

We must have control over our communities – the innumerable planning disasters we live with and see around us show the disastrous effect on communities that entrusting planning to politicians has. Many of us in this country live in housing estates with few green areas, little space for kids to play and inadequate access to proper services. Politicians simply allow their developer friends to build as cheaply as possible with no regard for the communities who have to live with the effects of poor planning. This is just another symptom of a world where the lives of people are entrusted to a political system that has no interest in representing anything other than the interests of the rich and powerful. We want a world where our communities can control themselves, not act as testing grounds for feckless developers.

>> What do we mean by control?

Control is not about you controlling anyone else or anyone else controlling you; it means that you and your work mates and your neighbours should run your lives together. We don't believe that a government, a party or a religious institution knows what is best for you – you can only decide that with those you live and work with. For you to have control over your day-to-day decisions direct democracy is essential. Direct democracy is where you have a direct say over the issues that affect your life, including in your workplace.

>> Is this Socialism?

Yes. The means of producing wealth should be in common ownership. Anarchists believe that everyone should contribute to society according to their abilities and receive according to their needs. We also see freedom as essential, we want to end the division of people into rulers and ruled. As one of anarchism's early advocates, Michael Bakunin, said, "Freedom without Socialism is privilege and injustice... Socialism without Freedom is slavery and brutality". How can this be achieved? We are not so naïve as to think that the likes of the property developers, the businessmen or the politicians are going to give up their power and wealth easily – we must be organised. Organisation is our strength - in your workplace this can mean joining a Trade Union or perhaps in your area joining a campaigning group. Together, as organised workers and neighbours, we can build a new society of equality, prosperity and liberty for all.

>> Who's Running this Campaign?

This campaign is organised by the Workers Solidarity Movement.

We hold that there should no limits on human liberty other than respect for the liberty of others. We believe in democracy, in direct democracy. This means everyone being able to have a say in making the decisions that will effect them.

We operate along the same lines as the type of society we would like to see. There are no leaders in the Workers Solidarity Movement. Our members in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Derry and Ballina are all equal. We all make decisions together and all contribute in terms of our time and money. We promote anarchism in our trade unions, in community campaigns and in our workplaces.

Want to find out more about anarchism? Email or write to us for a free copy of our newspaper, 'Workers Solidarity'.

VOTE NO

Against a Capitalist Europe Against a Bosses Ireland

liberty

solidarity

equality

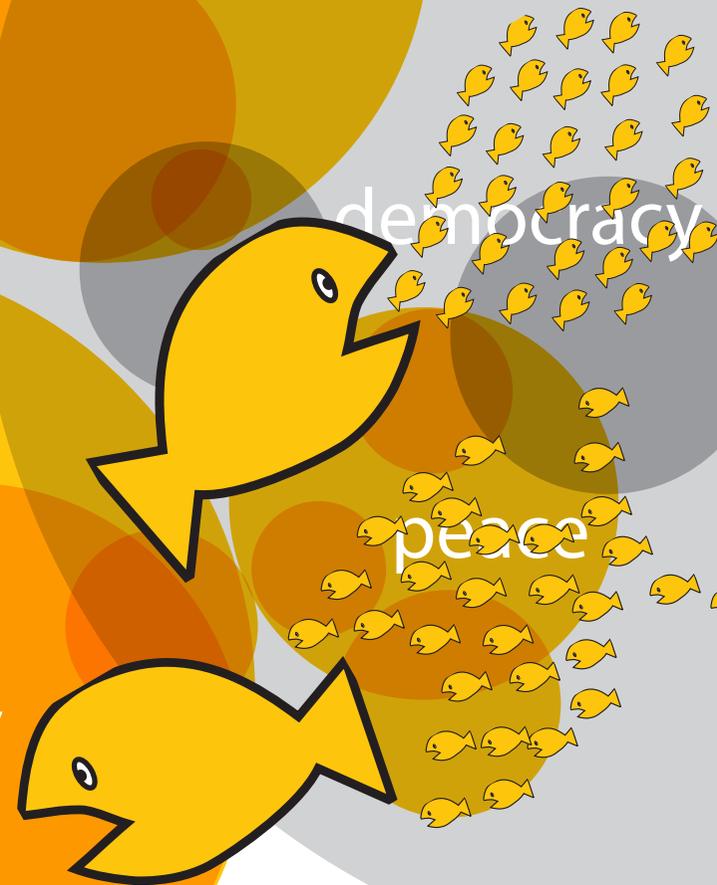
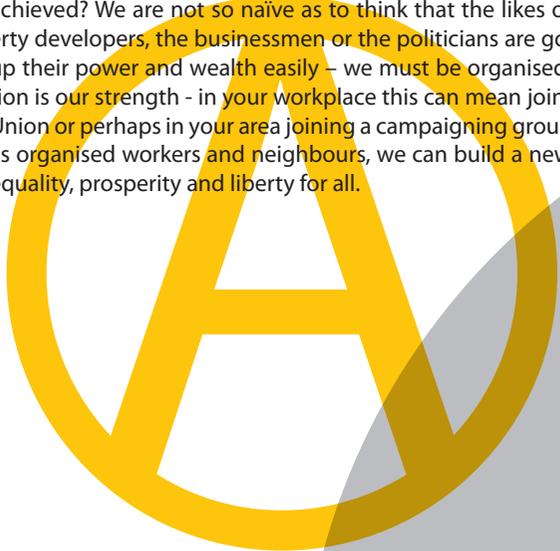
peace

democracy

ORGANISE FOR REAL SOCIAL CHANGE!

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>> Lisbon - So What's It All About Then?

Over recent months, there's been endless talk about the Lisbon Treaty. Most political parties advise us that we'll be embarrassed and economically ruined if we don't vote 'Yes'. Groups advocating a 'No' vote tell us that we will lose our democracy and sovereignty if we do vote 'Yes'.

We as Anarchists think they have both missed the point. People in Ireland can do a lot better than a choice between the clowns in the Dáil or those in Brussels. We oppose the EU but don't insult people's intelligence by saying that our current society in Ireland with its ludicrously high house prices, diabolical public services and corruption is anything better.

A 'No' vote will not ruin us. The treaty doesn't commit us to any major new economic agreements. A 'Yes' vote will not ruin us. Let's not forget that sovereignty as it is currently discussed is meaningless. The major lack of democracy in our lives is not between us and the EU but between the Irish government and us. The Irish elite are happy to have a debate focused on Europe because it deflects attention from the real struggle which is here in Ireland.

Anarchists believe the problem is not the treaty alone but the EU as an institution. The treaty, no matter what it contained, wouldn't give us more control of our lives. This can only happen when we have democracy in our communities and workplaces.

>> They're Stealing Our Public Services

Over the years, trade unions and social movements across Europe have improved our quality of life by winning increased public services. Today, we are seeing the European elite, including the Irish elite, attempting to overturn these victories. We are seeing an attack on working people through the process called "liberalisation" which means the handing over of public services to private owners so they can make profits from services that are essential to us all.

We've already seen this when the Irish government brought in the 'Bin Tax'. Over the past few years this tax has risen and risen. Now the county councils are "outsourcing" waste collection. Essentially they have given our taxes to private companies to profiteer on what is an essential service.

If our leaders have their way things will get worse. We've already seen attempts to re-introduce a water tax in the 1990's. This will follow the same process as the 'Bin Tax'. Water charges, once introduced, will steadily increase before being privatised. A 'No' vote won't stop this "liberalisation" by itself, but it will send a clear message that we will not allow this to happen and that the fight starts here.

>> A Treaty for Elites

This treaty also asks us to support changes in the structure of the EU. These changes will not affect our lives on a daily basis. Much is being made of the fact that we are losing our commissioner, but for us as Anarchists this question is irrelevant to the daily lives of people in Ireland - Charlie McCreevy has been a Commissioner for two years - is he really making a difference? Do you trust him or any politician to act in your interests?



We see issues like the democratic deficit in the EU as merely a symptom of the real problem. The real problem is in how we live our own lives. We work all day and have absolutely no control over our lives in our workplace; we are asked to vote every 5 years to choose who we would like to make our decisions for us. This is not democracy in any meaningful sense of the word. There are people who do have control however; the politicians and business elites. They make money off our work everyday. A quick look over the past ten years in this country has seen the fact they couldn't care less about us. A massive amount of wealth has been created by workers in this country during the Celtic Tiger. Our bosses have hoarded this wealth while we had to take out huge mortgages to buy homes.

Now things are not looking so rosy and this has left many of us looking into an uncertain future. The elites do not face these problems. Many have become millionaires, even billionaires. Now are they willing to give a bit back to relieve our uncertain futures? Of course not. This is capitalism - they make money in the good times and then live off it while we are going through the bad times.

These problems exist for a reason. There is no democracy in our workplaces and until this happens the money will always end up in the coffers of the elite. This treaty asks us to support changes in the EU to make money transfers and trade relations between them easier. Why should we give them the thumbs up when they couldn't care less about us? Vote 'No' to their restructuring. But a vote 'No' is worth little on its own if things are not changed at home. The EU must change but so too must Irish society.

>> So, What's the Solution?

Through its commitment to liberalisation, this treaty is endorsing the passing of more of our public services in to private hands. This is robbery. It is maintaining, reinforcing, and expanding the undemocratic structures of Ireland today on to a European level. There are quite clear reasons for this - as we have argued above, the EU and the Irish State are designed to benefit a minority; those who control the wealth in our society.

This is nothing new. It has been going on to some degree or another for thousands of years. Is this the best we can do? For us the answer is simply no. How can Ireland, a country with vast amounts of wealth, allow 25% of the population to either live in poverty or at risk from poverty? It simply isn't good enough. We don't believe the problem lies in a bad government or corruption. The problem is the structure of society we live in.

We, as Anarchists, believe that only a radical change in the democratic and economic structure of our society can change things so that the majority of people benefit from the resources of this country. The wealth, held now by the minority, must be used to benefit everyone.

We believe control is the key. Firstly we must have control over our workplaces. If we cannot control our workplaces we will not have any control over where the resources of our country end up. The health service is a good example. The people who do the work - doctors, nurses, cleaners, technicians, cooks, etc. should be the people who run the health service on a daily basis. Our current system puts a politician and businessmen in the HSE in control of the system when clearly those who work in the industry know it best. The same can be said for private industries: the people who do the work never see the wealth created; it always ends up in the hands of one individual or a small minority.