



SOLIDARITY

Bulletin

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**FREE
OR
DONATION**

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1942 – 2002

A.S.F.

SACKED AIRPORT SECURITY WORKERS SPEAK OUT



On Saturday, 6 July at 1.00 p.m. a crowd of nearly 100 people assembled at the roundabout outside Aldergrove airport in a show of support and solidarity with 24 sacked airport security workers.

One of the 24 was sacked as a result of action earlier in the year.

Speaking to the crowd, the workers promised to continue their struggle for reinstatement with picket lines, protest marches and through the courts.

The dispute arose with

their employer ICTS over pay and conditions, but quickly became much more complicated. The security staff were originally working on a number of different pay scales, but they wanted a single rate for all workers.

Workers also wanted an immediate increase to £6.00 an hour, time and a half for overtime and the introduction of a sick pay scheme. (They are currently on £5.20 an hour, with no sick pay scheme

or overtime rates).

And they wanted it badly- 97% voted for industrial action in April. The paperwork was done, the strikes were sanctioned and things were all set to kick off.

As a result, negotiations between management, shop stewards and the labour relations agency began, and strike action was suspended for the duration of the talks. This ended on Mon 13th May, when the management failed to

contact the union.

On the advice of union lawyers in London, the strike action resumed at 4.00 a.m. the next day.

ICTS deemed the strike illegal, and managed to obtain a letter of repudiation from union official Mr. McCluskey agreeing with them.

Workers arriving for the evening shift joined the picket after a two day rest period, only to be told by ICTS manager Clifford Duncan that the strike they knew to be legal wasn't. Three days later, 23 workers were handed suspension letters and after a disciplinary hearing three days later they were sacked.

"It was the union that got us sacked in the first place, we were very badly let down," claimed one of the workers, but he qualified this, pledging respect for the shop stewards who had worked hard to get

Fat Cat Pensions Up - Workers Pensions Going Down

As more and more workers face uncertainty over their pensions Company Directors will continue to rake in the money for doing nothing productive after they 'retire'.

What are you looking forward to when you retire? For many of us, retirement seems a long way off but, increasingly, employers are already denying their employees the chance of a secure retirement after years of often thankless service.

Fewer and fewer workers are covered by 'final salary' pension schemes, with employers opting more and more for 'defined contribution' schemes. Even those companies which do offer final salary schemes are tending toward closing those schemes to new employees, offering only defined contribution schemes. These schemes might in theory offer the prospect of a decent pension, but nothing is guaranteed. Last year, most UK pension funds experienced negative returns.

Outside of this, are the huge numbers of workers in low-paid/temporary jobs or those in the black economy etc, for whom the notion of a pension of any kind is simply not an option.

And steel workers in England are already threatening strike action over the latest Government proposals on pensions.

A report on pensions presented to Government by Alan Pickering has recommended that;

"...workers shoulder more responsibility for saving for their retirement."

What this means is the end of any obligation for Company pension funds to pay benefits to pensioners' widows or widowers, severing of the link between pensions and inflation, forcing workers to join these proposed, inadequate, Company pension schemes and the 'right' to work beyond retirement age. So not only are our pensions under attack but so is the very idea that we should have a right to a comfortable retirement after years of hard slog and contribution to society.

This latest attack on our standards of living must be opposed, these proposals if they go unchallenged will see unprecedented levels of poverty among working class pensioners in the future. And if you think it won't effect you think again - you are going to retire someday. Worse still is the possibility of death in service and no payment to or provision for your partner or children.

What is not an option for the directors of many of the same companies which are denying a guarantee of a comfortable retirement is retiring themselves with anything less than an obscene amount of

money to look forward to.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Garnier of GlaxoSmithKline will retire on £833 000 p.a. according to Labour Research magazine. He tops their list of top 50 Fat Cat directors. Facing life in the gutter at No. 50 is Peter Ratcliffe of P&O Princess Cruises on only £300 000 p.a. If Pete needs a tap he can contact us at the PO Box address and we'll organise a whip round. Its interesting to note that many of those on the list retire or plan to retire in their fifties; not an option for most workers. Even those of us who are 30-40 years off retirement age can't predict what situation we're going to be in when that time comes. Its also probably quite coincidental that the top 50 includes no less than 15 Sirs.

'Labour Research' also notes that the TUC is 'very concerned' about the future of final salary pension schemes. What it doesn't note is what kind of retirement some of our esteemed union bosses might be looking forward to....paid for by our dues.



Sacked Airport Security Workers Speak Out

...from front page

union backing since then. They met Bill Morris, the ATGWU General Secretary, who "admitted liability" and promised to throw all the resources necessary behind the campaign to have the men and women reinstated.

Workers were informed that selection for dismissal was 'random'.

"What I would like to know is what method was used to 'randomly' select us. Who was the independent witness and where are they? How random can it be if a married couple were selected for dismissal. There's more chance of me winning the lottery. And I don't play the lottery!" said Brian Summerfield, whose wife Valerie was also sacked.

The feeling amongst those dismissed is that the mass sackings were in fact tactical, and that TBI (the parent company of ICTS) are driving much of the local management's decision making.

At a time when the powers that be are keen to emphasise the role that airport security has to play in providing security for passengers and other ordinary citizens, it is particularly sickening to see the bosses show where their real interests lie. When safety takes a back seat to strikebreaking, everyone suffers.

There has been a great grassroots response to their struggle, even if the

union bureaucracy got off to the mother of all bad starts.

The workers we spoke to are realistic about their chances. At the appeal ICTS training officer Alec Bradley claimed they were already training 29 new staff to take their place. Further to this is the problem that every industrial dispute like this throws up - management never want to admit that they were in the wrong.

Nevertheless, they will not go quietly and the fightback in this dispute which started over pay and conditions and is now about wrongful dismissal of workers exercising their right to strike in pursuit of their claim is only just beginning.

The ASF would like to thank Brian Summerfield and Malcom Spencer for a very enlightening interview.

BOSSSES WIELD LEGAL WEAPON

Talk may be in the air of a renewed militancy among trade unions but many employers are also ready for a fight. And they often wield a very powerful weapon: the law. More and more employers are finding new ways to use anti-union legislation in their favour, and are more prepared than ever to go to court. To make industrial action by employees legally impossible.

There are several recent examples. In the case of Associated British Ports vs. the T&G the employer claimed that the workers were on "personal contracts" and therefore were not allowed to call industrial action; the Appeal Court authorised then union to proceed. RMT vs. Midland Mainline; the court upheld the employers claim that not all relevant members had been balloted. Newcastle City Council vs. Unison; the High Court granted an injunction against the union on the grounds that the dispute involved secondary picketing. RMT vs. London Underground; the employer claimed that the union had provided them with insufficient information to allow plans to be made.

In 1994 the Appeal Court ruled that unions had to pass on the names of all members being balloted to the employer. This obviously restrained unions because many members were not willing to be identified in such a way. When Labour came to power in 1997 it made changes to the law, but it is still very difficult for unions to ballot legally. The legislation is complex and it is easy to make mistakes. One mistake is all that is required, however, for the employer to have a window of opportunity in the courts.

These strike laws, heavily weighted in the employers favour are in breach of Convention 98 of the standards set by the International Labour Organisation. A change to the law in 1999 that protected striking workers for the 1st eight weeks of a dispute are also deemed

insufficient by the ILO.

Workers at Friction Dynamic were sacked as soon as the eight week period expired. Calls by the TUC for compliance with ILO standards and the reinstatement of workers such as those at Friction Dynamic have, astonishingly, gone unheard.

The sort of revolutionary labour movement envisioned by the ASF would refuse to be constrained by such laws. It would take action in such numbers and in such a way as to make the legislation irrelevant and impotent. As the IWW said; "It is best for labour to concern itself with controlling the actual practice. That makes good lawmaking easy and bad law making hard. The law makers are mindful of the powerful ones in society; one big union makes labour all powerful. Once labour is properly organised, law makers will be duly mindful of it; and if they are not it will not matter, for what happens from then on is what the organised working class decides to make happen."

'Illegal' action taken sectionally or in small groups can easily be crushed by use of anti-union legislation. Widespread sympathetic, or secondary, action is a necessity if campaigns, for example, for the reinstatement of the security workers dismissed by ICTS at Belfast International Airport are to succeed.

What is needed ultimately is a labour movement that can make the laws irrelevant by making them unenforceable and by declaring, and practising, that;

"An injury to one is an injury to all".

Fighting The Elections In The 'Free' State

The recent general election in the South saw widespread action by anarchists to encourage people to take the two only reasonable courses available – either spoil your vote or abstain completely.

The turnout in this general election was the lowest in the history of the state demonstrating an increasing belief amongst people that voting changes nothing and that all politicians are the same.

In Cork where I live the ASF, WSM, the Cork Anarchist Group and others came together and produced a leaflet arguing for anarchy over apathy and "capitalist democracy". 1,000 leaflets and posters were produced and a very successful stall was held in Patrick's Street.

Some people stencilled rubbish bins with ballot box, others glued brown envelopes to election posters and someone put up pictures of anti-immigrant TD Noel O'Flynn through the city with the word scum on them. Elsewhere the leaders of the two main parties were pied and hundreds of stickers and thousands of leaflets were produced and distributed by the ASF and other anarchists in County Donegal, by the WSM and others in Dublin.

All the leaflets produced urged people to engage in direct action and struggle with others to change society. They listed organisations and campaigns existing within the areas where the campaign was going on. This meant there was a practical alternative to the electoralism of the "revolutionary left" on offer.

Enough is Enough Say Council Workers

As we go to press council workers are set to take industrial action across the North and across the UK to demand an end to low pay. Wednesday 15th July will see local council workers take part in a 24 hour stoppage alongside 1.4 million of their co-workers across the UK. More than a quarter of a million council workers earn less than £5.00 an hour so it is little wonder that they have rejected a 3% increase and are taking this action in pursuit of a 6% increase.

The one day strike will affect education, social services, residential care, home care, environmental health, housing, planning, transport, refuse collection, catering and cleaning. Not since the 1979 'Winter of Discontent', which toppled a Labour government, have council workers taken national action.

A council worker we spoke to said; "We've had enough, the cost of housing has gone sky high, workers can't even afford to pay mortgages or keep up with the ever increasing cost of living. We demand a decent wage for the work we put in."

Unison, one of the unions representing council workers, has vowed to keep taking industrial action until workers secure a better wage deal.

£270 Million Windfall?

Much has been made of the £270 million 'windfall' from Westminster which will see the beginning of major investments in education, health, transport and water services. Things aren't as rosy as our politicians are trying to paint them, cut backs and back door privatisation continue while the majority of workers struggle to make ends meet.

While work is beginning on a 'state of the art' regional cancer centre for Northern Ireland hospitals are still facing cut backs. Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh, which dealt with the human aftermath of the Omagh bombing, is to have emergency and surgical services withdrawn. Hospitals with full accident and emergency units and the facilities to carry out life saving surgery are being reduced to nine.

This money is not even enough to see any of these projects through. Local Government will be relying on private sector expertise and co-operation with our 'social partners' to see these projects become a reality. This means privatisation through PPP and PFI schemes.

The money from Westminster will go only a very small way to addressing years of under funding in water, health, transport and education. Under funding which built up, to now chronic levels, during the years of direct rule. But this isn't a repayment of what's owed - the bulk of it is a loan from the Treasury.

So how is this loan to be repaid? First Minister David Trimble, in his speech at the Odyssey Arena for the Prime Minister and Chancellors visit on 2 May 2002 tells us; "In future, after we have dealt with the problems in our rating system... we can consider longer term borrowing," and that; "...we must be ready to contribute financially..."

The "problems" with our rates and the need to "contribute financially" lets us know exactly who will be paying for this 'windfall'.

Back in September 2001 Mark Durkan, then Minister of Finance and Personnel, stated in his draft 2002/2003 budget that; "The Assembly should note that if we were to raise rate revenue and water charges roughly equivalent to the pattern in England, we would have something like £300 million." (That's £65 million less than Sean Farren as current Minister for Finance & Personnel managed to 'under spend' by this year).

So we have a situation in which our new 'Local Government' at Stormont is borrowing money from the 'Central' or 'National' Government at Westminster to pay to address problems caused by under funding, during direct rule, from Westminster! And this loan is to be paid back by you and me as rate payers! And to cover it Stormont are set to impose a rates hike and water charges in two years time.

"Reinvestment And Reform" Stormont Spin And Privatisation

"Resources and reform must go together." [1]

There has been a lot of grand sounding talk up at Stormont about the need for 'reinvestment and reform', with mention of PPP/PFI's (Public Private Partnership and Private Finance Initiatives) and using private sector expertise and investment to help sort out our historically underfunded public services.

"We run many services publicly, yet we have failed to use the skills of the private sector. That must now change..." [2]

There has been little to no real discussion or debate regarding PPP/PFI and it is a discussion which our Ministers up at Stormont may well prefer we didn't have - because as we will see things are not quite as attractive as the rhetoric and spin makes out. It may even spur on some effective and long overdue opposition to PPP/PFI initiatives.

An image has been constructed of our local Executive crusading to bring in reforms which grant us salvation from backwards thinking public servants, public sector workers and, well, anyone who gets in the way.

Trimble stated, in his joint announcement with Deputy First Minister Mark Durkan on the £270 million investment package, on July 2nd 2002,

"The total value of the projects and programmes that are included in the package is £510 million when contributions from private funds and from mainstream Departmental budgets are included."

Initially that leaves £240 million to be made up but the overall deficit in Northern Ireland is closer to £5 billion.

"We also need to ensure that all new options are explored creatively and urgently, so that our people can have the benefit of better services and facilities. The fundamental idea of our initiative is for reform as well as investment." [3]

So, PPP/PFI, privatisation in effect, is dressed up in the language of reform.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL BOX

"We realised, however, that to achieve our ambitions for new investment, we had to find new ways, to think outside the traditional box. A step change in

investment has to be accompanied by a radical reappraisal of the problem, and a search for new solutions." [4]

"...there are four compass points in this Executive's search for improved public services through its Programme for Government - alternative sources of Finance, Rating Policy and Public Administration combined with action to improve Effectiveness." [5]

So what exactly does PPP/PFI mean in terms of funding and investment. There is no real difference between the two other than name. You may be surprised to learn that in the long term, and often initially as well, PPP/PFI costs more than traditional projects financed from the 'public purse'. Private investors expect a return on their investment and are guaranteed one for 25 - 35 years with PFI.

There are also much greater costs involved with private sector borrowing, and if the company goes bust all the liability returns to the public sector! This means that in practice penalty clauses regarding the provision of services etc., are often not applied. It isn't in the Governments interests to see these 'investors' go bust because they'll end up footing the bill again. This also has the effect of undermining any level of accountability in the provision of services to the public - if things aren't up to scratch but the authorities are reluctant to apply penalties it doesn't take a genius to figure out who'll suffer.

Public sector comparators in the costing of projects can and have been manipulated in order to make PPP/PFI schemes look more attractive. In the case of the London Underground billions were added to the public sector costing on the basis of "reputational externalities" which is just management crap to 'queer the pitch' in favour of privatisation.

Keeping costs down has also resulted in the design quality of projects being compromised, with the result, for example, of a reduction in the number of beds available having become a common outcome of private 'investment' in the Health Service in England. Many of the schemes running in England from the early '90s are faced with fundamental design, quality and long-term service problems.

There has also been a widespread lack of consultation and openness in regard to the implementation of these schemes, often involving the misuse of "commercial confidentiality" in order to justify a lack of

information to unions and communities effected. A review process has taken place involving NIC ICTU and voluntary sector representatives which according to participants failed to address the core issues of public interest and workers rights.

MINISTERS "REMOVE RISK" WHILE PROFITEERS RAKE IT IN

What PPP/PFI does do for the Executive at Stormont is to remove the risk to the budgets of individual Ministers as the private enterprise becomes responsible for overspend on the project. This is a key factor in the push towards privatisation at local and national government levels. It also provides the private sector, local building contractors and multi-nationals with a long term, 25 – 35 year subsidy which evades EU scrutiny and interference. In other words it allows the private sector to rake in profits and be guaranteed a steady return from government for years.

EDUCATION LEADING THE WAY?

"We have to break down the traditional mindset of the public sector... That mindset is demonstrated by the slow start of PPP's in Northern Ireland and by the relatively limited achievement to date. Our Department of Education leads the way in PPP's..." [6]

Examples of the effects of private finance have already been seen in our 'leading' Department of Education. Wellington College was originally to be a 36 acre site but ended up with only 11 acres. The rest of the land was used, not for the benefit of our children's education, but by the profiteers to build 400 houses which they sold at immense profit to themselves. Schools and colleges have also seen support staff transferred to the private sector often on worse terms and conditions than those they previously worked under.

PFI was also used in the building of Further Education colleges like the new Millfield College building in Belfast. Across Further Education there is a growing crisis with some colleges facing bankruptcy, Lisburn Tech is bankrupt, Derry Tech last year handed part of its buildings over to a private consortium, Northwin and is now £1.5 million in debt. Classes are threatened and workers at Northwin are facing cuts in pay and conditions.

Privatisation forces workers from the public to the private sector and undermines all talk about 'equality' in the north. (if the talk ever really needed undermining). It is anti-worker, anti-union, and also anti-partnership at a time when the Trades Union leadership is still clinging on to the lie that the bosses could ever be our 'partners'. The whole process has catastrophic effects on workers terms and conditions, it undermines the right to strike and often sees workers forced into two tier workforces. Those who retain their original

terms and conditions on transfer are squeezed out while new employees are brought in on worse contracts. Compass Plc. in the Sperrins have introduced a two tier workforce.

THE FIGHT TO DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES

So how is the Trades Union movement countering these attacks on our services, on workers terms and conditions and job security? On the 4th of December of last year NIPSA organised a Trades Union rally in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, in opposition to PPP and PFI demanding that

"the fight must begin immediately to defend public services". [7]

At the same time (but separately!) Unison leafleted at the City Hall demanding that public services remain public.

NIPSA rightly pointed out, in a leaflet distributed at the rally, that;

"Schools, hospitals and all public and civil services will be up for sale for Private Sector profit. The Public Sector will be faced with a future of uncertainty, unmanageable debts, cuts in services and attacks on jobs and terms and conditions."

Action, yet to materialise, was promised for the new year – its now July.

BLACKMAIL & ACQUIESCENCE

The Trades Union leadership have on the whole failed to promote an effective fightback. Many in the Trades Union leadership have allowed themselves to be blackmailed into acquiescence. While most are unhappy with privatisation many are reluctant to rock the boat as privatisation is being presented as the only way out of the legacy of years of underfunding towards a 'secure future' for our beleaguered public services. An NIC ICTU seminar on demystifying PPP/PFI held in the NICVA premises on Duncairn Gardens, in January this year, and attended by representatives from a large number of public sector unions alongside voluntary sector representatives, the CAJ and Transport 2000 ended disappointingly with those present resolving to continue to represent their members once they had moved into the private sector, i.e. after the battle had been lost.

BUILD OPPOSITION

What is needed is to build on the opposition to privatisation that undoubtedly exists among public sector workers and to begin a campaign which exposes PPP/PFI for what it really is before it is too late. Disclosure on proposals for PFI's need to be pushed for at the start of these schemes and Unions must be forced by their membership to challenge the figures, if this is not done at the start of the process it is too late.

More importantly shop floor and community opposition needs to be built and built quickly.

As the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation stated in a leaflet distributed at the NIPSA rally last year "The labour movement must build rank and file resistance to this privatisation by the back door... To ensure that the government does not get away with this latest attack on working people the ASF is urging the creation of a strong rank and file resistance in our workplaces. We need to take on this threat with direct action against the bosses and politicians and build the maximum of solidarity among those working in our public services across the barriers of trades sectionalism. This solidarity must go right into the heart of the working class communities which will be worst effected."

To really go outside the "traditional box" we must look at alternative ways of running our public services and our lives which put workers in control of their industries. This will result in those best placed to provide these services making the decisions based on the needs of our community and not the budgets of politicians or the selfish motives of the profiteers. Such a shift in thinking and in organising of society is not 'reformist', it demands a truly revolutionary transformation of the way our society is run. It is a vision of a better world were human need comes before and uproots the greed of the few.

FOOTNOTES

[1] First Minister David Trimble in speech delivered to Prime Minister and Chancellor at Odyssey Arena 2 May 2002.

[2] *ibid.*

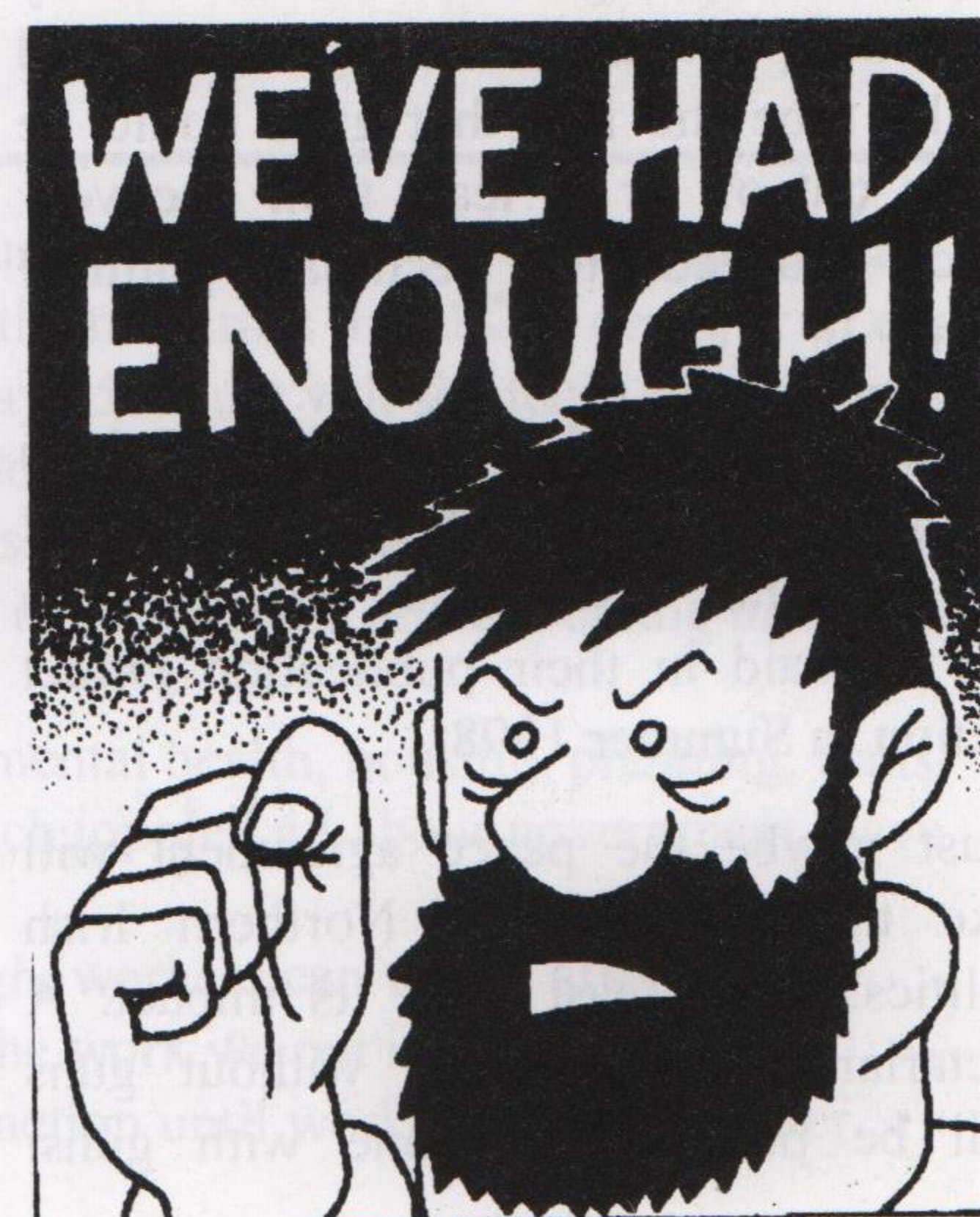
[3] Deputy First Minister Mark Durkan in joint statement with the First Minister on "£270 million package to tackle infrastructure deficit.

[4] First Minister David Trimble in joint statement with the First Minister on "£270 million package to tackle infrastructure deficit.

[5] *ibid.*

[6] First Minister David Trimble in speech delivered to Prime Minister and Chancellor at Odyssey Arena 2 May 2002.

[7] NIPSA leaflet "Oppose PPP PFI"



If We Tolerate This Our Children Will Be Next

The recent results of the 2001 Life and Times survey in the north of Ireland confirm that sectarian attitudes are spreading and deepening. In 1999 some 12% of Protestants and 6% of Catholics wanted single religion workplaces. In 2001 these figures have doubled to 21% and 14%. In 1999 29% of Protestants and 21% of Catholics wanted their children to go to separate schools. Now this stands at 37% and 29%. Similar figures show an increase in support for segregated housing and a decrease (to 25% and 33%) of people who believe things are now better than they were in 1991!

BELFAST AGREEMENT

That sectarian tensions, division and conflict have continued and increased was perhaps inevitable to an extent given the very nature of the Belfast Agreement which our politicians signed up to.

This escalation of sectarian attitudes and violence is directly related to the sectarian headcount type of politics which the Agreement has institutionalised at Stormont. Politics is a communal numbers game, its about territory and control. Our 'political leaders' cannot wash their hands of responsibility for the hatred and bloodshed our society.

At the time of the Belfast Agreement we were all well aware that this was going to be a sectarian agreement to be ran by sectarian political parties. We welcomed at the time the fact that guns could be taken out of, or at least their use very much reduced, the sectarian political arena.

As the Solidarity Federation, the British section of the Anarcho-Syndicalist International Workers Association (IWA), said in their publication *Direct Action* in Summer 1998;

"Just maybe the peace agreement will take the guns out of Northern Irish politics, or at least limit its impact. A sectarian political scene without guns will be preferable to one with guns.

Perhaps this is the best we can hope for from this agreement."

Organise! - IWA, the now defunct Irish section of the IWA, stated in the same issue of 'Direct Action';

" 'Our' politicians may well have come to some sort of 'Agreement' on Good Friday, one which may lead to a very welcome reduction in paramilitary violence, but for the North's working class, 'unity' seems as elusive as ever. The goal of a united Ireland or maintaining the union with Britain are of course nothing to do with the type of unity we are talking about in Organise! Our communities are still sectarian ghettos and, with perhaps the most segregated education system in the world, how can we ever hope to break down the barriers of mistrust, bitterness and suspicion?

The one hope for our future... lies in the fostering and development of 'workers unity'....

...This is not something which can be demanded or called upon by placard waving lefties, it is something which must be built. It is built in very concrete ways around the common problems workers face at their workplaces and in their communities. It is something which occurs naturally when workers as workers are faced with a new attack from their bosses, it is built around the response to 'bread and butter' issues."

THE STATE CAN PROVIDE NO SOLUTIONS

The guns have not always stayed silent, there have been sectarian murders, people have recently been murdered by sectarian thugs using cars in hit and run attacks, young men little more than children have died while handling blast bombs, there have been countless injuries, beatings and punishment shootings, plastic bullets and police batons continue to maim and injure, families and communities continue to be terrorised, clashes took place between Orangemen and the RUC/PSNI again this year at Drumcree.

Sectarian violence is destroying our lives and the lives of our children.

The response of the RUC/PSNI in raiding homes and batoning residents in the Short Strand shows that the state are incapable of defending people from attack or being any part of the solution. The RUC/PSNI even attempted to have a security barrier in Belfast's Newington Street removed as local residents braced themselves for another marching season and the prospect of renewed rioting.

That recent research has found, sectarian division and attitudes to be more entrenched is unsurprising. More, not less, people live in sectarian ghettos, less young people have 'met' let alone had any form of conversation with people from the 'other side'. And this is all set to get worse, not better, as we pass through another marching season.

If we continue to tolerate this makers will only get worse. It is time for the sakes of our children, to spare any more death, pain and anguish among working class families and communities that we took a stand against sectarianism.

THE CLASS WAR RAGES

While sectarian conflict is the stuff of headline news there has been another war raging across the north, a war which is raging across the globe. This war has results just as devastating as sectarianism. Untold numbers, north and south and throughout Britain die in work related accidents, or of illnesses caused by hazards they are exposed to due to bosses cutting corners, more are dying prematurely because of the run down state of the Health Service, suicides in the north, particularly among young men living in run down areas such as Tigers Bay, are rocketing. Casualisation of labour, the running down of services and amenities, neglect of the health service, harassment at work or on the dole, benefit cuts, criminalisation of parents of 'habitual truants', lay off's and mass redundancies, 'cut backs', inflation, privatisation, bad housing and in many interface areas no new housing at all, are

OBITUARY

John McGuffin (1942-2002)

Independent Belfast-born anarchist, John McGuffin died on 28 April in Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry. Author of several books and his internet-based 'Dispatches', McGuffin was a well-read and abrasive enemy of the state and capitalism.

In the tradition of other individualistic anarchists from the north such as Captain Jack White and 'Slumdom' Jack McMullan, McGuffin was from a strong loyalist background. His grandfather was a Freemason and his uncle, Sam McGuffin was a Shankill Labour-Unionist MP and first speaker of Stormont.

McGuffin was a member of People's Democracy and carried an anarchist banner (on his own) at the Burntollet march in 1969.

He was interned in 1971 and later produced two books on internment and prison torture.

A lifelong lover of liberty and a self-confessed 'Lundy', John McGuffin's red and black flag-draped coffin was taken to Roselawn Crematorium in Belfast for a short atheist ceremony.

all part of the mounting and largely untold suffering of our class whatever particular 'ist' your ghetto attracts to describe it.

Social and economic deprivation is common to both sides of the sectarian divide no where more obviously than in run down interface areas.

DEMANDING A NEW FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN

Do we want this future for our children? Segregation, division, hatred and the very real possibility of their death, injury or imprisonment as a result of the society we are creating and maintaining around them? Militarism and violence poisoning their lives? Continued poverty, no facilities or play areas, chronic unemployment and slum housing? Hoods and police running amok?

The answer to this is surely no, and the task facing working class people is one of coming together in order that we can build a future and a society for all our children.



AIMS & PRINCIPLES of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation

- 1) The Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation is a working class organisation.
- 2) The ASF seeks to secure for all workers a full and equal share of the wealth and social benefits created by the combined labour of our class.
- 3) We aim to create a free and classless society. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery and to replace them with workers control of industry and society, ensuring production and distribution for need not profit.
- 4) To achieve this revolutionary change in society, and to better organise ourselves in our struggle against the bosses, we are striving towards the creation of a new independent workers organisation - the Anarcho-Syndicalist Union.
- 5) The Anarcho-Syndicalist union is one controlled by the workers themselves. Organising industrially we shall cut across the barriers of trades sectionalism. Such a union will unite, not divide, workers. Any and all delegates will be directly elected, mandated and subject to immediate recall by that membership.
- 6) Such unions will build effective class organisation in order not only to win improvements within Capitalism but ultimately to win the class war with its overthrow through the Social General Strike. The Social General Strike is the means by which workers shall take control of our land, factories and workplaces, it is the start of a truly social revolutionary transformation of society.
- 7) The ASF rejects parliamentary democracy as at best a distraction and a sham. We are not in the business of building, nor do we support, any political parties. The interests of the working class cannot be pursued in the halls of political power and intrigue, our real strength lies in our communities and, even more so, at the point of production.
- 8) The ASF recognises the appalling effects of Capitalism on the natural environment, and believe this to be the normal result of a system which treats both workers and the planet as something to be exploited and disposed of at will. We believe that access to a sustainable lifestyle is not a luxury for the wealthy, but something urgent and important that must be extended to the mass of working people. Sustainable communities cannot arise as a result of reforming Capitalism, nor can they be imposed by the state. With this in mind, one of the functions of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Union must be to demand rational and sustainable practices.
- 9) The ASF takes an active part within the existing labour movement, agitating in defence of pay and working conditions, while helping to build a spirit of confidence amongst our fellow workers in order that we may, together, go on the offensive against the bosses.
- 10) The class struggle is world-wide and must recognise no artificial borders or boundaries. Party political interests, nationalism's, racism, homophobia and sexism divide our class and turn us against one another - to the benefit of the boss. We must fight all attempts by the state and capitalism to divide our class and we must not tolerate divisions based on bigotry and ignorance which stand against equality and the right of people to control their own lives. We must organise along class lines if we are to secure a better future for ourselves, our fellow workers and society as a whole. Our class exists the world over and we have a common struggle the world over. We are therefore internationalists, opposing all political and geographic borders and instead organise with other workers towards world-wide workers unity in face of global capital and government oppression.
- 11) We reject the notion, propagated by government, the employers and the trades union bureaucracy, of 'social partnership' between workers, bosses and government. The bosses are not our partners.
- 12) The ASF rejects the notions of various 'left-wing' parties, the would be 'vanguards' of the working class, that the state can be 'conquered' and used against the bosses. Government, no matter on whose behalf, has always rested on domination and exploitation, it is an inherently repressive institution and as such beyond reform. The basic function of the state - that is the courts and prisons, the army and police, civil service and other state institutions - is to defend the interests of the bosses. Government is a top down institution which puts power into the hands of the few. All efforts at creating a 'Workers state' have only led to further oppression of the workers themselves as those in power consolidated and strengthened their positions.
- 13) At present the ASF is a propaganda group, it is the role of the ASF to support workers in struggle and to expose the weakness of traditional trades unionism. We aim to highlight attacks being directed against our class and promote, organise and support resistance to any such attacks by use of direct action. Direct action is any form of struggle under the direct control of those involved without reliance on politicians, trades union bureaucrats or any other would be leaders acting on 'our behalf'. Ultimately the ASF works towards the creation of an Anarcho-Syndicalist Union Federation in Ireland.

They've Got The Bottle - Irish Glass Bottle Workers Still Inside, And Marching As Well

Despite some media reports to the contrary the IGB dispute, at Ringsend, Dublin, is not over.

The Company had set Friday 5th July as the closure day but the plant had already been closed - or occupied - for two weeks without a stroke of production. On the other hand the gates are open and the workers are in occupation and, while they are not now seeking to keep their jobs, they won't accept the closure until they get satisfactory redundancy compensation.

What may also have given the impression that the plant was finally 'closed' on Friday was the inclusion in reports that there was a queue of IGB workers lining up for their redundancy money. That was true but tended to give the impression that there was some acceptance of what was on offer, with only a slim hope of getting more, or that a large part of the workforce had taken the lump and bailed out. The IGB workers did take what was to hand to tide them over, but that does not take away from their determination to fight on.

Furthermore, the strange omission from some reports, while reporting that the official pickets will be maintained, of any reference to the continuing occupation might have implied that the plant had been abandoned and they were now down to a conventional picket. This may have been sloppy reporting, though those with irrepressibly suspicious minds will note in whose interest it is not to have it trumpeted too loudly that the boundaries of the 1990 Industrial Relations Act are not being too strictly adhered to.

Anyway the active spirit of IGB hasn't gone away, you know, and workers planned a to march from the plant, at Pigeonhouse Road, Ringsend, to town, on Thursday 11th of July.

ORANGE BOYCOTT

Workers in the Richmond Shopping Centre in Derry, having won the first round against Orange placing an array of masts on their building are again having to fight off the mobile phone multinational.

Local parties and union officials are united in embracing Orange's advances and want to placate workers while remaining friends with the mobile phone giant. This is while phone mast density in the north-west, and across Ireland, continues to increase and more and more research is pointing out the adverse health effects, including links to cancer, from mobile phones and masts.

The new generation of mobile phone masts are widely regarded to be a serious threat to human health, but profits take precedence. Workers and supporters need to encourage a boycott of the Orange network among users.

This is supported by local anarchists who have already called for such a boycott to halt Orange's total disregard for the workers and communities across the north-west.

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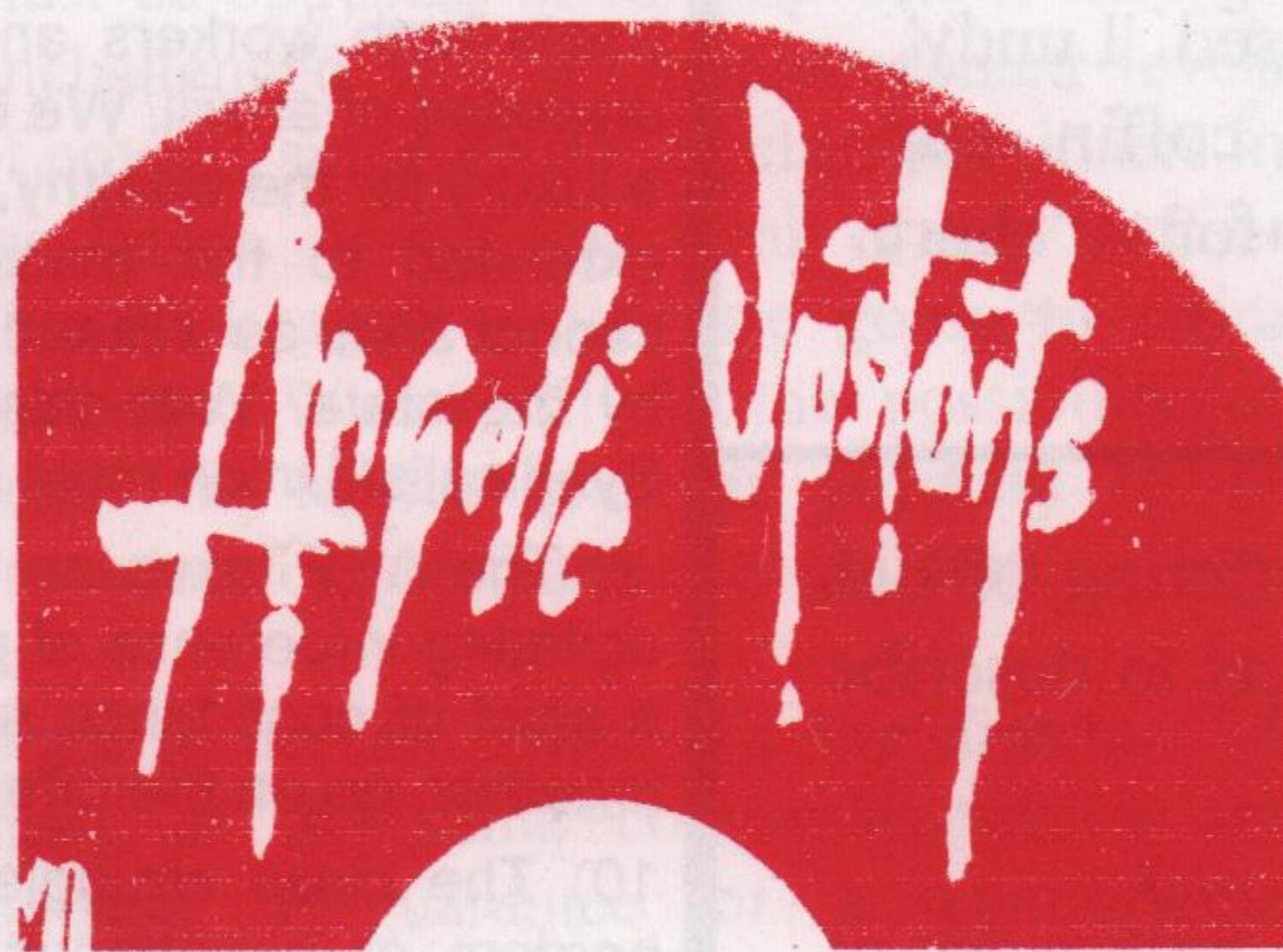
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