

HOUSEWORK MAKES "WORK" LOOK EASY!

There are millions of us: we shop, wash, clean, breastfeed the babies, change their nappies, spend five years making them socially acceptable for school, nurse anyone in the family who is ill or old.....the list is endless, and even though it can easily take up to 12 hours a day, seven days a week, the work is seen as trivial. Housewives are part of that group of people who don't count for much as human beings—the poor, the sick, the old, the young, the unemployed, anybody who isn't 'working for a living'.

Housework isn't just a job, it becomes a married woman's way of life. It doesn't make any difference if a woman has a full time job, she is still expected to make the bricks and mortar of a house into a home. Redevelopment in inner city areas has meant the break up of the extended family—there are no grannies, mothers, and sisters to borrow from or to go to when things go wrong. Women are isolated in high rise flats, semi detached suburbia, impersonal housing estates often with few friends, no amenities and no sense of community. Their isolation makes it impossible for them to come together as housewives and initiate solutions to their problems. They spend their time doing mindless repetitive chores, some striving for a resemblance to the dream house portrayed in glossy magazines, others give up, demoralised. Many have young children and they are expected to bring them up in the isolation of their own homes and when problems arise with so called 'difficult' children, they blame themselves for having failed, not the situation that they are in.

Society has different values for male and female work. A man works for a decent wage to support his wife and family, a woman on the other hand works for the love of her husband and children. This

dual standard is carried into the outside world with the result that working women just aren't taken seriously. They work for low pay and in bad conditions. For many it is a necessity to go out and work for the extra money, yet they are fobbed off with 'pin money'. Then again, it is hardly conceivable that a woman wants to work for personal satisfaction, for excitement, for a change to the daily routine once in a while. Womens role as wife and mother is so ingrained in our consciousness, that it is difficult to see any other alternative. Many women do want to go back to work after they have raised their families. These women may have spent 10 to 20 years without working in the outside world. No employer is prepared to train a middle aged woman for a rewarding job, let alone the career she would have liked to have had if she hadn't got married. So these women go into low paid menial work as cleaners of large stores and offices, auxiliaries in the hospitals.....in the end it is the only work they know.

Since the war there has been a massive increase in modern gadgets and household appliances. Today's housewife demands that she have these to make her life 'easier' and obviously many of them do

make it easier. But what of the consequences? The main function of this hardware is to make profits not to help unburden the housewife. Their built in obsolescence guarantees they break down when the year is up and they finally find their way to the scrapheap within another few years of servicing and new parts, to the detriment of our environment and dwindling reserves of raw materials. And what of the housewife? She may have a house of mod cons but the way in which she is expected to use them is positively medieval.to imprison a woman in a home to mindlessly oversee an assortment of machinery, some of which stands there idle most of the time is not the luxury brought by a technological age, but slave labour.

When we begin to discuss housework as an issue, we find that we start to question the foundations of this society—the family, its relation to the outside world and womens role within it. We start to question the division, not only between mens work and womens work, but work itself, wages, consumerism and the divisions between intellectual work and manual labour. Whatever solutions we put forward in the short term, collective responsibility for children, the sick and the old in centres and nurseries controlled by the people who use them, utility rooms etc; womens freedom is only possible in a completely transformed society.

BRITS 'N COMMIES!!!

The past few months we have all been subjected to a propaganda blitz by Western Governments and the media over the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The cold war jingoism is all so very convenient at a time when Governments 'up' their military spending, paid for (by us all) at the expense of welfare services. (Britain currently spends upwards on £1million per HOUR on military purposes!)

Behind the media onslaught, however, much more has been going on. The British Government and media have been emphasising the Russian use of chemical and biological warfare against the Afghani tribes...they have also used this excuse to justify their increase spending into the research and development of the supposedly outlawed weapons...chemical and biological sprays and gases. As it turns out, the Russians HAVE been using chemicals in Afghanistan—CS gas to be precise—and as news of this leaked out, the British Government have suddenly shut up! It would hardly do for them to criticise a Russian use of CS gas after what they pumped into the people of Belfast and Derry.

JUST OUT: RESISTANCE. A NEW IRISH ANARCHIST PAPER (ISP) WITH ARTICLES ON - E.E.C.9, H-BLOCK, CLONES 6, NUCLEAR IN BRITAIN, (AVAILABLE) ARMAGH, CURRAGH, HOUSING, SABOTE (JUST BANKS) ANARCHIST WORKER (NO.4, ISP) PAPER OF THE AWA, - THE CUTS, MAYDAY, PRISONS, RELIGION + SCHOOLS, HOUSING, TWININGEN, INJUNCTIONS, ARMAGH II, GAYS, URANIUM, H-BLOCK, + FREE PULLOUT POSTER. STARRY PLOUGH GETS A MENTION BECAUSE ON THE BACK PAGE ITS THE 44 TIME IRISH SOCIALISTS HAVE GIVEN CREDIT TO THE ANARCHIST PRESENCE IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, (PART FROM BEING AN EXCELLENT SUMMARY OF THAT PERIOD. BELFAST. MAY FESTIVAL - SAT. 30D - SUN. 31ST MAY, CAMPING + PARKING FACILITIES 10TH - 11TH PULK WEEKEND - 44 DAY (17-23RD) DAY AT GREEN BROWN, ADDRESS UNKNOWN IN MARGUÉE



WHAT CRISIS?

In only January and February of this year, there were 4,360 lay offs announced in Northern Ireland. Last week the Housing Executive announced a reduction by a third of the number of houses it was to build, and a complete stop to house repairs—unless these were emergency repairs. Northern Ireland has already the highest unemployment rate and the worst housing conditions in the UK. So what's going on? 'There's a crisis' the bosses say, 'We all have to tighten our belts'. Well here's just a brief look at what causes it and who's belts are tightened.

The 'economic crisis' is a world wide trend and is due mainly to 2 causes—

1. The saturation and loss of markets by companies (causing a decrease in profits). An early example of this was when the car companies sold so many cars in the USA, that everyone who could afford one, had one (or two), so there wasn't the same demand.
2. Since the 2 World War, there has been an increase in workers wages, both pay packets and the social wage of transport and health facilities (again causing a decrease in profits). This social wage wasn't given away, but was won

after much hard struggle, albeit in a form which also benefited the bosses—ie: centralised, alienating hospitals and the means of leisure became big business (so the workers money was spent as soon as it was earned).

The 'crisis' is an opportunity for the bosses to reassert their authority and profits. By a manipulation of the worth of money, by a cutback in public services, and national wage agreements (or more recently companies imposing small rises), the capitalists and politicians have reduced both the real and social wages.

BACK TO PROFITS

For instance, have you noticed that all the banks profits have INCREASED during the crisis. And looking at just one day's newspaper (Belfast Telegraph 17th April) its also the multinationals who have done well—Burmah (the oil company) followed last months BP and Shell increases with an increase of profits of 300%, from £17million to £67million and RTZ (the mining company testing for uranium in Donegal) increased its profits by 250% from £184million to almost £452 million.

So how come we workers are asked to pay for the crisis, by reduced real wages (last months inflation rate was 20%) and cutbacks in hospital services, employment, dole rates, etc, when those bastards are making more money than ever out of our labour and spending.

Prison is a weapon of the ruling class, so all prisoners are political.



But the men in H Block & women in Armagh are resisting their imprisonment, resisting the label of criminal which 'justifies' their imprisonment.

ANARCHIST CONSIDER DOWN
DES KEANE RECEIVED 18 YEARS IN THE DUBLIN SPECIAL COURT (SIMILAR TO OUR H-BLOCK COURTS) DES, WHO WAS ALWAYS ACTIVE ON PRISONERS ISSUES (WHICH COST HIM 2 YEARS) HAS ALREADY SERVED 5 YEARS IN THE CURRAGH, (HE FOUND GUILTY ON ATTEMPTED LARCENY CHARGE.)

[ABC OF ANARCHY CONT.]
COLLECTIVES
IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION '36-'39, WERE THE FORM GIVEN TO THE INDUSTRIAL + AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES WHICH THE WORKERS + PEASANTS TOOK OVER FROM THE BOSSES, AND RAN FOR NEED, NOT PROFIT.

DONEGAL

On the week-end of April 19-20th., the Donegal Vocation Educational Committee held their long awaited uranium seminar... a supposedly neutral affair though all but one of the 'experts' (the infamous Professor Blackith from Trinity College Dublin) just happened to be pro-nuclear and pro-uranium. Blackith was included in the 'experts' panel only after local protest at its obvious bias. The Nuclear Energy Board, mining company representatives, selected academics and business people from the South and the North dined on about the benefits and the safeguards, in an attempt to mystify the truth. Meanwhile the continuing pickets of the drilling rigs by local people has been suspended, as has drilling work, pending a meeting between local people and the Nuclear Energy Board. What false promises and lies will the NEB come up with this time?

POGFF, FRANCE

Plogoff is a beautiful little fishing town in S.W. Brittany. Since 1976, the French Government have been planning to build a nuclear plant...and since 1976 the local people, organised in defence committees, have resisted it. French law states that a public enquiry must accompany any compulsory purchase of land...and the enquiry was held in Feb-March of this year. It didn't go quite as expected. Local opposition was, and is, so total, that the "public enquiry" was held in "temporary town halls"—2 vans heavily escorted in and out of the area everyday by the Gendarmerie Mobile (especially trained for country guerrilla warfare)—a military reserve riot control force. They had to face the fury of the entire region for the forty-five days of the enquiry. They were hustled and hassled every way imaginable and a mere 210 people (out of a possible 60,000) bothered to attend the enquiry... and even some of those just went to write NO on the register. The rest of the people enjoyed a six week resistance festival! On the last day of the enquiry they held a triumphant march of 50,000 people. French democracy marches on, however and the report of the public enquiry commissioners was published one week after the enquiry ended in mid-April... the result was that the "enquiry" decided it was OK to build the nuclear plant! Say no more.



Last year the Trade Union leaders refused "permission" for women to walk behind a womens banner. Their answer to all groups who are not trade unions and who want to show solidarity with other groups and the unemployed, on what is traditionally a workers day, is that they don't want the march to become "political". Political in the Northern Irish sense that they do not want to become infiltrated by left wing groups, by workers smash H-Block banners, slogans or whatever. Because womens groups have gone through the proper procedures this time and asked "permission" to march this year, it is likely that there will be a womens banner on the march, sent along, courtesy of the Belfast Trades Council. Our answer as women should be, that, whilst glad the issue percolated through the upper echelons of the Trade Union movement, we cannot join in the procession until all people here are able to walk behind a banner of their choice as of right and that women themselves have their own banners to walk behind anyway, we don't need to be supplied with one.

Co-ops are by no means a new idea. They have come and gone for the last 200 years. The seizing of land or industry by the workers is a crucial factor preceding, and a catalyst for a revolution. Soviets were created in Russia in 1917 and workers collectives in Spain in 1936. The counter revolution began when the governments took back that power.

CO-OPS

There was some talk of forming a co-operative out of the bankrupt Armagh Shoe Factory but this idea evaporated quickly. It would have required money from the State to sustain it over a period. However the state preferred to let the workers draw the dole indefinitely and hope that some other capitalist entrepreneur employs them or maybe even takes over the ownership of the shoe factory (no doubt with the State's financial blessing).

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY.....

It is difficult to overcome the obstacles in creating co-ops. Money got from selling shares in the co-op takes a long time and is usually insufficient. The only people who have money are capitalists who aren't likely to finance something which they see potentially as doing away with them. The Government present every obstacle possible. They are more geared up and sympathetic towards giving money to capitalists, especially multinationals who usually demand huge amounts per job created, (De Lorean) and yet are able to make tax free profits. The State provides every incentive for them; they build the factories, finance the equipment, provide and train the workforce and in some cases pay the wages while the multinationals reap the profits out of Ireland and into their shareholders pockets. Co-ops may be given a grant from the Government if they show a glorious track record and suit the terms.....otherwise its to the bank for a loan and that's a very expensive business.

REACTIONARY ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

The trade unions huge assets could help enormously in the founding of co-ops, but they prefer to invest their money in such anti-people activities such as insurance companies, property speculation, works of art. Being conservative, bureaucratic and short sighted they would see the setting up of co-ops as taking work away from their members....absurd!

Starting a co-op in the manufacturing industry is extremely difficult. By starting off with a loan they are immediately handicapped. Paying back the interest and wages corresponding to the minimum approved by the trade unions makes it difficult to compete with the capitalist prices. They always have the backing, the massive automation, and the exploited workforce and the competition of third world imports....its a wonder co-ops get off the ground let alone survive! This basically leaves the craft industries which only produce products which working class people cannot afford.... a little bit of art for those with the money to invest in.

Co-ops have limitations especially when working alongside the capitalist system. Some say they are useless and not worth supporting or bothering about. However there are different ways of working a co-op.

ITS NOT ALL AT THE CO-OP

Take for instance the Belfast Co-op. Its one of the largest department stores in Belfast. A co-operative by name, but thats about all. It may offer dividend stamps as part of co-op policy but little else. The general public relate to this store like any other. It sells the same products at the same prices as any other store, the workers are divided into the usual hierarchical ranks and sexist roles and they are told what to do and are hired and fired on the same basis as anywhere else.... the workers never decide policy. That is left to the directors who are paid huge wages compared to the workers. This is perhaps the most introverted and reactionary of co-ops.

Agricultural co-ops aren't much better. They are usually the case of small producers banding together as a group in order to produce or distribute a product, employing hands to work for them and sharing the profits between themselves and not with their employees.

PROFITS

Other co-ops run on the line of paying themselves different wages depending on their expertise, their roles and commitment and the profits are divided amongst themselves and their 'sleeping' shareholders.

THE QUEST FOR JOBS AT ANY PRICE

Some well meaning people band together and see a co-op basically as a way of creating jobs and receiving a wage. When this is the foundation of the co-op without the political insight into what the co-op could be, it usually degenerates into the same relationships that you would expect in any factory. The workers simply look on it as any 8 to 5 job and give no real commitment.

THE MILITANT CO-OP

To see a co-op as not only an alternative to the capitalist system but a challenge to it, and not just economically, is by far the most visionary. The workers are bound not simply through working for the same 'firm' but by the idea of creating a better, freer society for themselves and others.

They work collectively, taking decisions together, producing or selling a product which is socially useful, relating and sharing skills. This shared work experience without the need for leaders can contribute to the confidence of the individual and the group. Sex roles and sexism are broken down. Wages are based on what a person needs and each gives what they can. Surplus money gained is not seen as the co-ops private funds. The workers have a responsibility to use the surplus in a productive way for the benefit of the community and not for themselves personally.

There will obviously be limitations that the militant co-ops will suffer from. They are surrounded by capitalist enterprises who constantly service them and compete against them. If the co-op poses any real threat it would be very easy to isolate and destroy it.