

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

Irish  *narchist Paper*



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www.struggle.ws/wsm.html

*Pic: Riot police guard the fence at Shannon, March 1st
overlaid with graffiti on Berties office, March 16th*



**BLOOD
ON YOUR
HANDS**

Act to stop their war

In the run up to St. Patrick's Day we had the sight of our ultimate gombeen, Bertie, presenting a bowl of shamrock to George W Bush and telling him it was fine to continue to re-fuel bombers in Shannon. Now in the war of super spin, Baghdad burns yet nobody dies. Over 205,000 people died in the last Gulf war.

Immediately people sprang into action. San Francisco was shut down by roving blocks of demonstrators who

sealed off strategic points in the city. Even 1,600 arrests couldn't stop it. In Dublin people attempted to blockade the TD's into the Dáil. A massive 'No to US TERROR' sign went up on a bridge in the northside of Dublin. Bertie Ahern's clinic in Drumcondra was sprayed with 'Blood on your hands'.

The leaders of the UK, USA, and Ireland aren't listening. It's time to make it impossible for them to continue to ignore us. Make them listen by taking DIRECT ACTION against this war.

International anarchist statement against the war

The statement below was issued before the war by anarchist groups from all over the globe. This included organisations in Ireland (WSM), Britain, France, Sweden, Argentina, Lebanon, Belgium, Turkey, Portugal, South Africa, Germany, Canada, Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Italy, USA, Switzerland and Croatia.

Libertarians against all wars!

The prospect for a new Gulf war appears more unavoidable with each passing day.

At the same time, colonial wars are multiplying, in Chechnya, the Ivory Coast, Palestine, etc. The whole world is bloodied with these conflicts, either openly carried out by the rich States, or manipulated for the benefit of capitalist profit, in particular of the multinationals.

Capitalism needs war to maintain its domination. Wars are directed against poor countries in order to exploit their natural resources for the profit of the dominant countries and to the detriment of local populations. They often occur after long years of Western support for the dictatorships in place. This is the case for example in Iraq, where Saddam Hussein was helped over a long period by the rich countries before becoming a hunted man. When rich States make war, they are not worried for one second about the people, whose liberation from the dictatorship which oppresses them is, however, necessary. It is all the more indecent to make use of it as a pretext with which to bombard these populations!

The "decision makers" of the rich countries cynically recognise this: war is "good" for getting rid of economic "uncertainty". Which, decapitated, means: the plundering of the natural resources of certain countries is necessary in order to increase the benefits to

big business. To invest in armaments and "antiterrorism" rather than in the public and social services is the business choice clearly made by all Western leaders.

But these wars are above all wars of hegemony, before even any consideration of their economic motives. They are wars of influence between dominant countries, to show and reinforce their supremacy. The United States wants to show its absolute military power by silencing, through terror, anyone



who calls its hegemony into question or anyone who contests the plundering of the planet for its profit.

Capitalism must terrorise populations in order to continue exploiting them. Imperialist wars carried out by the rich countries are the external echo of the repressive policies which are applied in their own territory. Military conflicts and the criminalisation of poverty are two sides

of the one dollar or one euro coin!

The true "Axis of Evil", responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths throughout the world, is capitalism, in its race for profit, and its exploitation which generates misery and

despair. The Heads of State who will meet in Evian (France) next June at the next G8 summit are criminals, both war criminals and economic criminals.

The rich countries arrogate the right to decide, in spite of their elitist, classist political systems (the election by blackmail of Jacques Chirac in France, the fraudulent election of George W. Bush, the mafia-like practices of Silvio Berlusconi, Putin elected to deal with a war which he started, etc). Moreover, they impose their decisions on the rest of the world. Eight people who decide for six billion! Where is the justice in that? They violate even the most basic international law (as in Guantanamo, for example, where six hundred prisoners are held in all illegality); they ignore the decisions of the international puppet institutions like the UN, which, however, they themselves set up, to make us believe in their democratic will.

Throughout the world, our organisations, trade unions, networks and communities are opposing war and taking part in the building of a vast movement to reject this barbarity. Let there be more and more of us, so that we will be able to keep capitalism's logic of death in check.

War always serves the rich, and always kills the poor.

- * No to the war in Iraq, Chechnya, Palestine and the Ivory Coast.
- * For disarmament and demilitarisation everywhere in the world.
- * Freedom for the people and the right to self-determination.
- * Solidarity with the victims of dictatorship.

An updated list of signatures and translations of this statement can be found at <http://alternativelibertaire.org/index.php?dir=international&page=wir80.html>

That's Capitalism



According to the Financial Times of February 22nd, the after tax income of the richest 1% of Americans rose 115% between 1977 and 1999 while the incomes of the poorest 20% fell by 9%.

A recent Oxfam estimate, reported in the Wall Street Journal of January 7th, found that if Africa could get a 1% additional share of world trade this would inject \$70 billion into African economies. If 10% of that went to health Africa would have the means to confront its health crisis. That is \$7 billion. This is a fraction of what it has spent preparing for the invasion of Iraq. But capitalism will not deliver \$7 bil-

lion to health care in Africa.

Apparently, in the budget for the coming year in the United States George Bush Junior is proposing to spend EUR380bn on the Armed Forces. This is greater than the combined arms budgets of the world's next ten military powers. (Pentagon Power program, BBC Radio 4) So much for a fall in arms budgets following on from the cessation of the cold war. Less than 2% of this spend could help the continent of Africa avert it's impending health crisis.

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Have your say

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

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.

Thinking about Anarchism Movement What is violence and who says so?

One of the most interesting arguments from within and, interestingly from without, the growing anti-war movement is on the use of violence. Typically, the argument takes this form: anti-war protests are peace protests, therefore they must be peaceful. Further, these self-appointed arbitrators within and without the movement have extremely tight definitions of what is and what isn't peaceful.

All this leads to some fundamental questions. Firstly, what constitutes violence? Almost everyone agrees that the mass "shock and awe" carpet bombing of people living in Baghdad is violence. Likewise shooting or injuring a person is violence.

But does pulling down a fence constitute violence? Many argue that such minor property damage can not be seen as violent.

Anarchists favour mass direct against the war. Opinion polls and massive demonstrations have shown that the majority in Ireland are completely against this war. The last Irish Times poll found that 54% wanted the Shannon refueling ended - even if the war received UN support.

The next step is to take action, getting large numbers to Shannon where it counts. We favour mass, peaceful, direct action capable of mobilising enough of the massive public support to make it impossible to continue refueling US military planes. Violence is of no use to us here.

Anyway, we must be completely honest and realistic. Any violence from anti-war people would easily be faced down with well organised violence from the state forces. Our advantage is in numbers and determination, not in training and arms!

Should we always be peaceful? What about anarchism in general? For us, the most thorough and successful revolution will be the most peaceful one. When the majority are won over to the idea of a completely new way of running the world it should not be too hard to achieve it.

However, we are not ideological pacifists. No ruling class in all of human history has ever quietly surrendered its power and wealth. Violence may well be needed to defend a successful revolution from the old ruling class. If anything is to be learnt from past revolutions it is that the penalty for failure is usually death.

Counter revolutions are bloody and vicious. The mass graves of Paris or the leftists slaughtered by Saddam's Ba'athists (after the CIA helped them to power) bear silent witness to this fact.

We may have to fight to defend ourselves and the new society we want to help create. But violence should be absolutely

minimised. It is not something any reasonable person takes pleasure in - it should always be a last resort. There is no place in the anarchist movement for those who glory in violence and carnage.



Any violence necessary to defend an anarchist society would be tiny and marginal compared to the violence routinely meted out every day by capitalism. When billions of dollars are readily available for warplanes and cluster bombs we should remember that our rulers never seem to be able to find the same sort of money for famine relief, clean water or basic health care. Every day 24,000 people die of hunger around the world. Who then are the violent ones?

Conor Mc Loughlin

Support those facing charges for Direct Action at Shannon

As we go to press, at least 19 people are currently facing prosecution out of the October and March direct actions at Shannon airport.

In addition 5 people are in the courts arising from the Catholic Worker/Ploughshares 'decommissioning' of a US military transport plane. Mary Kelly is facing charges for taking a hammer to the same plane on an earlier occasion, and Eoin Dubsky for spraypainting a warplane.

Cash is needed for legal costs and for travel to remand hearings. These people not only protested against war, but also bravely did their bit to end the use of Shannon by warplanes. Not everyone can do this but most of us can manage a contribution towards their legal fund.

Donate to the Ploughshares Defense Fund by making cheques payable to Peace and Reconciliation, c/o Ploughshares, 134 Phibsborough Road, Dublin 7.

Donate to the 19 direct action defendants: Cheques can be made out to Shannon Solidarity, and sent to Shannon Solidarity c/o Ecology Society, Students Centre, NUIG, Newcastle, Galway.

Or money can be sent to the Bank of Ireland, NUIG, Newcastle, Galway; account number 89174196, sort code 904018, account name Shannon Solidarity



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 has been campaigning against the war and in particular against the refuelling of US war planes at Shannon. Our members have helped organise or taken part in many protests there over the past year. Members of the WSM are also active in the campaigns against the bin tax, and in the ongoing struggle against racism. We produce this paper, the magazine *Red & Black Revolution*, and the occasional *Anarchist News* bulletin. With our relatively small numbers there is a limit to what we can do. That's why we need people like you to get involved.

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.

Direct Action - your questions answered

This article addresses Direct Action in the context of the sometimes hysterical debate about the Grassroots Network Against War (GNAW) action at Shannon on March 1st.

What is Direct Action?

Direct action simply means acting for yourself without intermediaries. For example, with regard to the use of Shannon by the US military we could plead with TDs to plead with the cabinet to plead with the US authorities to move their operations to Germany. That type of action relies on other people acting on behalf of you.

Direct action is simply where you act for yourself. An example would be if thousands of people occupied the runway at Shannon preventing US Military from refuelling there.

Is Direct Action always Violent?

Nope, though they're not mutually exclusive either. Anyway violence **against people** (as opposed to property) usually originates from the state forces as they react (by batonning & imprisoning) demonstrators. The morality of violence is a separate though not unrelated question and, in my opinion, each use of force needs to be justified on its own merits.

Why publicise a Direct Action?

In the afterglow of February 15th it was reasonable to assume that a couple of thousand would show up at Shannon. The reason for publicising it was to encourage the maximum number of participants in the direct action itself. The plan to tear the fence down was dependent largely on numbers. The fact that the numbers didn't materialise was disappointing, and all the publicity, far more than expected, probably served to scare away people rather than attract them.

If people don't know about an event then they we can't expect them to participate. Open publication of the plan allows people to make an informed decision about the extent of their involvement. It minimises the chances of them being drawn into events they are uncomfortable with.

On the other hand, it could be fairly argued that direct action instigated by a few can be more successful than a pre-planned one. For example, the fence destruction at Shannon in October was a spontaneous action instigated by a few which led to a mass trespass. The very public plan on March the 1st failed in its objective and may even have appeared as a standoff designed to attract media attention. I think there's merit to both positions.

Does Direct Action frighten people off, particularly those new to political activity?

This argument is often connected to the cry 'let's build the movement' first. There are hundreds of thousands of people against this war. The movement is built. The question is what to do now?

There was no change in policy after February 15th. We can either sit back and hope that the government will change it's mind about refuelling in Shannon or we can try to stop it ourselves

The latter is the harder option and it's entirely possible that such attempts will be both unpopular and a failure, but a start has to be made. If direct action isn't appropriate at this time and on this issue then it'll never be.

Direct action also leads to people feeling empowered in the struggle as it has an achievable aim and does not rely on our 'masters' doing what we ask them.

If peaceful protesters are attacked by police then surely it's the protesters' own faults ?

In the run up to March 1st concerns were expressed that attempts to cause a security breach at Shannon would bring violent retribution from the security forces and therefore the action was inappropriate.

This highlights the degree to which some people, even anti-war supporters, are committed to the legitimacy of State violence even if such violence is used to continue an unethical policy in the face of peaceful civil disobedience.

The GNAW demo, whatever its organisational flaws, was intended to be entirely peaceful, as indeed it turned out. At its most extreme a fence was going to be torn down. This is so minor compared to punching someone in the face or an aerial bombardment that I'm embarrassed it needs pointing out.

The security forces on the other hand were prepared to violently resist this peaceful (or at most barely aggressive action) action by thumping people – hence the batons – and imprisoning them against their will.

Therefore any violence was likely to come from them and *it is they and their masters who ought to be called upon to desist from acting violently*, particularly as they were acting in the service of an unethical (and unpopular) war. Excus-

ing the security forces because they're "just following orders" has a long and inglorious history.

Is DA is a Distraction ?

A distraction from what? The Green Party leadership disassociated themselves from the actions of the Catholic Workers and the March 1st demo partly because they considered such action a "distraction". In fact the opposite is true. Every time an action took place more attention was focussed on Shannon, the scene of the Irish State's complicity in the war effort.

Not only is direct action not a distraction it has had specific positive results, namely the withdrawal of some of the airlines ferrying the hardware to the Middle East.

Ireland's role in the war is minor and no doubt dispensable. Nevertheless it's our responsibility to stop that involvement. It's not up to us to stop the war, we can only change that which we have control over.

But you must admit that the cost to the State of securing the airport is a waste of taxpayers' money?

Defiantly true, the quickest way to stop it would be to prohibit the planes from using the facilities in the first place.

Aren't Workers strikes are the best form of direct action?

True again, and while we should do our bit to encourage and support them there's no reason to wait for them to do it. They mightn't be agreeable to the anti-war case or they mightn't have the confidence to risk going on strike. If we're going to call for them to take a risk we should at least be prepared to take a few ourselves. Workers' strikes and breaching security are not mutually exclusive tactics.

James O'Brian



The March 1st action at Shannon

If you were anywhere in Ireland in the last week of February you can't have missed the hype ahead of the March 1st direct action called at Shannon by the Grassroots Network Against the War (GNAW). Suddenly every politician, reporter and even bishop in the country was joining the queue to denounce the planned 'violent' protest. The morning before the protest irony died on its feet when Sinn Fein announce it was pulling out of the unrelated Irish Anti War Movement protest at the airport for fear of violence.

You probably missed all the reports in the paper after Saturday when the same people queued up to issue apologies to GNAW. Really they should have read the publically available GNAW plan for the day line two of which read; "This action will be an example of mass non-violent civil disobedience in the tradition of Gandhi's salt march."

On the day some 300 people braved the media hype and the attacks from other sections of the anti war movements to take part in the GNAW action. We marched up to the airport beneath white flags to find row after row of Gardai, dog units and tooled up riot cops waiting for us.

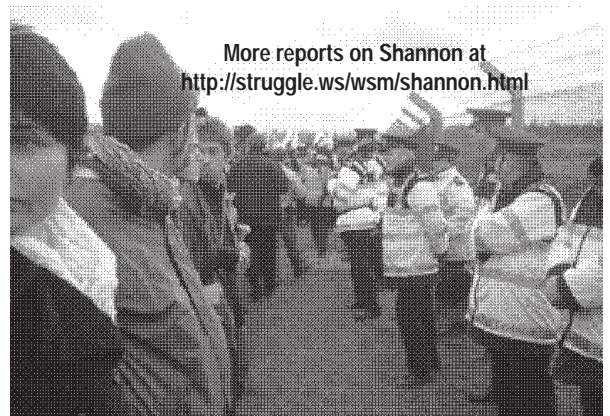
Arriving at the fence everyone linked arms and formed a long line. We then slowly walked forward until we came into contact with the line of Gardai. We had hoped that at this point we would massively outnumber them and be able to simply walk around them. They were obviously worried about this as well as their senior officer was quoted before the protest as saying that it would be

impossible to guard 7km of perimeter with 500 men but they would try their best.

After some time we did however manage to catch the Gardai on the hop simply by walking sideways. This opened up a gap in their ranks. Seizing the opportunity people walked up to the fence or threw crude grappling hooks attached to ropes to the top of the fence and started to pull it down.

In the space of a couple of seconds the fence had started to peel off from the top and cops had come charging in, rugby tackling people to the ground, grabbing the ropes and generally shoving people around. Most of the 10 arrests made on the day happened around this point.

March 1st at Shannon was the last pre-war chance to stop refuelling there. I have little doubt that if other sections of the anti-war movements had argued against the media 'there will be violence' hype instead of repeating it then sufficient numbers of people



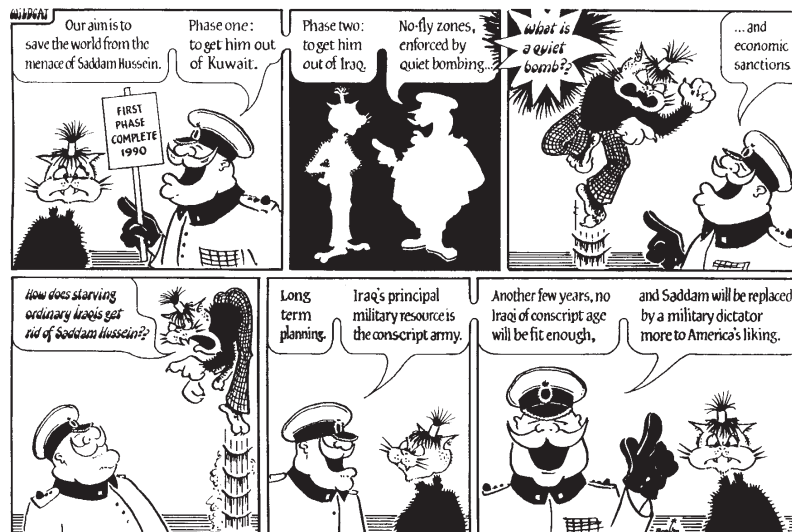
More reports on Shannon at <http://struggle.ws/wsm/shannon.html>

would have taken part to simply walk around the Gardai as planned. The fence would have been removed and a thousand people or more would have entered the airport perimeter. That is not what happened so US war planes continue to use Shannon to refuel on their way to the war.

The anti-war movement needs to grow up fast. It is not the case that everyone needs to agree to do the same thing. It is the case that we need to respect the diversity of tactics argued by different groups rather than trying to undermine the actions of those we disagree with for political gain. US war planes can be driven out of Shannon but we need to work together to achieve this.

Andrew Flood

What 12 years of sanctions were about



A rabid neo-liberal wages war on the poor in the USA

Social spending is plummeting in the USA, leading to some strange things happening. The budget for the United States is going to run to a deficit of £180bn of spending over income.

Bush has introduced tax cuts for the wealthy and plans to spend £26m every hour on the US armed forces, whilst 60,000 people are being dropped from health insurance, class sizes in schools are increasing, prisoners are being released and state troopers are losing their jobs.

In short Bush is far more than just a Republican war monger. This man is a committed neo-liberal and it's paying him to focus attention away from home whilst domestically he's adding to the army of poor in his own country.

(Figures taken from Analysis by David Walker - Down and Out in America - The Guardian)

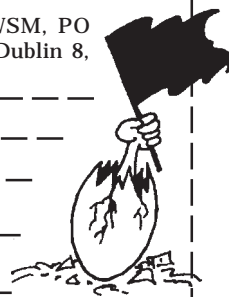
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Global actions against the war

Action speaks louder than words in the run up to this war!

In the extensive build-up to this war the United States had to enlist the logistical help of many countries to prepare for the invasion of Iraq. This in turn meant that anarchists and activists had the opportunity to display to their complicit leaders their opposition to this impending war. We have compiled a small selection here of the various actions that occurred throughout the build up to the war.

Stopping trains

Across Italy anti-war activists have blocked trains transporting U.S. Military equipment. The protests continued over a number of days and organisers say about 1000 activists were involved at different points throughout the country. 120 stopped a train moving from Vicenza to the US base near Pisa, forcing the train to take a different route. A spokesperson for the group known as 'I Disobbedienti' - the Disobedient - said *"We are guarding all the train lines being used by the American Army to transport material from war ... this is serious because they're using the civilian transport network. There are 26 trains expected, and we want to block them because we don't want this war"*.

Invading arms factory

Britain is one of the main players in this war and anti-war activists there have been targeting military bases up and down the country. In early March 8 anarchists in Cardiff invaded the BAE Systems munitions factory at Glascoed in Wales. They scaled a 3m high fence with the help of a homemade rope ladder. Splitting into three groups and dressed in appropriate white overalls they proceeded to make an inspection of the site. After some time they were caught and escorted from the site, only to return later to make several large holes in the perimeter fence. Some of the group, once again, gained entry to the site.

The activists were arrested but released without charges, as BAE did not wish to press charges. The Cardiff Anarchist Network reports *"The arms trade is so ashamed of the bloody business of death and destruction in which they deal that they are scared even to prosecute a rag-tag bunch of anarchist protestors for trespass and criminal damage, fearing the negative publicity it would garner them. Lessons of us all? Don't be scared of fences - jump 'em and expose the dirty dealing of BAE and the arms trade worldwide"*.

Refusing to fight - Recruitment Office destroyed

Some people engaged in direct action by doing nothing. In the UK one in three reservists either asked to be excused from duty or failed to answer their call up papers. This is the highest percentage of

'refuseniks' in British Military History. In Pittsburg, US, a marine recruitment office was smashed during a breakaway from an anti-war march.

Refusing to Work

Two train drivers in Motherwell in Scotland refused to move a freight train carrying ammunition. The two are the only pair of drivers who were trained to take trains on the route from Glasgow to the Glen Douglas base on Scotland's west coast, and so were in a good position to strike directly at the build up to war. In Italy and Greece dockers refused to load military supplies and in Brazil dockers boycotted all British and US ships for a day.

Blocking Ships and trucks

Greenpeace sent the 'Rainbow Warrior' to block a section of the Rota naval base in Spain to prevent the US warship Cape Horn leaving for the Gulf. In Turkey they blocked the entrance to the Iskenderun Harbour with a truck in order to prevent a convoy of trucks carrying US military equipment from leaving. Two activists chained themselves to the top of the truck and four locked themselves behind the



wheels. In Derby in England 14 activists entered the military port, occupying tanks and jeeps which were about to be sent to the Gulf.

Invading Military bases

The biggest bomber base in the UK, which is used for direct air raids on Iraq, is located at Fairford in Gloucestershire. Peace activists have been engaged in a steady campaign against its presence. The fence has been breached many times. On one occasion landing lights were destroyed on others the gates and parts of the fence were torn down. Activists who brought bicycles through the fence and cycled them up and down the runway blocked the runway at RAF Lakeheath. The runway at RAF Brize Norton was also blocked. 7 peace activists blocked the entrance to the

Trident Refit Factory in Derby.



In January 70 activists blocked the entrances of the Northwood Military HQ. Three activists were arrested trying to break into the secret US spy base at Menwith Hill. A former British marine was arrested while trying to block the gates at Portsmouth naval base. Anti-war demonstrators managed to get inside the RAF base at Feltwell, which is used in surveillance operations. In the Netherlands a member of the Plowshares group, armed with a sledgehammer, smashed three satellite dishes at a NATO airbase.

These are some of the many direct actions that have occurred in the last few months. In some cases a few people have struck, in others hundreds or thousands. On their own, none can stop the war. But each make it more difficult for the war machine to operate. We are faced with huge military power and the organisational force of state. Yet despite these obstacles we can have an effect. We are the fleas on the back of the dog. We are disobedient. We will not make it easy for them.

Aileen O'Carroll

More details on these and other Direct Actions against the war at

<http://struggle.ws/stopthewar.html>

One Year of CAZ

The Cork Autonomous Zone has been functioning for over a year now. The shared space has become an irreplaceable part of the agitational infrastructure of anti-capitalism in Cork city.

You might walk in on some group producing banners or placards for an anti-war demo, a video showing to help finance solidarity volunteers for Palestine, anarchists in earnest discussion about the best tactics to be used to fight the war, the Cork Peace Alliance at its weekly meeting working on Traveller solidarity, freeing the Old Head of Kinsale, talking of fundraising for prisoners and defendants in the anti-war campaign. Then of course you might just interrupt the artists or the bands rehearsing.

The CAZ filled an important gap, gave a secure meeting place to several groups and a work space to many others. The financing comes from voluntary donations and subscriptions from users. All work is done by volunteers on specific CAZ work days. There is a good sense of ownership amongst the users. The CAZ membership however dream of something bigger better. Slow organic development has been preferred over some ambitious plan that might fail. The key to success has been participation and democracy.

James McBarron

CAZ is located at 4 Knapp's square, next door to the CAT club in Cork.



Malatesta: Life & Ideas

Freedom Press, London 1965.
Compiled and edited by Vernon Richards.

This book serves as an introduction to Malatesta's thinking on anarchism. And very lucid thinking it is too. You may agree or disagree, but you won't be scratching your head trying to decipher a load of jargon.

Most of the book is taken up with short extracts from Malatesta's writings on various subjects, for example 'Ends and Means'; 'Anarchism & Violence'; 'Reformism'; 'Trade Unions' and many more. Each subject is dealt with in not more than 10 pages and sometimes as little as three.

His clarity of thought is apparent throughout the book. Take, for example, his position on violence and pacifism: the latter is viable only where peace is desired on both sides. The use of force is justified in self-defence and, when used, you must be careful to do in the way that causes least suffering.

But what constitutes self-defence? Malatesta argues that the oppressed and exploited are always in a state of self-defence and therefore the use of force against rulers is justified providing care is taken to minimise human suffering.

He steers a middle course between the terrorist and the pacifist, both of whom, he

claims, arrive at similar results: "the former would not hesitate to destroy half mankind so long as the idea triumphed; the latter would be prepared to let all mankind remain under the yoke of great suffering rather than violate a principle".

As early as 1907 Malatesta had voiced doubts about the revolutionary capability of purely syndicalist unions and tactics [not that this prevented him from taking an active part in the struggle of the Italian unions in the early 1920s]. A general strike would not be enough to see off the capitalists unless it was a springboard for insurrection because it would quickly lead to a general famine among the workers before the capitalists collapsed.

He saw that trade unions without the constant infusion of revolutionary ideas would lose their militancy. Their natural role is to defend the working class in the here and now. As such they must come to terms with society as it is, conceding long-term goals for short-term gains. His arguments do seem valid when you look at SIPTU! Even the pre-war Spanish CNT probably kept its militancy due to constant pressure from the anarchists and even then there was a significant reformist element within it.

The book contains his important letters criticising pro-allied [World War I] anarchists and also an article where he reflects on Kropotkin's thinking. He's critical in a constructive way. He considers Kropotkin to have been overly optimistic and that his attempts to give anarchism a scientific footing were misplaced. He's correct on both counts I think, any attempt to impose such certainty about a social ideology as physicists have about gravity is likely to fail and is probably dangerous. Human affairs are way more complicated and dynamic than the those of atoms.

Anarchism is not worthwhile because it is natural as Kropotkin strove to prove; it is worthwhile simply because it'd be good to live in an anarchist society.

James O'Brian

Grassroots Gathering – A sun kissed weekend in Limerick

The fourth Grassroots Gathering happened at University of Limerick on the St. Patrick's bank holiday weekend. It was a glorious weekend of weather and once again I came away from the experience of meeting fellow activists with renewed vigour for the struggle. The Grassroots Network has succeeded in creating a space for non-hierarchical libertarian groups and individuals to gather and share information and conduct workshops on various tactics used.

Saturday consisted of various workshops, including ones on Palestine, Gender, Non-violent direct action, Protesters v police, and what to do when you get arrested (Keep stum).

The next day was taken up with some feedback on the Gathering and on the child of the Gathering known as GNAW (Grassroots Network Against the War). Then in the afternoon the meeting turned contentious as a number of proposals were discussed and amended in a short space of time. This was necessary to attempt to get the GNAW functioning officially in a delegate based manner. I think that a general lack of organisation and time constraints made this the most difficult part of the weekend. It was also not the best way to end the Gathering. People stayed on planned forthcoming actions against the war.

Once again thanks to the people in Limerick who hosted activists from all over the island, provided some wonderful food and put up with us. The next Grassroots Gathering will take place in June in Dublin. Watch this space for details.

Dermot

Review of Infoshop.org



There are a large number of anarchist news services on the internet - one of the best ones covering North America is the news section of infoshop.org. The site looks a little like Indymedia, including readers' comments with articles but in fact all articles require prior approval by an editor.

This means that the number of articles per day can be kept fairly low and that the editors can select alternative sources over mainstream ones. The disadvantage is that the selection of course favours the editors' preferences - this means at times infoshop is dominated by anti-organisational theory pieces which are generally of pretty poor quality.

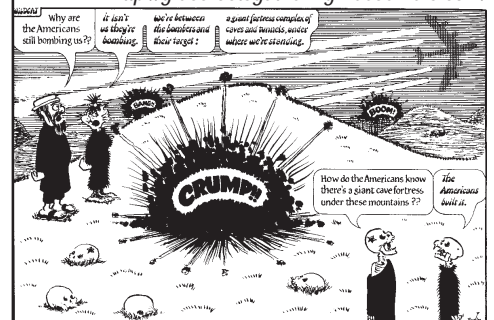
Here, as on Indymedia, the ability of the

reader to comment on articles is important. This often leads to long discussions on theory articles which are often more useful than the original article. This also allows for controversial (or just plain wrong) interpretations of events to be challenged. It also means that the site has become something of a community for a wide range of North American anarchists to discuss events online with each other.

The areas of news covered by infoshop vary with events as might be expected. So at the time of writing detailed reports from anti-war protests all over the USA dominated the newswire. This is its real strength, at times of mass protest it offers multiple reports on what is going on.

<http://infoshop.org/inews/>

<http://grassrootsgathering.freesevers.com/>



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Bin Tax Battle Enters New Phase

The campaign against the bin tax is set to enter a new phase before the summer as the government brings forward new legislation to give the Councils the power to refuse to collect the bins of non-payers. The politicians are obviously rocked by the huge level of opposition to their attempts to impose this double tax – in South Dublin, for example, where the bills for the second year of the tax will arrive through people's letterboxes shortly, up to 70% of households are refusing to be bullied into paying.

It is because of the huge levels of opposition that the politicians are now changing the law. Up to this the Councils were obliged to collect everybody's rubbish whether or not they paid the charge. This had come about as a result of a successful Supreme Court challenge taken by a member of the Cork campaign. Regular readers of *Workers Solidarity* will recall reading about a successful campaign waged by the Cork Householders Against Service Charges when Cork Corporation refused to empty the bins of non-payers a couple of years ago.

Now the campaigns in Dublin and elsewhere are set to enter a similar battle. If we are to be successful in this battle, non-payers must organise themselves into effective local campaign groups, as constituent parts of the existing campaigns. In every single area, meetings will be held by the campaigns to discuss the tactics involved in stopping Council attempts to use this new legislation to leave the bins of non-payers uncollected.

Strength in numbers

The strongest weapon in the campaigns' arsenal is the massive strength in numbers involved, in so many people standing together and refusing to pay. This direct action tactic – i.e. people relying on their own strength and ability not on that of any politician or political party – of non-payment has been successful in putting the frighteners on the Councils and on the government. It will be further direct action tactics which will end the latest attempts to browbeat us into paying.

The meetings held in all the areas will provide everybody with the opportunity to participate in the discussion about what form these tactics will take. A leaflet currently being distributed by the South Dublin Campaign Against Refuse Charges outlines some of the tactics which might be used as follows:-

“ – Appeals to workers through their unions not to co-operate with the new legislation.

- Frustration of Council attempts to identify non-payers e.g. if

For details of the Campaign in your area, ring Dermot on 087-6277606 or Gregor on 087-6996046. Visit the Campaigns' website at www.stopthebintax.com

South Dublin Campaign Against Refuse Charges, A.G.M., Sat. 12th April, 2 – 4 p.m., Green Isle Hotel, Naas Rd. All members welcome. Come along and discuss the future strategy of the campaign. (If you're not already a member you can come anyway and join at the meeting.)

The Dublin City Anti-Bin Tax Campaign is having it's Conference on the same day Sat. 12th April –with registration taking place at 10.30am in Liberty Hall. Please try and get along as we need to have a good conference in preparation for the next battle in this campaign.

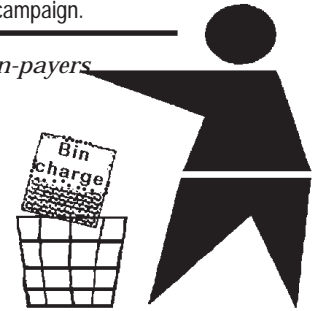
they put stickers on the bins of non-payers we can remove them.

- Interruption of trucks which refuse to collect all rubbish.

- Identification of areas in which uncollected rubbish can be dumped.

- Organisation of teams to place uncollected rubbish in the bin trucks.

- Bringing of uncollected rubbish to Council offices or other such places which will increase the pressure on Councillors and Council officials.”



BIN THE BILL

The important thing for everyone to remember is that it IS possible to defeat the government on this issue. It IS possible to force the Councils to collect everybody's rubbish. And it IS possible to defeat the government and force the abolition of this double tax, just as the water tax was defeated over five years ago.

For this to happen, however, it needs the involvement of as many people as possible. That means it needs YOUR involvement. Don't just sit at home and wait for someone else to do it. Instead get involved in the campaign in your local area. Do your bit to help build the opposition. A Campaign of people power WILL win. Get in touch with the campaigns and get involved.

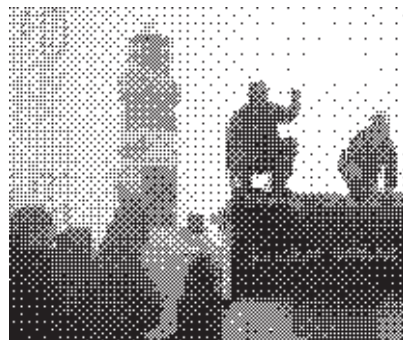
Gregor Kerr (member Co-ordinating Committee, South Dublin Campaign Against Refuse Charges) & Dermot Sreenan (Secretary of the Dublin Anti-Bin Tax Campaign).

<http://struggle.ws/wsm/bins.html>

Money is the King at the Old Head of Kinsale?

'One law for the rich and one...' is one of the oldest sayings known. But, old or not, this saying is as true and relevant as ever. In a long-awaited judgement, the Supreme Court ruled against the public's right of access to the scenic walk at the Old Head outside Kinsale in Co. Cork.

Siding with the millionaire businessmen who 'purchased' the Old Head of Kinsale in the 90s and turned it into an 'exclusive' golf club, the Supreme Court effectively said 'Money is King'. From now on – legally speaking that is – only rich golfers (and we mean rich!) will have the right to ramble around the area and along the cliffs that are the Old



Head of Kinsale. That is, of course, if we accept the Supreme Court's ruling!

The Campaign to Free The Old Head of Kinsale, a loose umbrella organisation dedicated to direct action and for the liberation of the Old Head (from rich golfers) is gearing up for the summer ahead. As in the past we need to defy the ban on walking on the Old Head. Most important of all we need to start building now for a 'mass trespass'. This summer will see a new round in this important battle. Get your walking shoes and picnic baskets ready. We're not obeying the

courts – Supreme or not!

Kevin Doyle