few”*** -Shelley, The Mask of Anarchy

Over the past fifteen years the global anarchist movement has awakened from its long slumber. In Ireland anarchist ideas and methods of organising, are gaining a wider acceptance than ever before. However, many people still associate anarchism with violence, destruction, and chaos. This concept of anarchism is reinforced by the corporate media, and those that have an interest in discrediting the anarchist movement. Needless to say this idea of anarchism bears no correlation with the society we are trying to create, or our struggle to achieve it.

Anarchism was born in the crucible of class struggle and emerged out of the wider socialist movement. Anarchists wish to replace the economic system in which a minority live off the labour of others, with a system in which the workers, mental and manual, own, and control the wealth of society. This would allow people to decide what it is that they need. This democratically planned production would be orientated towards satisfying people’s needs rather than the insatiable greed of a minority.

However anarchists feel that this control over the economy cannot be exercised through a centralised government. We see freedom as at the very heart of socialism, and the fight to create it. History, rationality

and our own experiences teach us that once given control, a ruling group becomes intoxicated with power and feel that they know what’s best for the rest of us. Often they will use their new found power against their enemies, even if they are the people they are supposed to represent. The bitter experiences of Russia, Spain and countless other betrayals throughout history teach us that capitalism and hierarchies cannot be abolished from above. Freedom is not granted by governments or elites; it is won through struggle by workers and other oppressed people.

Instead of appointing “good” bosses and leaders to run society for the rest of us, we want people to directly control all possible



aspects of their life. We believe that any interaction between individuals should be under the direct control of the participants.

The basic democratic structure of our envisaged society would be worker and community councils. Here people could come together to discuss how they want the resources of society to be used. These

councils would federate together on a national and international basis to plan production for the larger community. The local councils would appoint delegates to the national, regional or international councils. If a delegate overstepped their remit or went against the wishes of the council they would be stripped of their duties. In all cases the decision making power would rest with the community rather than the delegate. However, democracy will not simply decide the allocation of goods. In an anarchist society people would also control the manner in which production takes place and the conditions of their work.

Anarchism does not simply satisfy our “animal” wants; food, clothes, shelter ect. It offers us dignity, self respect and control over our own lives. It creates the conditions in which people can develop freely and realise their full potential.

Obviously we are nowhere near this idyllic state of affairs. However, anarchists are not utopian dreamers. We recognise that it will be a long, hard struggle until our basic aims are achieved. Rather than sitting back and waiting for capitalism to collapse, or for the revolution to come, we believe in organising in the here and now. On a day to day basis anarchists are involved in union and community struggles as well as the fight for gender equality, anti-racist, pro-choice and many other campaigns for a better standard of living and more control over our lives.

Anarchism is then; an analyses of what’s wrong with society, a strategy of how to change it, and a vision of a future based on solidarity, equality and freedom.

### ANARCHIST GROUPS

#### Workers Solidarity Movement

[Platformist Anarchist Organisation](#)

Publishes *this paper*

PO box 1528, Dublin 8, Ireland

[www.struggle.ws/wsm](http://www.struggle.ws/wsm)

[wsm\\_ireland@yahoo.com](mailto:wsm_ireland@yahoo.com) [corkwsm@eircom.net](mailto:corkwsm@eircom.net)

Affiliated with *International Libertarian Solidarity*

#### Organise!

##### Working Class Resistance

[Class Struggle Anarchist Organisation](#)

Publishes *“Working Class Resistance”*

PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ

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

### LIBERTARIAN NETWORKS

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

#### Indymedia Ireland

[www.indymedia.ie](http://www.indymedia.ie)

[Irish Branch of Global Media Collective](#)

The place to find Irish campaign news.

#### Barracka Books

[Radical Book Store](#)

61 Barrack Street, Cork City

[barrackabooks@yahoo.ie](mailto:barrackabooks@yahoo.ie)

#### Cork Autonomous Zone

[Social Space](#)

61 Barrack St., Cork

[corkcaz@yahoo.ie](mailto:corkcaz@yahoo.ie)

### ACTIVIST GROUPS

#### Shell to Sea

[www.shelltosea.com](http://www.shelltosea.com)

*Website of campaign to move Shell’s pipeline offshore from Co. Mayo*

#### Alliance For Choice

[Campaign for women’s freedom to choose](#)

[www.struggle.ws/ireland/allianceforchoice/index.html](http://www.struggle.ws/ireland/allianceforchoice/index.html)

#### Residents Against Racism

[Campaign against racism & deportations](#)

*Meets every Friday at 7pm in the Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square in Dublin*

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

### EMAIL/WEB

[www.anarchism.ws/ireland.html](http://www.anarchism.ws/ireland.html)

*Index of Irish anarchist Internet resources*

[www.anarkismo.net](http://www.anarkismo.net)

*International Anarchist Website*

## Who We Are, What We're For..

It's one of anarchism's fundamental claims that it's possible to organise in an effective manner without submitting to authority. Not only that, but we believe that it's more effective than organising in a hierarchial manner as it makes use of everybody's talents and minimises the alienation that comes with decisions being made over your head. That's why we don't have a leadership – we think it's ineffective.

One of the obvious consequences of anarchism's rejection of leaders is the need for people to act for themselves. This doesn't mean acting alone – far from it – anarchism is all for collective action as being clearly a more effective means of changing society. But we think it vital that people participate in the decisions that affect them and collectively take action to improve their situation. This direct action stands in marked contrast to appeals to political leaders and their rich friends. It's not in their interests to change the make up of society so we'll have to create enough pressure in order to achieve the change ourselves.

All members of the WSM have an input into making policy and all members participate in the organisation's activities. The activities the WSM are involved in straddle major national campaigns

such as Shell-to-Sea and against the USA's use of Shannon to occupy Iraq. We've also members participating in the trade unions, anti-racist groups such as Residents against Racism, the anti-G8 protests of last summer, and local neighbourhood residents' groups. The intensity and number of members involved varies with the strength of the campaign, how widely our activities are spread, and how important an issue is at any one time.

We are especially concerned with promoting anarchist ideas within these campaigns so that people will have practical examples of libertarian methods as well as more broadly with this newspaper, our magazine and website. The more workers get used to acting for ourselves in the here and now, the easier we will be able to run society in the future.

Our primary reason for existence is to promote the ideas of anarchism. As stated in *Thinking About Anarchism*, this encompasses a critique of capitalist society, a strategy for changing it, and a vision for a future based on freedom, equality and solidarity. Capitalism isn't about to fall by itself. It's going to need a lot of help from workers from every area of life to replace it with a libertarian socialist world. We hope that those of you attracted to libertarian methods will join with us in the struggle for a free society.

**Though the issue of the Rossport pipeline was last in the news when the the five local men were released from prison, the conflict with Shell hasn't gone away. Since then the government commissioned a report, which essentially whitewashed Shell and gave the go ahead to build this dangerous pipeline**

The people of Rossport, however, are not lying down in the face of either the multinational or government. Last summer they stopped Shell from carrying out pipeline work. This summer the plan is the same. Safety is not negotiable.

Five years ago when Shell decided to push ahead with this pipeline it was clear it wasn't safe. Five years later, government reports or bullying a small community will not change this fact. It wasn't safe then and it isn't safe now.

Beyond safety, the Shell is ripping us off. Five years ago Shell got the deal of a century when our esteemed leaders gave them the entire gas field and then paid them to build the refinery by giving them massive tax breaks on all their construction work. If it was a rip-off then, it's

still a rip-off now.

Shell are aware that they face a very strong campaign and so have been sending out fancy leaflets all across Mayo telling people how safe the pipeline is. They are getting ready for a big push to have it built this spring.

The local Campaign is also preparing too. Last autumn a delegation went to Norway to successfully publicise the complicity of Statoil, who own the second largest stake in the field.

At the moment there are several people preparing a camp site in Mayo to facilitate people who want to go and show solidarity. The camp is opening on February 25th and is for all interested in showing solidarity with the people of Rossport.

In this sparsely populated area the campers will help with the continuous picket which makes sure that Shell don't start their pipelaying. If you have a few days to spare, come

to Mayo and help with the blockades. If you can't get to Mayo, you can get in touch with your local 'Shell to Sea' group.

For more information about the camp contact Bob 0863201612. [www.shelltosea.com](http://www.shelltosea.com)

*Finbar Dwyer.*



# Chomsky on Anarchism

## Essays on Anarchist theory and practice.

*Chomsky on Anarchism*  
AK Press

*From good bookshops or by mail for €16.99 inc. postage from WSM Books, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8*

**This book is a collection of essays by and interviews on anarchism with the man who has recently been voted the most popular intellectual in the world, (not that he was very impressed by that!) The bulk of the items have been published elsewhere but some are presented here for the first time.**

Now it is important to remember that Chomsky himself does not consider himself an anarchist theoretician (i.e. someone who creates theories about anarchism) but rather an intellectual who is an anarchist and who is prepared to give his views on subjects from an anarchist perspective. Chomsky makes it clear that he stands very much in the tradition of the classical anarchists, in particular those that emphasised collective (as opposed to individualist) solutions to problems. He is refreshingly non-sectarian, being generally supportive not only of both the anarchist communist and anarcho-syndicalist strands of anarchism but also the more libertarian elements of Marxism, especially council communism. His position is deliberately pluralistic, as he considers the question of which are the best forms of struggle and re-constituting society to be open questions, there being no long-term successful anarchist societies to draw on and as the situation is different in various places and economies, it is unlikely that any single solution can be applied to all situations.

Chomsky is also a classical anarchist inasmuch as he sees his anarchism as standing at the meeting point of the two main liberatory tendencies from the European Enlightenment: liberalism and socialism.

One of the most interesting essays in this book is his well-known discussion of liberal scholarship in the matter of the Spanish Civil War / Revolution, which first appeared in his book "American Power and

the New Mandarins". Chomsky shows up the ideological bias in mainstream liberal scholarship, which renders it incapable of comprehending the nature of the anarchist inspired resistance to the military coup and



the associated social revolution. However, the essay is now nearly 40 years old and there has been a huge amount of writing on the topic published since then. One looks forward to a similar essay looking at more recent writings.

Alongside the more familiar pieces there those such as a talk he delivered at the "Glasgow Conference on Self-Determination and Power" in 1990 which hasn't been published before, which initially situates his ideas on freedom within a specifically Scottish framework which makes for interesting reading. He also approvingly quotes from Bertrand Russell - well you would too if he said that anarchism is "the ultimate ideal to which society should approximate". Chomsky also goes into one of his favourite riffs on the subject of the manufacture of

consent and the evils of the foreign policy of the government of the United States of America. No change there then.

Indeed one can argue that Chomsky has been consistent in his political stance since the 1960's, which is not to say he never has anything original to say in later essays and interviews. But equally there is inevitably a fair bit of repetition involved when reprinting eleven items spread over nearly 40 years. One aspect of Chomsky's "anarchism" has given rise to some debate over the years and that is his pragmatism, which at times seems to be little different than a form of radical liberalism. For example he votes in local and national elections, if he considers his vote may make a difference - to keep out an overtly reactionary candidate or to vote in local referenda on important issues. Equally there is advocacy of strengthening the state in certain areas if this can help build community-based services in opposition to more privatised profit based ones.

Inevitably the question has to be answered in a review such as this: should one spend one's hard-earned cash on this book? Well, AK Press have done another excellent production effort on the book, and you won't find a better collection of Chomsky's writings on anarchism anywhere else. The price seems reasonable for the type of book and so if you haven't already got most of the essays in your existing collection of Chomsky's books then I'd recommend buying this one. However, be aware, you won't be getting much that is particularly original in the way of anarchist theory or history, and the level of writing is way beyond "Anarchism for Dummies". What you do get are a series of essays and interviews, which, hopefully, will challenge and inform and entertain (Chomsky has a very dry wit). Perhaps the only criticism I could make is that the book would be improved by a name and subject index.

So, recommended if you don't already have the main essays

*Richard Alexander*

This review was slightly edited. The longer version is at [http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/blackchip/chomsky\\_on\\_anarchism.htm](http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/blackchip/chomsky_on_anarchism.htm)





# IT HASN'T GONE AWAY YOU KNOW!

## The struggle for safe, legal abortion on demand continues.

Official Ireland pretends that abortion doesn't exist, the estimated 100,000 women who have travelled abroad to terminate pregnancies since the 1983 amendment to the Constitution know different. *Workers Solidarity* spoke to Níav Keating from the new pro-choice youth group.

### What is BODY?

BODY stands for Bold Open Decisive Youth. We are a diverse group of young pro-choice activists that are campaigning for safe and legal abortion services. We formed in October 2005, as a result of the launch of the Irish Family Planning Association's 'Safe and Legal' campaign. Our main objective is to push the Irish government to hold a pro-choice referendum. We are also interested in campaigning for free access to reproductive health care and contraception.

### Why is the campaign for abortion rights important to you?

For me, abortion is a women's health issue. It is not a legal, moral or ethical issue. As an anarchist and a feminist, I strongly support a woman's right to choose. It's a woman's choice to decide whether or not to continue with her pregnancy. I believe all women who choose to terminate should be able to access free, safe and legal abortion services within Ireland. Currently, seventeen women are forced to leave Ireland every day to avail of abortion services outside the State.

This is totally unacceptable.

**There have been lots of campaigns for abortion rights in the last twenty years. We still don't have abortion in Ireland and it is an issue that burns people out. Why do you think BODY will be more effective than the other campaigns?**



Although we still don't have access to abortion services in Ireland, in the last twenty years activists have campaigned for and gained the right to information and the right to travel. I think BODY could be more effective than past campaigns. Our first action outside the Dail in December 2005 received a very positive response. Activists from Grassroots Dissent, Alliance For Choice, Labour Youth and the Socialist Party participated

including Joe Higgins TD. It also gathered a lot of interest from the media in terms of newspaper articles in the Irish Times and radio stations nationwide conducted interviews with activists from BODY.

### How can people get involved in the BODY campaign?

For more information or to get involved with BODY e-mail [choice\\_ireland@hotmail.com](mailto:choice_ireland@hotmail.com) or contact Louise 086 329 3741. Currently we are active in Dublin but we hope to form other groups based in Cork and in Galway. If you are in a crisis pregnancy situation and would like information about all the options available to you - parenting, fostering, adoption, and abortion contact the IFPA on 1850 49 50 51 or visit the website: [www.ifpa.ie](http://www.ifpa.ie)

*Aileen O'Carroll*

## Irish Examiner does an Irish Ferries

**We were assured during the Irish Ferries saga that it could only happen because it was a maritime industry and landbound Irish jobs were safe. Many newspapers editorialised against escalation and for reasoned negotiation etc, the Irish Examiner was no different.**

But a story absent by and large from the Irish media has been the Examiner Group's move to shed its print workers and replace them with lower paid workers in a 'new company' which will print its stable of papers on contract. Under the new arrangement workers in Ballina and Cork city were invited to agree redundancy, redeployment or a transfer to the 'new firm' - under new conditions of course. Out of a staff of almost 90 only eleven are transferring to the 'new' firm.

Many who took redundancy and then applied for work at the new plant discovered that trained printers were unwanted and were given short shrift. Instead the 'new' company, Web Concepts, is looking for print technicians and is proposing to pay them in the region of €19,000 per year, quite a drop from the €40,000 average of the old workforce.

Redeployment of workers is something of a joke as the qualified printers are unlikely to easily adjust to answering phones all day or training as reporters, in fact the Examiner had no intention of doing so and discouraged any such illusions. Relocation to the new company was also discouraged and the few who did will find a very new working regime and conditions.

Redundancy conditions are extremely good with five weeks per year served plus another two from the state. We cannot help but think that good jobs with good conditions have again been lost and that the next generation of print workers will have to fight long and hard to get anywhere near this situation again.

The Examiner of course does very well out of this. They get a new printing works with cheaper labour, they have sold their city centre property for millions to developer Owen O'Callaghan and they are rid of a highly unionised and effective group of workers. The future looks bright for Irish Examiner publications as long as you are not a worker.

*James McBarron*