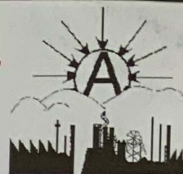


FREE!

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

Twenty Four years of Irish Anarchist News

Number 104 July - August 2008



## THE TRIUMPH OF GREED OVER NEED

The construction industry and the property market have well and truly collapsed. House prices have already fallen by up to 20% in some areas since 2006, and the fall is set to continue for some years still.

Although many politicians and developers will tell you that the property crash is nobody's fault - due to market conditions - they are simply liars. The reality is that the property bubble was entirely predictable. The problem was that a significant number of capitalists were making shed-loads of cash off rising prices: developers, bankers, landowners and so on.

Irish politicians were hardly going to spoil their party when so many brown envelopes were addressed to them. The corporate media gorged itself on the revenue from property ads and, in return, were happy to

provide platforms for a whole host of snake-oil salesmen - banks' economists, estate agents and other vested interests - to pimp their propaganda.

The overall affect of all this greed and corruption was that Ireland's economic boom ended up being mostly diverted into the pockets of a tiny number of capitalists. Although they were the ones who made the cash, everybody has to live with the ruinous consequences of their decisions. The country is littered with thousands of empty properties in areas without services where nobody wants to live.

At the same time, hundreds of thousands of people will spend decades struggling to pay back the massive loans they took to buy their homes. If interest rates continue to rise, thousands could face eviction and repossession. This appalling vista is a direct consequence of an economic system based on greed and exploitation.

Housing is a basic human need - people really can't choose to do without it. Those who own property exploit this need to enrich themselves. They don't care if they wreck the economy and thousands of lives - that's somebody else's problem.

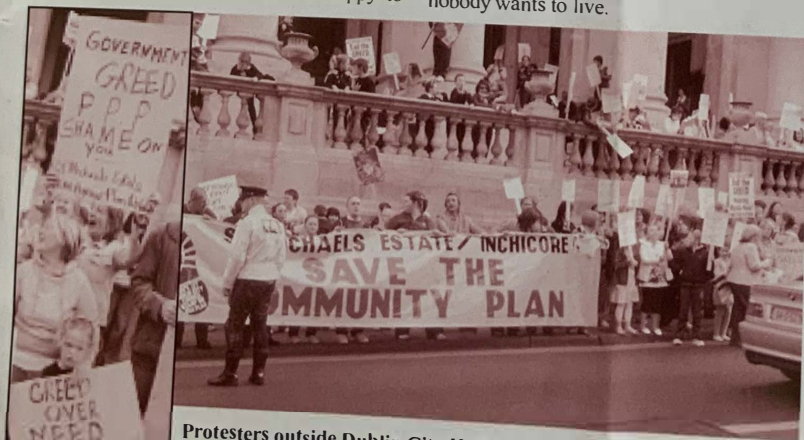
There is nothing inevitable about this system. It would be perfectly possible to organise housing in a completely different way. Society could provide everybody with decent housing as a basic right. Doing so would cut out all the horrendous waste and greed that the profit-motive introduces.

The reason that society doesn't do it like that is not because it's too difficult, it's because the current situation suits those with power perfectly well. Workers, in general, have no say in such matters, all we can do is to try to get as good housing as we can afford and keep our fingers crossed that the market doesn't turn on us.

In the long term, the only solution is to replace capitalism with a system where housing is allocated according to need, not profit. However, there's no point waiting around for the revolution. In the short term, there are a whole host of ways in which workers can limit the destructiveness of capitalists.

Demanding more public housing, opposing planning corruption, resisting evictions, protesting poor conditions and many other such actions can give workers some measure of control over the housing market. As the property crash intensifies, more and more people will have to choose between fighting back and penury. The sooner we start organising the better.

*Chekov Feeney*



Protesters outside Dublin City Hall in May when long-promised 'PPP' regeneration plans for their communities were scapped after billionaire developers McNamaras said there was not enough profit for them.

NEWSPAPER OF ANARCHISTS IN IRELAND

Pay restraint is not for the rich, but ICTU still say

# Carry On Partner

Working people in the Irish Republic have been hearing a lot from the representatives of our exploiters about the need for us to exercise 'pay restraint' and to 'moderate our demands' in these difficult times. The bosses' organisations IBEC and ISME have been given considerable airtime and newspaper space in order to convince us of the necessity for sacrifice on our part, and this message has been taken up by the government too.

Brian Cowen tells us that 'pay restraint under partnership' is necessary, and will be good for the economy 'going forward', like Bertie Ahern said before him. Meanwhile our purchasing power at the supermarket tills, petrol station forecourts and high street shops is shrinking before our eyes. Who are these guys trying to fool?

Inflation is currently running at its highest level for twenty years because the rise in the price of ever-scarcer resources is being imposed on us every time we go shopping or pay a bill. But we cannot expect any relief in the form of higher wages for our work that makes and distributes all that we ourselves consume.

The bosses who profit from our daily need to live do not feel they must themselves live by their message. It's different for them. There is no call for them to restrain their profit taking for the common good. No, we are told that they have to maintain and even increase their profits to show that Ireland is 'globally competitive' and a 'healthy' economy. These messages from the business establishment and government come when the so-called partnership process enters another round of negotiations.

Ordinary working folk should not be fooled by self-serving rhetoric coming from the privileged, but many senior trade union leaders taking part in the negotiations will tell us that nothing better is possible. Their very good salaries and high-powered careers mean they don't really share the concerns and understand the vulnerable situation of hundreds of thousands of their own members.



*Despite much searching Siobhan could find no evidence of partnership being good for her*

They are more concerned with not rocking the boat, and will recommend a yes vote on the pay terms, almost regardless of what is proposed. What is described by the high priests of money and (sometimes) the Irish Congress of Trade Unions as 'restructuring' and 'flexibility' are better known by their real names of job losses and casualisation.

In tough times we are all expected to rescue the rich and privileged from the consequences of their own economic system, and make good their losses. We, on the other hand, can expect no such tender care - we are the ones who will make sacrifices. Why should we? And why is it always us whose demands must remain unmet, while Capital and Profit march greedily on?

Why should we accept this unequal sharing-out of risk and reward? A good first step towards rebuilding fighting unions and putting working class interests first would be the rejection of the 'partnership' confidence trick. Then we should carry on to end the power of the profiteers over our lives!

Ray Hanrahan

## Contacts

### ANARCHIST ORGANISATIONS

Workers Solidarity Movement  
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[corkwsm@gmail.com](mailto:corkwsm@gmail.com)  
[belfast@wsm.ie](mailto:belfast@wsm.ie)

Revolutionary Anarcha-Feminist Group  
P.O. Box 10785, Dublin 1  
[www.ragdublin.org](http://www.ragdublin.org)

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

### LIBERTARIAN NETWORKS

Indymedia Ireland  
The place to find Irish campaign news  
[www.indymedia.ie](http://www.indymedia.ie)

CAZ  
Radical bookshop and social space  
61 Barrack Street, Cork City  
[centraladminzone@gmail.com](mailto:centraladminzone@gmail.com)

Seomra Spraoi  
Dublin social centre, reopening shortly at 113 Cork Street.  
[www.seomraspraoi.blogspot.com](http://www.seomraspraoi.blogspot.com)

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

### CAMPAIGNING GROUPS

Shell to Sea  
Campaign to move Shell's gas pipeline offshore from Co. Mayo  
[www.shelltosea.com](http://www.shelltosea.com)

Hands Off the People of Iran  
Anti-imperialist network for solidarity with Iranian trade unions and the women's rights movement.  
[www.hopoi.org](http://www.hopoi.org)

Choice Ireland  
Abortion rights action group  
[choiceireland@gmail.com](mailto:choiceireland@gmail.com)

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

Anti-War Ireland  
Democratic anti-war organisation  
[www.antwarireland.org](http://www.antwarireland.org)

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

**FACT**

**Even under 'partnership' you're better off in a union**

The Central Statistics Office says trade union members usually get better pay than those who are not unionised.

The average difference is €6.05 an hour for women and €3.43 an hour for men.

## anarkismo.net

International anarchist website with news and discussion from all five continents; in English, Turkish, Polish, Arabic, Spanish, Dutch, Norwegian, German & Greek.

## LabourStart

for Irish and international trade union news

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



### The Federation of Anarchist Communists of Italy

have an English language site with lots of articles and pamphlets for you to read or download.

[www.fdca.it/fdcaen](http://www.fdca.it/fdcaen)

of the political elites who have concocted this treaty and grown rich on the back of EU expansion and the celtic tiger?", the result is no mystery at all. The middle class have mostly agreed - why wouldn't they? The working class are naturally more sceptical and unwilling to sign a blank cheque for those who have plundered the coffers while leaving our schools, hospitals and infrastructure to crumble.

So in the face of the remarkable unity of the European ruling classes behind this initiative that we remarked upon before the referendum, the Irish working class has responded with its own unity in a clear-sighted refusal to give legitimacy to a treaty that sought to trick its way past democratic accountability by shrouding its real designs in a deliberately impenetrable fog of bureaucratic gobbledegook.

It's an old cliché to say that Dev would be spinning in his grave, but the event that is the referendum result has broken the post civil-war bipartisan consensus that, no matter what else, class politics was the one thing that had to be avoided at all costs in this state. Of course one swallow does not make a summer, but this event is like the sudden spark in the night that illuminates a scene for a brief instant and reveals a hitherto hidden scene. A very different social picture from the smug triumphalism of the FF 2007 election victory.

The referendum result is not only a crisis for the constitution of a bosses' Europe, but also the beginnings of a political breakdown of the FF/FG excommunication of class politics from Irish society.

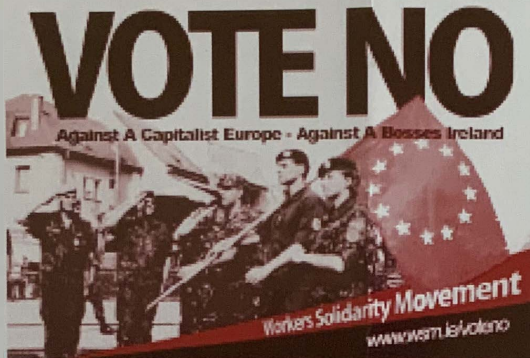
*Paul Bowman*

## Lisbon Vote: A Class Act

As the morning of Friday 13th of June grew towards midday, the government realised with mounting horror that they had not only lost the referendum for the Lisbon treaty, but had lost badly. In the end, with a turnout higher than both Nice referendum and European elections, the Irish electorate had cast more No votes than the number that elected the FF government last year.

In the days that followed the media commentators in press, radio and television, groped around blindly for arguments or reasons why the people have rejected the appeals of the united front of political parties and bosses to "do the right thing" and rubber-stamp this treaty.

But amongst all the outpouring of words



from the chatterati, one theme, indeed Friday the 13th's most striking and historic theme, has been missing. A wise man once said "listen for the silences". In this deluge of punditry there has been an almost total silence over "the big C". As in class, not cancer. The results of this referendum show a vote split along class lines that has not been seen so clearly since the founding of the Republic.

Indeed, given that the referendum basically came down to a question of "do you believe that your interests are the same as those

## US Dockers strike against the war

For those of us involved in the fight for workers' power, the 1st of May gave us much to be cheerful about. Traditionally a day to celebrate working class solidarity and militancy, workers in America and Iraq marked it with a wonderful demonstration of both of these fine qualities.

Work was shut down in 29 ports across the US as 25,000 dock workers organised in

the International Longshore and Warehouse Union went on strike against the American war in Iraq. This action was supported by some truck drivers and postal workers in the US, and by fellow dock workers in Iraq who struck in the ports of Umm Qasr and Khor Al Zubair, protesting against the war, religious sectarianism, and the economic agenda of the occupation.

As they wrote in a solidarity letter to ILWU members: "The courageous decision you made to carry out a strike on May Day to protest against the war and occupation of Iraq advances our struggle against occupation to bring a better future for us and for the rest of the world as well. We are certain that a better world will only be created by the workers and



The union's drill team leads the San Francisco May Day march

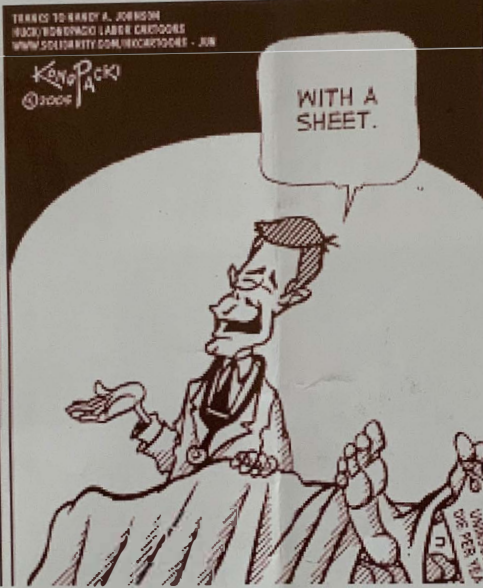
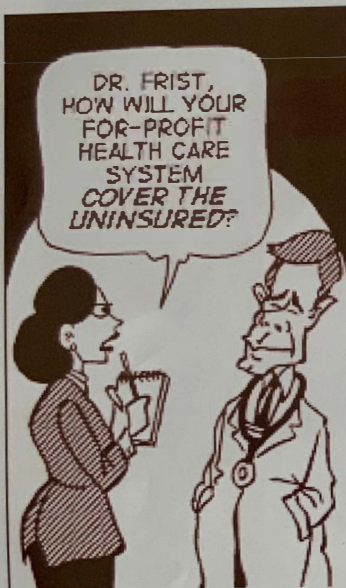
what you are doing is an example and proof of what we say... We in Iraq are looking up to you and support you until the victory over the US administration's barbarism is achieved."

*Ronan McHugh*



*It's not incompetence, it's sabotage*

# HSE Board have an interest in running down health service



Let's put a gang of joyriders in charge of road safety. An unbelievably stupid idea? Of course it is, only someone who didn't give a damn about road safety would even suggest it. So would you put people with a financial interest in running down the public health service in charge of our hospitals?

That's exactly what the government has done. The Board of the Health Service Executive is full of them. Making profits is what really matters to Brian Cowan and his chums in the PDs and Green Party.

A pitiful public service forces people to buy private health insurance and use private facilities. Just over 50% of the population have done this, mostly to get just basic care without waiting years.

Chairman, Liam Downey used to be Chief Executive of the medical company, Becton Dickenson. He also sits on the executive of the bosses' organisation, IBEC.

Another IBEC executive member is Neither of the two medical members of the

Board actually works with people who are ill. Michael Murphy is Dean of Medicine at University College Cork and Anne Scott is Professor of Nursing at Dublin City University.

Psychologist Maureen Gaffney is also on the Board. A regular on RTE radio, she has an opinion on everything except the state of our hospitals.

Pat Farrell is the former chief executive of Galvia Private Hospital in Galway, and current Chief Executive of the Irish Banking Federation.

Joe Mooney is a newly retired senior civil servant from the Department of Finance, and P.J. Fitzpatrick is Chief Executive of the Courts Service.

## Undocumented Irish in US to be hit by new anti-union law



The Kansas Senate has voted in a new law that will make criminals out of unions which organise workers who are illegal immigrants. To "collect union dues from any alien who is not lawfully present in the United States" would be subject to fines from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

The same Senators repeatedly rejected attempts to impose punishments on employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers. In other words, in Kansas, while employers are free to do whatever they want when hiring, trade unions will be punished for uniting with their work colleagues.

What a boon this will be to union busting employers! Keeping the undocumented out of unions makes them more exploitable. And any boss wanting to stick the boot into the union only has to drop in a few illegal aliens, let the union recruit them, then make sure the union gets reported for collecting dues. The fines hurt the union and the employer gets off free and easy!

Thinking about Anarchism

Why Class Matters

The concept of class is fundamental to the anarchist understanding of society. The goal of anarchist communism is to create a classless society where everyone is on an equal footing...

Many figures in the economic and political elite argue that we now live in a classless society. While it is true that class as an economic and social phenomenon has changed as capitalism has developed...

First of all, lets try to define what we mean by "class". The simplest way to begin is to look at the two main classes: the working class and the capitalist class.

social infrastructure like education, health and other public services; the rest is profit or "surplus value" for the capitalist class.

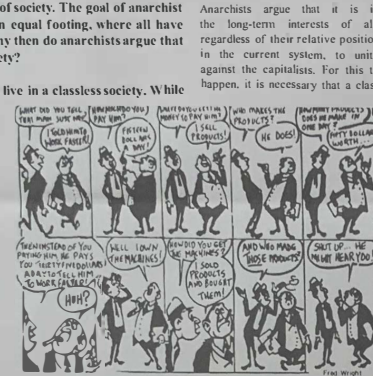
In other words, work generates wealth but this wealth is not controlled by those who do the work. it is controlled by those who manage and direct the workers.

In todays Ireland, this includes both blue-collar workers the "traditional" working class) as well as (due to our changing economy) many in white-collar jobs.

The working class far outnumbers those in the capitalist class; under capitalism a very small number of people have most of the wealth and power.

The distinction between the working class and the capitalist class is best described in terms of their ownership of the things which are needed to do work...

The divides are not always so black and white; there are those workers who have a higher standing than those lower down the scale.



will be white-collar workers with some degree of managerial power, self-employed business people or farmers.

This is quite understandable, as any working person will tell you they wouldn't mind higher wages or better working conditions.

Anarchists argue that it is in the long-term interests of all, regardless of their relative position in the current system...



consciousness be developed, so that individuals recognise how they are being exploited and realise their collective power to change society.

Some libertarians argue that focusing on class is unnecessary and means ignoring other forms of oppression such as sexism and racism.

Anarchists are not saying that once we get rid of class, that such things as sexism and racism will disappear...

automatically. Neither are we saying that class is the only oppression but rather that it must be a focus if we are to achieve any lasting change beyond token reforms.

A truly revolutionary movement can only come from the action of the working class as a class. We are the ones who keep society running...

Bob Kavanagh



The Health Services Executive in Cork is spending nearly four times as much giving work that used to be done by a HSE employee to private profiteers.

"There wasn't anyone in the office, from the receptionist up, who paid as low a tax rate [as me]..."

Whoever said that radical ideas like taking direct action don't appeal to the majority of people? This case proves that, given the chance to hear all the facts, most of us will support direct action.

According to the Forbes annual list of billionaires, the richest 300 families own over 50% of the world's monetary wealth.

According to the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation approximately 6 million children are dying from hunger every year...

In the ten years from 1996-2005, profits in the 26 county retail sector rose by 338% but wages only went up by 126%.

Solidarity action by Cork Dockers

In mid-April, Cork dock workers took action in support of the crew of The Defender, a cargo ship owned by Forestry Shipping from Riga, Latvia but registered in Cambodia.

You were at work when you heard about the situation of the crew. Can you tell me what happened? Well you see, the boys in Connolly Hall heard about the Defender via Ken Fleming of the International Transport Federation.

Is this an unannounced to come across on the docks or what?

When we were asked to support them we did so and it was then we found out about what was happening on the Defender.

What was the response to your solidarity action? Well nothing happened then! What I mean is that the timber load was on the Defender and that was where it was staying.

What was the exact situation of the crew?

The crew had been pulled for a long while. Over four months. Which for seagoing people is a very, very hard thing to swallow.

We also met with a representative of Doyley, Doyleys are the stevedore company that we work for. They were dealing with the Defender.

What happened then?

No one was happy at this stage. Not the Harbour Board, not Doyley, not the ship's agent.



Scene of the crime

businesses were anxious to get the cargo moving.

Did the crew get their money at this point?

We'll The Harbour Master got the owners and said about the money owed to the crew. The Harbour Master could technically sell the cargo to settle the matter if he wished.

Anarchism and the Workers Solidarity Movement

Our campaign against the Lisbon treaty saw anarchist posters in town as far apart as Ballina, Ennis and Bray; street stalls in Limerick, Waterford, Cork and Wexford; and 50,000 leaflets delivered to homes.

Friday July 4th saw 17 people gear up for their lunchhour to leaflet workers at Londonderry in Dun Laoghaire. The multinational firm sacked a trade union representative in their Warran office and, as part of an international day of action, the ZSP union asked the WSM to stage a protest and inform staff here about the case.

The following day saw the WSM respond to another call for solidarity with trade unionists sacked by Starbucks in Spain and the USA.

And anyway at this point word was out. The Harbour Board workers are also militant - the harbour pilots and so on, I mean. If they say some action is justified, then no much can move in the harbour.

We have a great relationship with them. And if we are backing a dispute, they will back us up. And we would also back them. We are all in No 5 branch of SIPTU, as are the Harbour Board workers and pilots.

Did all the crew of the Defender get sorted?

In three or four days yes. We started the action on a Thursday and by Tuesday of the following week we were notified that they had all been paid. Everything went well once we secured the agreement.

Y ou got the result?

Once we stopped the unloading it brought it all to a head. If that hadn't beendone I think the crew would still be without their pay.

In the recent times, there have been a few well publicised cases of dock workers acting in solidarity with other workers and with larger political struggles.

George Bush's war in Iraq. Are there similarities with these widely publicised cases?

Solidarity always there. It's always been there, but when we don't know about a situation or dispute we don't do anything.

Belfast jury says fighting war criminals is not a crime

Raytheon 9 acquitted on the grounds that direct action was justified.

It was a victory for people applying common sense and cutting through capitalist bullshit. What the prosecution had feared most was the jury acquitting the 9 because they believed them when they said that they had sabotaged Raytheon's computers in order to disrupt the company's activities.

But they failed in that, so they petitioned to have it moved from Derry to Belfast where they thought a jury would not be as sympathetic to the non-station Raytheon 9.

But it didn't work. That the jury acquitted the 9 goes to show that ordinary people, when presented with all the facts in a measured and sober manner, won't buy into the spin and euphemisms spouted by the corporate PR gurus, the government and the mainstream media.

Instead they cut through the crap and supported the actions of ordinary people who decided not to wait for politicians to fulfill their empty promises, and took matters into their own hands.

Whoever said that radical ideas like taking direct action don't appeal to the majority of people? This case proves that, given the chance to hear all the facts, most of us will support direct action.



Shane O'Curry

Turkish workers take on killer bosses

On June 16th Turkish shipyard workers went on strike in a bid to stop workplace deaths at Tuzla docks, near Istanbul.

There have been 97 deaths since the shipyard was privatised by the government five years ago and 19 deaths since the Minister of Employment and Social Security promised, on September 8th 2007, the issue would be resolved.

During the protests 70 workers were arrested and one worker was run over by a police belonging to a subcontractor. The police not only arrested

crushed to death under machinery weighing half a ton. Deaths in the shipyards are due to the lack of safety equipment and the reckless disregard for safety regulations shown by the shipyard management, subcontractors and the Ministry authorities.

Workers in Turkey face tremendous pressures in making demands for basic rights such as workplace safety, job security, better pay and a minimum standard of living.

At the end of February 2008 shipyard workers went on a two day strike after five deaths in that month alone.

Messages of support and solidarity can be sent to: limerick@gmail.com

workers, they also confiscated a tent, banners and publications belonging to the union and arrested union officials. The representatives of the subcontractors, who are responsible for these deaths, placed the blame on workers.

Workers in Turkey face tremendous pressures in making demands for basic rights such as workplace safety, job security, better pay and a minimum standard of living. They face arrears and lengthy sentences for "public disorder", lock-outs and losing their jobs.

According to official statistics more than a thousand workers die in Turkey each year in preventable workplace accidents and five thousand die from workplace acquired illnesses.

Messages of support and solidarity can be sent to: limerick@gmail.com

Starbucks Union

The 30 people outside the College Green branch moved up the road to the Dawson Street one after hearing the manager there had snatched leaflets from staff and torn them up.

With bosses like that who can doubt the need for an union?



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**Organisation:** Workers Solidarity Movement

**Date:** 2008

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