ORGANISE!

the Leveller

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Titanic Spectacle

As capitalism continues to bite, our 'betters' have been treating us to a series of expensive spectacles to distract us from our increasing misery.

The Titanic centenary, the London Olympics, the European Championship and the red, white and blue flag waving 'pageantry' of the Queens Jubilee continue to bombard our senses giving 'national pride' a boost while the rich get on with the business of robbing us blind.

For those who prefer their patriotic distractions in different colours there is even some sort of 'cross community' element to all this. The Olympic flame was paraded through Dublin. The Titanic's heritage belongs to us all. Ach, and sure, anti-monarchical sentiment is off the agenda for even dyed in the wool republicans as Deputy First Minister McGuinness rises to the challenge of welcoming the 'foreign' Queen for the sake of peace. So everyone can just settle down, get back to all the pomp, ceremony, nice distracting bright lights, flegs and bunting with the rest of them. Not to mention the copious amounts of alcohol required to wash it all down. Besides we all had a good aul blow out for Ireland's wee stint in Euro 2012 now didn't we.

And yet some still have the temerity to raise their voices to declare 'Capitalism has no clothes'.

While Sinn Fein wax lyrical about equality we see no equality. While Jackie McDonald asks us all to turn a blind eye to sectarian commemorations we see no end to sectarianism.

The truth is that all these celebrations, circuses and spectacles are a very thin veil for the real nature of what is going on. Behind the hype, the glitz, the 'titanic thinkers', titanic restaurant awards, the real story of the Titanic is one of wage slavery, exploitation and murder on a massive scale (see pg 12). It is a disaster that provides a chilling insight into the nature of capitalism. One hundred years later fuck all has changed.

The Queen's Jubilee is a sickening celebration of privilege, a hangover of feudalism in a time when capitalism is reducing many of us below the position of wage slaves to that of slaves plain and simple. While the poor and ill in our society are demonised as scroungers and frauds this woman and her family actually are real benefits scroungers (see pg 3).

The Olympics have witnessed London, a city marred by huge levels of inequality, turned into a police state with missiles installed on top of apartments by the MoD (see pg 3).

Behind the carefully choreographed 'feel-good factor' we find ourselves on the side of the begrudgers who aren't buying in. We don't want to piss on anyone's excuse for a piss-up but we really aren't feeling too good.

The pretty colours, flegs, big screens, proud heritage, royality, tradition nor pomp can distract us from our very real circumstance.

Jason Brannigan

Millions 'One Push From Penury'

Challenging the coalition governments assertion that people are better off in work research (commissioned by the Guardian) has found that 2.2m children are living in households on an "economic cliff-edge".

There are close to 7 million working-age adults living in extreme financial stress, "one small push from penury", despite being in employment and largely independent of benefits.

Unlike the 'middle-classes' these 3.6m households in Britain have little or no savings, no equity in their homes:

> *and struggle at the end of each month to feed themselves and their children adequately.*

Unable to cope on their current incomes, with no assets to fall back on, they are left vulnerable to "something as simple as an unexpectedly large fuel bill".

Contrary to the notions of the work and pensions secretary, Iain Duncan Smith, the findings prove that getting a job does not ensure your children are not brought up in poverty.

The research has brought to light the existence of what has been called "the new working class - except the work they do no longer pays". Having a job is no protection against homelessness and destitution despite the spin from Cameron of a 'fair' society in which 'work pays'. Austerity measures have created a new generation of working poor, struggling with debt and fearful that they could lose the jobs they do have.

Another report, by Oxfam, has found that more people in poverty are working than are unemployed. The amount of people working and claiming housing benefit has double since 2005. The report also found that more and more working people were turning to charities to help them make ends meet.

Organise! And Youth Fight For Jobs Take Action Against Slave Labour



On 19th of May Organise! And Youth Fight For Jobs picketed Holland and Barrett and Boots to oppose the use of free labour by both companies.

Across the UK Holland and Barrett have been using free labour to cut their staff costs. The picket was part of a day of action against the company called by SolFed (the British section of the anarcho-syndicalist IWA). As long as this practice is continued pickets will continue to turn away customers from their stores across the UK.

Afterwards Organise! joined the Youth Fight For Jobs picket of Boots on Donegall Place. The picket was to expose the rolling out of a scheme across Britain and Ireland which will give young people the 'opportunity' to work 9-4 every day for two weeks and receive only their dole money. Boots will not even pay for travel or any other expenses.

Both pickets were well received by the public, however the underpaid security worker at Boots was not too impressed.

She repeatedly threatened the picket with police and told us we had best be on our way "before they got here".

The cops did arrive, checked out the picket and as there was nothing illegal about the protest refused to move us on. The previously gobby security guard chose to skulk red-faced in the shop after that.

Under the guise of 'helping the unemployed back into work' the government is rolling out various workfare schemes that will provide free labour for their rich corporate friends. Many charities and even trade unions – who should know better – have been hoodwinked into supporting these schemes.



"You'd better be going before the police get here". The cops came, we stayed, the security guard disappeared.

Low paid to be punished for taking Industrial Action

In an attack on the rights of the most vulnerable workers to defend themselves Iain Duncan Smith plans to take money off us for taking industrial action.

The new Universal Credit model of benefit payments, part of a massive overhaul of the benefits system, includes plans to restrict payments to those who take industrial action.

Presently, workers who earn under £13,000 are able to claim Working Tax Credit (WTC) to top up their wages, workers can claim WTC against the first 10 days of strike action. Duncan Smith intends to take that away, pushing those forced to take action in defence of services, terms and conditions, and jobs into greater poverty.

This is a blatant attack on the right to strike and organise. Struggles for better pay will see workers put into even greater financial hardship than at present.

Duncan Smith reckons that:

> *the right to strike is a choice, and in future benefit claimants will have to pay the price for that choice, as under universal credit, we no longer will.*



Strike for a "living wage" and we'll stop your benefits - thats the message to the working poor from Ian Duncan Smith

Department of Work and Pensions Attempt to Gag Union



The PCS poster campaign is a response to what the union says is an insensitive management propaganda campaign aimed at people who take time off sick.

Fran Heathcote, president of the PCS DWP group, said

> *This is as an attack on the union's independence.*
>
> *The posters are no different in content to those we've used before and we can see no justification for them being banned.*

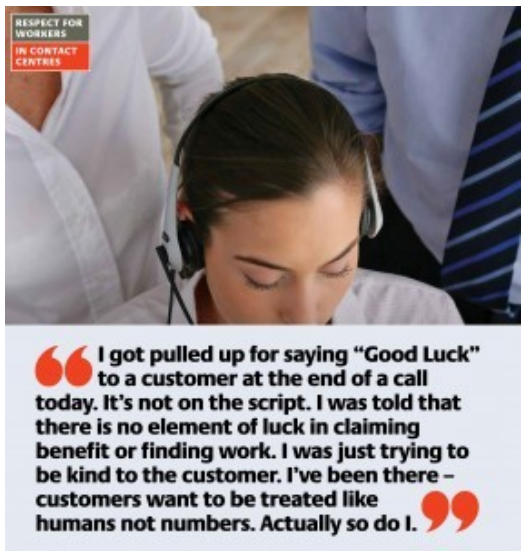
Separately, PCS is to hold a consultative ballot on 25th June among some of its members in government call centres in a campaign over working conditions.

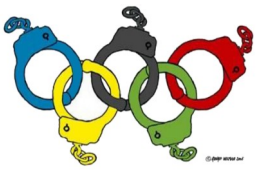
Managers in government call centres have been taking down union posters (*pictured*) that expose the brutal way workers are told to treat people on benefits.

Claiming the notices were offensive and an incitement to take industrial action Duncan Smith's lackeys in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have been tearing the posters down.

The PCS posters were on union notice boards and highlight the real experiences of workers in DWP call centres – including one who was told off for wishing an unemployed person "good luck" (*pictured, below*).

While the posters do refer to the number of callers who threaten suicide because of cuts to disability benefits they do not mention industrial action.





London Olympics

Its not just all great mums and big screens in city centres across the UK, its also about forced relocation of working-class and Traveller communities, military manoeuvres and the installation of missile across London.

Working conditions during building work have been criticised, the London Development Association has cleared out local residents using Compulsory Purchase Orders and moved Travellers onto "leftover space" at Hackney Marshes.

Clays Lane residents were moved out while businesses being relocated got their legal expenses paid. Residents got no such assistance. 'Redevelopment' has meant that local residents have lost green space and free sporting facilities as it is this land that has been sold off to be developed.

The military have also installed missiles across the city on top of flats and apartment blocks for the event.



Missiles over London - installed by the MOD for the Olympics.

Slaving for Her Majesty

Unpaid jobseekers were bussed in hundreds of miles to work with-out pay on the royal river pageant during jubilee celebrations in London.

Thirty unpaid jobseekers and another 50 on 'apprentice wages' were bussed from Bristol, Bath and Plymouth and made to sleep under London Bridge before working on the river 'pageant' as part of the government's Work Programme. The 'apprentice wages' were £2.80 per hour!

Two jobseekers, who did not want to be identified in case they lost their benefits, told the Guardian that they had to camp under London Bridge the night before the pageant. They had to change in public, had no access to toilets for 24 hours, and were taken to a swampy campsite outside London after working a 14-hour shift in the pouring rain on the banks of the Thames.

As the £12m river spectacle of a 1,000-boat flotilla and members of the Royal family sailed by stewards, 'employed' by the security firm Close Protection UK, were given plastic see-through ponchos and high-visibility jackets for protection against the rain.

One woman, after being picked up with other jobseekers in Bristol at 11pm on the Saturday and arrived in London at 3am on Sunday said:

> *We all got off the coach and we were stranded on the side of the road for 20 minutes until they came back and told us all to follow them. We followed them under London Bridge and that's where they told us to camp out for the night … It was raining and freezing.*

Told to get their heads down on the cold, wet concrete under London Bridge they were woken again at 5.30am. While the men changed under the bridge a female steward said:

> *They had told the ladies we were getting ready in a minibus around the corner and I went to the minibus and they had failed to open it so it was locked. I waited around to find someone to unlock it, and all of the other girls were coming down trying to get ready and no one was bothering to come down to unlock [it], so some of us, including me, were getting undressed in public in the freezing cold and rain.*

She said:

> *London was supposed to be a nice experience, but they left us in the rain. They couldn't give a crap … No one is supposed to be treated like that, [working] for free. I don't want to be treated where I have to sleep under a bridge and wait for food.*

Austurias In Revolt



In industrial action reminiscent of the Austurias revolt of 1934 miners have been taking on austerity and the Spanish state in the region.

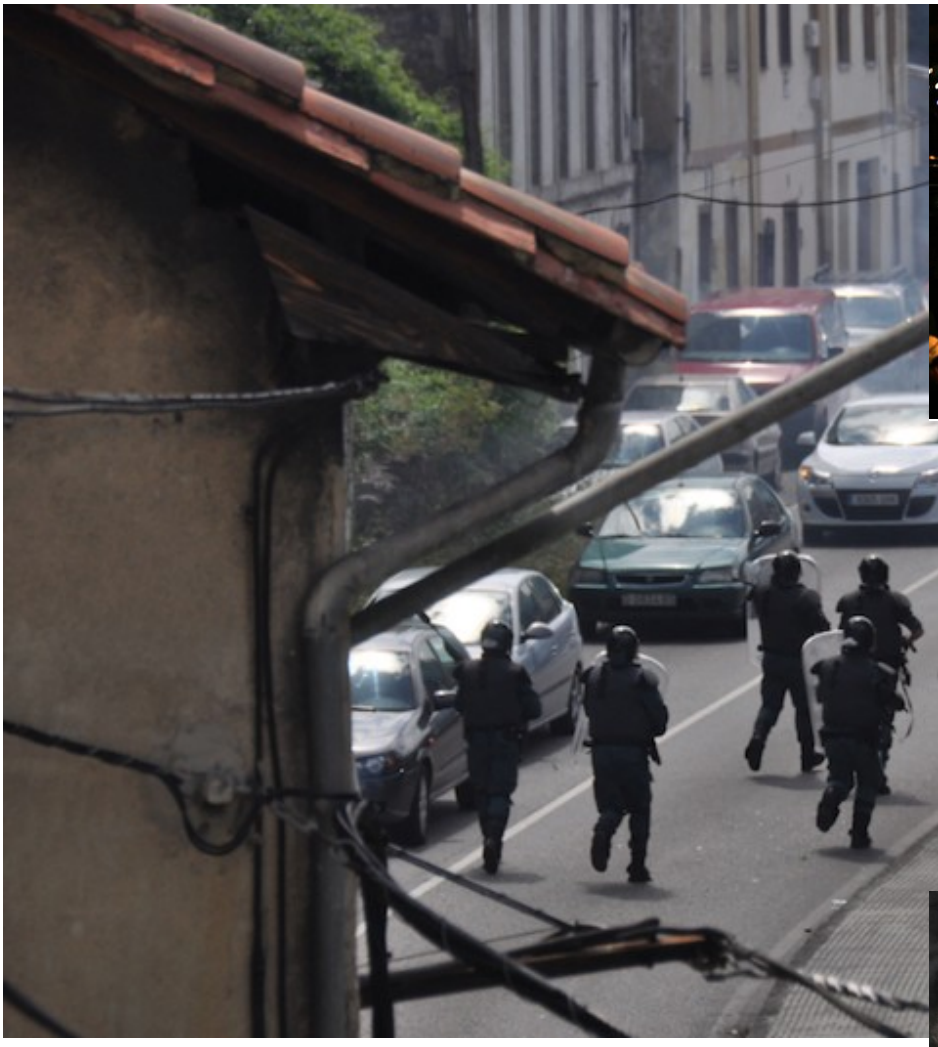
Around 8,000 miners have been involved in ongoing strikes, occupations, militant protests and a general strike on June 18th, after the government announced cuts to subsidies for the region's coal mines.

There are around 40 mines in the country, mainly in the north, where they provide vital jobs in an increasingly depressed economy. The end of the subsidy will effectively mean the end of those jobs, as Spanish coal prices will increase beyond those of cheaper imported coal. The strikers view winning the strike as essential to their livelihoods and the survival of their communities.

images from libcom.org







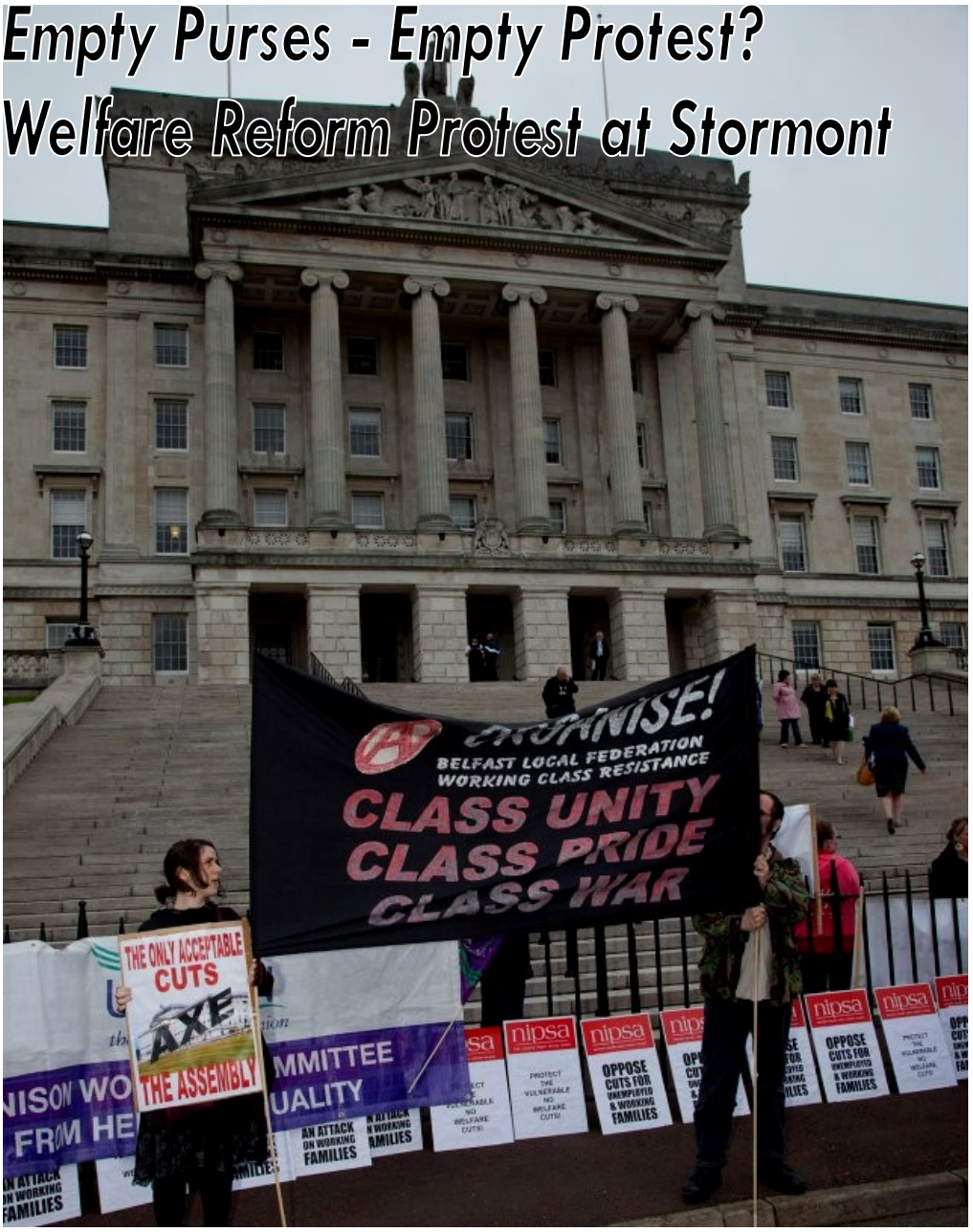




Top left: a masked miner fires a catapult at police lines while a barricade burns in the background. Beneath text: miners equipped with fireworks and a make-shift rocket-launcher. Below this: Miners firing rockets at police lines. Left and above: armed cops have a heavy presence in the region. Top right: banner at a miners mass assembly reads 'If our children go hungry yours will shed blood'. Right: striking miners help an old woman pass a burning barricade. Below: workers remain defiant behind a burning barricade.



Empty Purses - Empty Protest?
Welfare Reform Protest at Stormont



Hours after Cameron announced his latest attack on young people there were protests at Stormont against the introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill.

While members of the PCS Union took industrial action NIC-ICTU and the Welfare Reform Group held a protest at the steps of Stormont. Members of Organise! were present alongside trade unionists from NIPSA, GMB, UNISON, Unite, PCS, the Belfast and District Trade Union Council, ICTU Youth and women's groups such as the Women's Resource and Development Agency and Footprints Women's Group.

Cameron's latest announcement threatens to rob under 25 years olds of housing benefit. It is an attack that has further angered many working class people and which will increase homelessness - with fatal consequences.

Unfortunately the protest was little more than a photo opportunity for NIC-ICTU and some opportunistic MLAs who implement cuts with one hand while getting away with holding union banners in the other.

Patricia McKeown had the politicians quaking in their boots no doubt when she argued we had voted for them to represent us not to implement cuts. And if they don't watch out we may vote for someone else, anyone, just not them!

The faith our union bureaucrats continue to place in our politicians is staggering and betrays a deep misunderstanding of the nature of 'representative' democracy. 'Our' MLAs are not there to defend anyone's class interests apart from those of the rich.

NIC-ICTU are busy trying to convince the Assembly they can have a 'useful' role in partnership with our rulers. The only role that will be tolerated (one they are actually very capable of) is one of lapdog.

We need to move beyond empty protests and photo calls. As long as there is no real resistance capitalism will continue its all out class war against workers, claimants and the sick.

One friendly member of the CPI welcomed us to the protest with a greeting of "hello losers". Funny? Not when we are all going to continue to be losers while we follow failed 'strategies' and failed unions that make up ICTU.

Which Queen do you want?



Its been reduced to a choice between a mythical 'celtic' warrior goddess or Lizzie Windsor. Despite McGuinness' handshake the Queens visit to Northern Ireland did not go without protest. Unfortunately the protests were not quite anti-monarchist and did not have any hope of uniting working class communities across the north in opposition to an institution that is reactionary, privileged and symbolic of wealth and inequality.

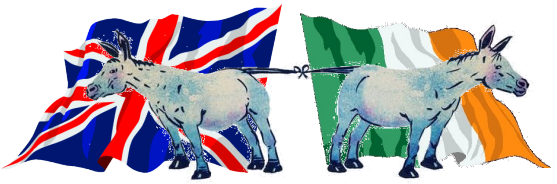
Irish nationalists staged a visual protest on the side of Black's Mountain with the slogan "Eriu is our Queen" and displaying a huge tricolour. 'Outraged' by the sight of the huge tricolour and the insult to their 'Britishness' a group of loyalists trekked up the hill to remove it. Following a vicious attack on a veteran republican that left him hospitalised a hardy bunch of republicans resolved to defend the huge flag and a claim that some mythical warrior deity is their true queen.

Hundreds of Irish nationalists gathered on the mountain that evening. One nationalist veteran said:

> *the call has gone out to republicans across the city to restore the visual protest on the mountain even if it means clashing with loyalists from the nearby Springmartin housing estate.*

As anti-monarchists it is saddening that protests against the Queens visit are simply protests against the fact that she is the 'British' Queen. In the context of the wee north this becomes an attack on a symbol of Britishness that a sizeable amount of the population see as an attack on them. That this is ridiculous unfortunately makes it no less true.

The lefty cheerleaders of Irish nationalism are keen to point out the 'radical' nature of Irish republicanism. There is nothing radical in it - from Sinn Fein to the various 'dissident' groups there is no revolutionary or class based opposition to monarchism. This is a clash of nationalisms plain and simple. All the more disheartening at a time when working class people and communities are on the receiving end of a all out class war with benefits to the poor being cut while the royals remain the biggest welfare



Who Are FEMEN?

I hadn't heard of Femen until Derry Anarchists posted an image and link on facebook to a topless blonde woman, with 'Fuck Euro 2012' painted on her belly, tackling the UEFA cup off its podium. The woman was immediately tackled and trailed off herself but not before creating a media storm due to her action.



A Femen activist tackles the Euro Cup

The group have generated huge publicity for their campaigns by staging topless protests. Making headlines around the world by baring their breasts against prostitution, corruption and exploitation. Regarded by some as a new generation of feminism are Femen simply providing images for a sex obsessed media?

According to their facebook page:

> *Our God is woman, our mission is protest, our weapons are bare breasts!*

They state that among their goals are:

> *to shake women in Ukraine, making them socially active; to organize in 2017 a women's revolution.*

Set up to challenge the subservient role of women in Ukranian society, the movement was founded in 2008, in Kiev, by Anna Hustol, and two other women, after hearing stories of Ukranian women duped by false promises of a better life abroad. Many of these women ended up the victims of sex trafficking.

Anna is an economist with a background in theatre, which Femen certainly put to good use. At 28 Anna is slightly older than most of Femen's topless activists, most of whom are university students and former students aged between 18 and 24. These activists number about 30 and are a minority of the groups membership - estimated at around 300.

The group has opposed prostitution, sexism, human trafficking, attacks on abortion rights. They have also protested political corruption, internet pornography, international marriage agencies, the World Economic Forum, the Euro 2012 (co-hosted by Poland and the Ukraine this year) and the lack of public toilets in Kiev. The group have also protested against politicians such as Putin and former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. They have refused to support protests at the prison conditions faced by former Ukranian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. They regard Tymoshenko as part of a ruling class clique of oligarchs at war with each other.

Accusing the Ukranian government of moving to legalise prostitution prior to the Euro 2012 the group asked the government and UEFA to create a social program devoted to the problem of sex tourism and prostitution in Ukraine; to inform football fans that prostitution is illegal in Ukraine; and to take additional steps to fight against prostitution and sex tourism.



Femen activists protesting at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos at the start of this year

Their activities have saw some Femen members spending time in jail and being harassed, beaten and kidnapped by the police. Particularly since the election of President Viktor Yanukovych in 2010. There have also been cases taken against them for 'hooliganism' and 'desecration of state symbols'.

Oksana Shachko, a 24 year old Femen activist, faced a sentence of 5 years for taking part in a topless protest during which she told the Indian ambassador to kiss her ass. The protest was in response to a claim that the Indian Foreign Ministry accused women from former Soviet countries of going to work in India as prostitutes. Four women from Femen stormed the building, waving the Indian flag proclaiming "Ukranian women are not prostitutes" and shouting "kiss my ass". Oksana was facing jail again only days after her release from a Moscow prison. Jailed for trying to steal (while topless) the ballot box that contained Putin's vote, during the 4th March Presidential election, she was imprisoned for 2 weeks and banned from Russia for life.

Oksana was in prison again for 5 days as a result of protests during the Euro 2012.

Together with Anna and Sasha Shevchenko, Oksana is one of the founding members of Femen. After many discussions on Marxism, feminism and the position of women in Ukrainian society the women decided they would not follow the usual route of marriage but that they would instead try to change society. Anna Hutsol told German magazine Spiegel that when they began the movement she was 21 and had just started reading August Bebel, the founder of the social democratic workers' movement in Germany. Bebel had introduced a bill on equal rights for women to the German parliament at the end of the 19th century. Looking at her own life and the lives of women around her Anna concluded that nothing had changed and began organising.

They started a group called New Ethics that organised discussion groups and organising protests at the university. This group was to become Femen. From the start Anna knew she:

> *...didn't want us to mutate into a typical feminist organisation. I didn't*



Will this hammer and half naked body be able to smash patriarchy?



want an organisation in which women talk, talk, talk, while years go by and nothing happens. We have brought more extremism into the women's movement.

Femen's first protest was in the summer of 2008. Dressed theatrically as prostitutes they held up signs and shouted "Ukraine isn't a brothel". They created a scandal and also attracted a lot of media coverage. In August 2009 they staged their first topless demonstration in Kiev's main shopping street, to protest against internet pornography.

Since then Femen have regularly protested 'topless', and have staged erotic street theatre (that they have called rallies) at the offices of the Cabinet of Ministers, at Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the Turkish embassy in Ukraine and in front of the Iranian embassy to oppose the expected execution of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani.

EMMA, a German feminist magazine carried a supportive article on Femen written by feminist and anti-pornography campaigner Alice Schwarzer. A bitter opponent of media depictions of female nudity Schwarzer claims:

The Femen women are catching the boomerang in mid-air and throwing it back. The bare breast, which would normally objectify them, becomes a weapon for them. They use it to attract attention, and to deliver their message to men, namely their protest against the exposure of women! Against prostitution! Against trafficking in women! I think that's a good thing.

Femen were also brought to France by Safia Lebdi, a founding member of the women's rights organisation *Not Whores, Not Submissive* to bring media attention for a campaign for the 'rights' of Muslim women. The women wore burkas that they tore off to reveal naked torsos with slogans like *Naked War*, and *I am a woman not an object*. Alongside Femen were Maryam Namazie, an Iranian women's rights campaigner and several French feminists. The protest was covered by over 40 journalists.



Femen and their supporters believe that they are using their naked breasts as 'weapons' and contributing to feminism. Many of their critics feel they are reinforcing sexism, pornography and the objectification of women.

A recent protest against prostitution in the Swedish fan area during the Euro was lost on fans. Initially drunk male football fans cheered on what they thought was a spontaneous tabletop strip. Cheers turned to boos and one of the women was grabbed by the arm and trailed off a table by a Swedish football fan. Security then moved in and physically removed the two women from the zone and handed them over to police. One fan told the media he thought the point of the protest had not got through as a direct result of the tactics used.

Femen's justification of its methods has been that:

This is the only way to be heard in this country. If we staged simple protests with banners, then our claims would not have been noticed.

It is a justification they stand by, despite the lack of impact on the fans the stunt in the Swedish zone certainly gained media attention across the world.

Femen as a movement leave me with more questions than answers. Are Femen simply about shameless self promotion? And if they are does it matter? In their own terms they have certainly proven that the media will provide greater coverage to protests featuring bare breasts. Are they wrong to use this to their advantage?

More importantly are Femen sex positive/ body positive feminists or do they reinforce the objectification and commodification of women? They certainly make commodities out of themselves. Following the Euro protests they have released prints of their breasts on their online shop. In order to 'support' Femen, prints can be ordered of paint 'boob prints' of your favourite Femen activists breasts - signed by the activist you've chosen!

Certainly the issues they seek to address are very real issues. Issues that perpetuated by patriarchal society and capitalism. In a free society the sight of topless women should be no more out of the ordinary, no more controversial, than the sight of topless men. Are Femen trying to 'normalise ' things and enable women to go topless without the associated sexualisation? I think not, their protest thrive off the media attention

generated by the fact that bared breasts are not 'normal'.

As an anarcho-syndicalist I also have other concerns. The actions of Femen contribute to the demonization of prostitutes and demand that it is kept illegal, they demand that the state keep prostitution, and drive it further, underground. Would it not be better to have decriminalised prostitution with some levels of protection for the women involved? Do we deny prostitutes the right to organise as fellow workers? This of course applies only to adult prostitutes who have not been trafficked.

Femen also relies on stunts as opposed to building working class self organisation. An issue that is reflected in their desire to become a political party and to:

> *build up the image of Ukraine, the country with great opportunities for women.*

There can be no emancipation for women on the basis of stunts and little meaningful change in the sphere of party politics,. Women's emancipation, and men's emancipation, can only begin to be fully realised with the destruction of patriarchy and capitalism. Femen many have drawn important attention to the causes they promote and campaign around but real change demands organisation. Stunts may have a part to play but working class men and women must organise in their communities and workplaces to bring about

A truly revolutionary transformation of society.

Julie, an anarcho-feminist from Belfast, gives her opinion on Femen.

Campaigning and protesting against issues such as; sex trafficking, exploitation and sex tourism are important. And it's good to see that women in eastern Europe, where women are generally not heard, are being active.

However, the way that Femen approach it; I'm not sure to be honest. Femen claim that the tactics they use are the only way of getting publicity. But I think that always using this tactic plays to the stereotype that unless women are doing something 'sexual' or provocative they aren't worthy of attention.

And I personally can't disagree more with their decision to fund themselves by doing a 'pick your favourite Femen protestor boob print!'

Although not exclusively; women that appear on Femen demos and street theatre are the stereotype of what, in our society, should equate an attractive woman. I know I've never seen that many extremely thin, blonde women at a protest before.

For the most part I agree with what they are protesting. But their tactics and messages are too one dimensional.



Femen activists in Turkey protest the position of women in their society without going topless.

Frack Off!



Anti-fracking campaigners at Stormont

Tyler McNally updates the Leveller on the campaign against fracking in the north.

In Ireland, we are familiar with attempts by Companies to exploit natural resources at the expense of both people and planet, with the issue of lignite mining in the North and the infamous struggle against Shell in Rossport being very good examples. Now however, we face a new and potentially more dangerous threat in the form of hydraulic fracturing (or fracking as its frequently referred to as).

Fracking is a process in which water mixed with sand and chemicals is blasted into shale rock formations underground to cause it to fracture releasing the shale gas trapped within it. It's been used widespread across the US and has been fought against vigorously by people in communities where it is been used, in some places this resistance has led to fracking being banned as it has been in Vermont. Bans are also currently in place in Bulgaria and France as well as moratoriums (temporary bans) in South Africa and elsewhere.

You may find yourself questioning why there is such a strong opposition to fracking wherever it is introduced globally, and it's with very good reason. Fracking is linked to cases of water contamination and health problems in local inhabitants with illnesses ranging from cancer to lesions in the brain. Fracking causes massive carbon dioxide and methane emissions, with methane being the more potent greenhouse gas.

With reports from bodies such as The Environmental Protection Agency in the US and the Tyndall Report in Britain, why do our politicians not place an immediate ban on fracking? Well it's because they are desperate to continue with providing the capitalists anything they need to make a profit in return for what will be very few jobs, despite the propaganda from Tamboran et al that they will supply 100s upon 100s of jobs! With the crisis of unemployment and no real solutions coming from our Politicians, they'll use anything to take the heat off. The jobs issue is one that will be a very potent issue for the anti fracking campaign to deal with, but one that must be surpassed if we are to win.

Despite the efforts of groups like the Fermanagh Fracking Awareness Network (FFAN) and Belfast Not For $hale, Stormont has been largely unresponsive to the demands for a ban, after a whole year since this became an issue, a motion has passed calling for a moratorium which has been ignored by the Executive, an executive with vested interests in having fracking go ahead in the North. DETI Minister Arlene Foster's husband owns 54 acres of land in an area of West Fermanagh sought by fracking companies, she is set to financially benefit from allowing the process to go ahead whilst other parties on the Executive make loud noises outside but when push comes to shove prove unable to perform.

For the anti fracking campaign to succeed, the groups need to mobilise the communities and prepare them for the fight ahead. Whilst direct action isn't a sole winning tactic to a campaign, it can't be ruled out and if Stormont continues to ignore the will of the campaign; a case could develop when local communities use direct action to fight against the installations. These must be backed and brought forward as part of a strategy to beat fracking.

We Won't Pay Twice For Floods



Recent flooding in Belfast, Dunmurry, Lisburn and Bangor saw hundreds of homes damaged, flooded with sewage, roads were put out of action, and cars destroyed. Thousands more homes were hit with power cuts.

Northern Ireland Water received over 2,800 calls about localised flooding. Emergency services received nearly 1,000 call outs.

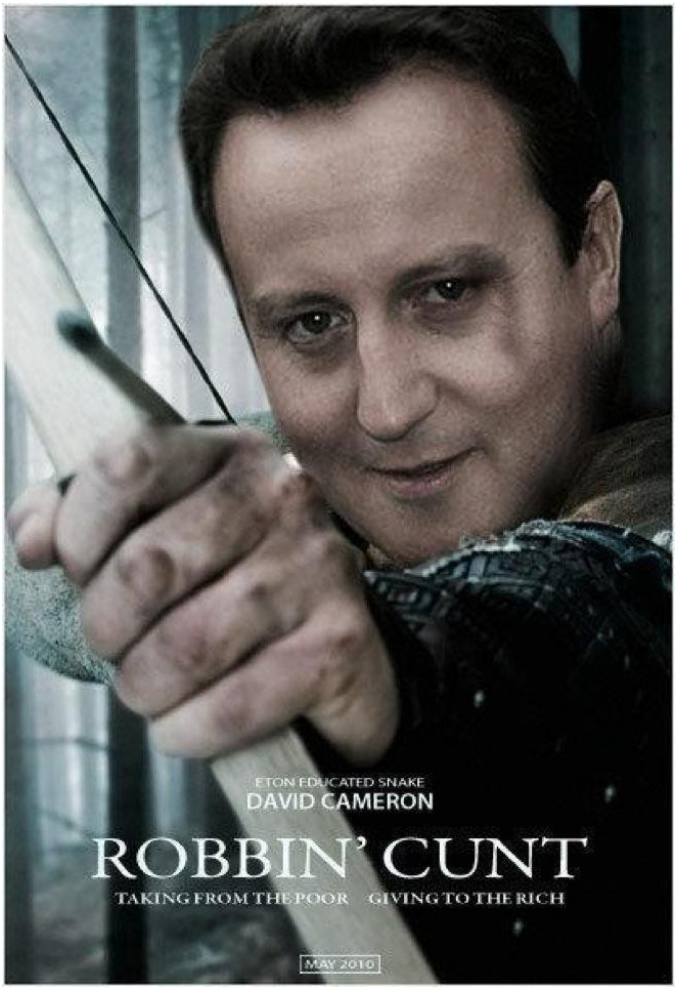
In a blatant attempt to force water charges back onto the political agenda the Alliance Party have demanded we 'get real' about how our water service is funded. Other parties are skirting around the issue fearful of a backlash. So they should be - successful campaigning by groups like the We Won't Pay Campaign against water charges has saw their defeat repeatedly over the years.

Water charges will simply heap increased poverty upon the misery of the working-class communities worst effected by the flooding. The 'debate' on water charges has been re-opened. It is essential that the sewage system in the north is upgraded but working-class people cannot be made to pay for this. It is simply not true that there is not money available to upgrade our water and sewerage system.

The message is clear 'we won't pay' and we can and will organise mass opposition if proposals to implement this charge are forced back onto the political agenda.



Assembly to Rubberstamp Westminster's Attack on the Vulnerable



With the likes of the Daily Mail, mainstream media and the Jeremy Kyle show's ongoing demonization of poor working class people hardly a political feather was ruffled by Cameron's latest proposals. His latest plans for benefits cuts see a further escalation in attacks on the working class, particularly the working poor and the young.

Payment in kind, a cap on housing benefits, no benefits for the young until after they have paid contributions and more harassment for those signing on are among the suggested 'reforms' of the welfare system.

He also suggested that workfare be rolled out even further with claimants being forced to work in return for benefits after six months on the dole. As for those on sickness benefits his message is 'heal thyself!'.

Single mothers with children as young as three could be made to prepare for work by writing a CV in return for income support.

His proposed reforms include removing access to all housing benefit for anyone aged under 25! Such a move would immediately increase homelessness among the young and is little less than a death sentence for many young people who would not be able to endure life on the streets.

Ministers have signalled that they are looking for a further £10bn in welfare cuts, and it seems there are no better people to pay for these cuts than the poor.

The Leveller has already had reports of single fathers being made homeless as a result of new 'under-occupancy' rules that have seen housing benefit cut for accommodation needed for children staying with their fathers. The amount of housing benefit payable has already been reduced. Many are having to make the difference in the rent charged and the lower amounts paid out in housing benefit up from their benefits.

Protests have already taken place - but we need to move from protest to resistance. Claimants need to build a union of our own.



Homophobia - It Hasn't gone Away You Know

Lord Ken Maginnis' is not alone in his homophobic bigotry. Edwin Poots is still denying homosexuals the right to donate blood.

The problem goes deeper though. While the 2011 Equality Survey found that lesbian, gay or bisexual people were the only group to see a decline in negative attitudes towards them - down from 21% in 2008 to 15% in 2011 - this has not seen an increase in positive attitudes. People have increasingly indicated 'neutral' opinions.

While the most worrying and negative attitudes continue to be towards members of the Travelling community people were extremely negative towards transgender people. 35% of respondents would mind (a little or a lot) having a Traveller as a work colleague, 54% would mind having a Traveller as a neighbour while 55% would mind having a Traveller as an in-law.

Transgender was included in the survey for the first time and 35% of respondents would mind (a little or a lot) having a transgender person as a work colleague, while 40% would mind having a transgender person as a neighbour and 53% would mind having a transgender person as an in-law.

In addition 21% expressed negative attitudes to Eastern European migrant workers.

Workers need to stand together in solidarity, against the scape-goating of one section or another of our class. Bigotry and intolerance must be stamped out. We can all join in and visibly make our opposition to intolerance and prejudice known - a good starting point will be to join the Belfast and Derry Pride parades on the 4th August and 25th August respectively.

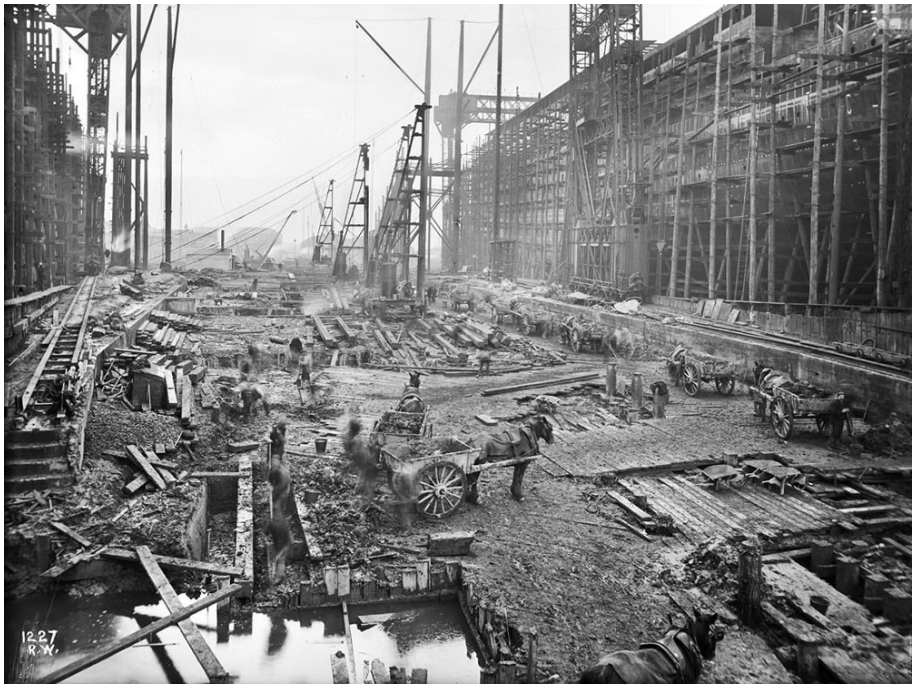
www.foylepridefestival.com

www.belfastpride.com

More Grants Axed

From next year the Department of Education and Learning will stop paying £1,810 on behalf of every student from Northern Ireland who have chosen to study in the Republic. Stormont seem to be intent on punishing students for choosing to study in the south and will replace these 'grants', which cover the annual college registration fee, with loans.

Titanic's Hidden History



Construction of the slipways for the Titanic and Olympic



Workmen on one of Titanic's huge propeller shafts.

Powerful symbols of progress, capitalist success, opulence, and modernity, the Titanic and Olympic were launched in Belfast in 1911 and 1912. Both represented a showcase of capitalism at the start of the 20th century. Both were built, to satisfy the dreams of the wealthy, by men who had hard working conditions and hard lives.

Injury was commonplace, disease was caused by many of the construction techniques and materials used. During the construction of the Titanic 8 lost their lives.

Of course the Titanic became the most famous of the two and the most infamous maritime disaster in history when the unsinkable ship sank after hitting an iceberg on 14th of April 1912.

A Harrowing Insight Into Capitalism

From inception to its tragic sinking the story of the Titanic provides a harrowing insight into capitalism. The open class bigotry of the times were reflected in the design of the ship, the access to lifeboats and ultimately in the fatalities themselves.

The available lifeboats were launched from the First Class decks first, Second Class decks second, while no lifeboats were dedicated to the Third Class.

Half the lifeboats, and all of the first six launched, contained only passengers from First Class, plus crew members to do the work. Although no one but First Class passengers could board a First Class deck lifeboat, First Class passengers could of course board Second Class deck lifeboats.

First Class passengers had easy access to the lifeboats while those in steerage passengers had not.

The steerage passengers who did survive did so only by scrambling for the last of the lifeboats that were launched or by jumping over board and climbing onto boats that had already been launched.

Steerage passengers were separated, by law, from other passengers with lockable gates! There were many reports of gates being locked and passengers being stopped from getting above decks by armed guards.

Annie Kelly, an Irish third class passenger, said that the stewards did not wake the steerage passengers with an alarm and told worried Third Class passengers who came up to the deck to go back down as there was no danger.

After the lifeboats had gone Colonel Archibald Gracie witnessed a "mass of humanity" pouring onto the boat deck from steerage.

Women and children first?

While much is made of heroic myths about women and children first over half of the women in Third Class died. Who was considered a child was also dependent on class. 14 year old Lucile Carter in First Class was considered a child, but 14 year old Annie McGowan in steerage was considered to be an adult. Only one child in First Class went down with the ship while less than a third of the children from Third Class survived.

While men in First Class had a lower survival rate than women, compared to men from other classes they did remarkably well. At the time when most of the lifeboats from the First Class decks were launching, it was not certain among the passengers that the Titanic was doomed, and many of the men from First Class who could have gone aboard a lifeboat decided to remain behind.

All 30 of the ships engineers and electrical engineers died. They stayed below decks until almost the end trying to keep the ship afloat and the electrical system working.

Only lifeboat 14, not a "First Class" lifeboat, went back to try and rescue people after the Titanic went under. It was only able to pick up three or four passengers from the water.

The Sinking of the Titanic and the Current 'Crisis'

It is tempting to compare the sinking of the Titanic with the current financial 'crisis'. However it does not provide a very good analogy.

For a start, capitalism has not hit any metaphorical iceberg. The ship is not sinking. It is most definitely afloat, with its wealthy passengers swanning about enjoying ever increasing wealth and opulence at everyone else's expense.

What is happening globally with the capitalist system today is more like the rich chucking half the crew overboard. The other half, told there is indeed a crisis, must work twice as hard to 'keep the ship from sinking'. In the meantime Third Class are starved below decks, to be dragged up only to be forced to work for the wealthy onboard for free.

Jason Brannigan

Organised Anarchy and Cooperative Politics: Worker Owned Enterprises in Action



Aine Carroll from Praxis attended the *Cooperate And No-one gets Hurt* seminar in Belfast that resulted in the establishment of the Workers Cooperative Network this June. We are reprinting her article from the latest issue of the Irish Left Review on the event which includes interviews with some of the participants.

The lack of jobs and services is forcing communities to seek alternatives, and once again the cooperative model is being explored. Two weekends ago in Belfast, a number of organisations met at the *Cooperate and No One Gets Hurt* seminar where the Workers Cooperative Network (WCN) was established. The cross-border initiative broadly aims to improve networking and learning opportunities among worker coops and to contribute to developing a greater understanding of the sector's benefits and opportunities.

Worker-owned coops are unique enterprises that demand a democratic decision-making process and a system of ownership that has workers at the centre. Worker-owners are not just employees but are more typically known as members who democratically share ownership of the business. While worker-owned coops are subject to the same strains and challenges as regular businesses, when well-governed and subject to basic good business practices they can deliver top-quality goods and services at affordable prices, as shown by the dramatic success of MONDRAGON Corporation in the Basque region.

While coops in Ireland have traditionally had success in the farming and dairy sectors, in the true sense of the term "worker -owned" such organisations are extremely rare. Golden Anikweof Cooperative Support Services believes that 'because cooperation can be organised in virtually all areas of human endeavour', there are lots of opportunities for communities to explore. Golden explains why he believes communities new to Ireland are particularly open to the idea. 'The World Bank says that Nigeria, as an instance of an African community, toes as easily to cooperation as ducks toe to water, because it is fundamental to the way of life. Due to the peculiar experiences they have had, migrants have developed skills that enable them to help themselves and there is a stronger tendency among them to explore these ideas.'

Strengthening links between new and existing democratic organisations will be the key to developing the sector.

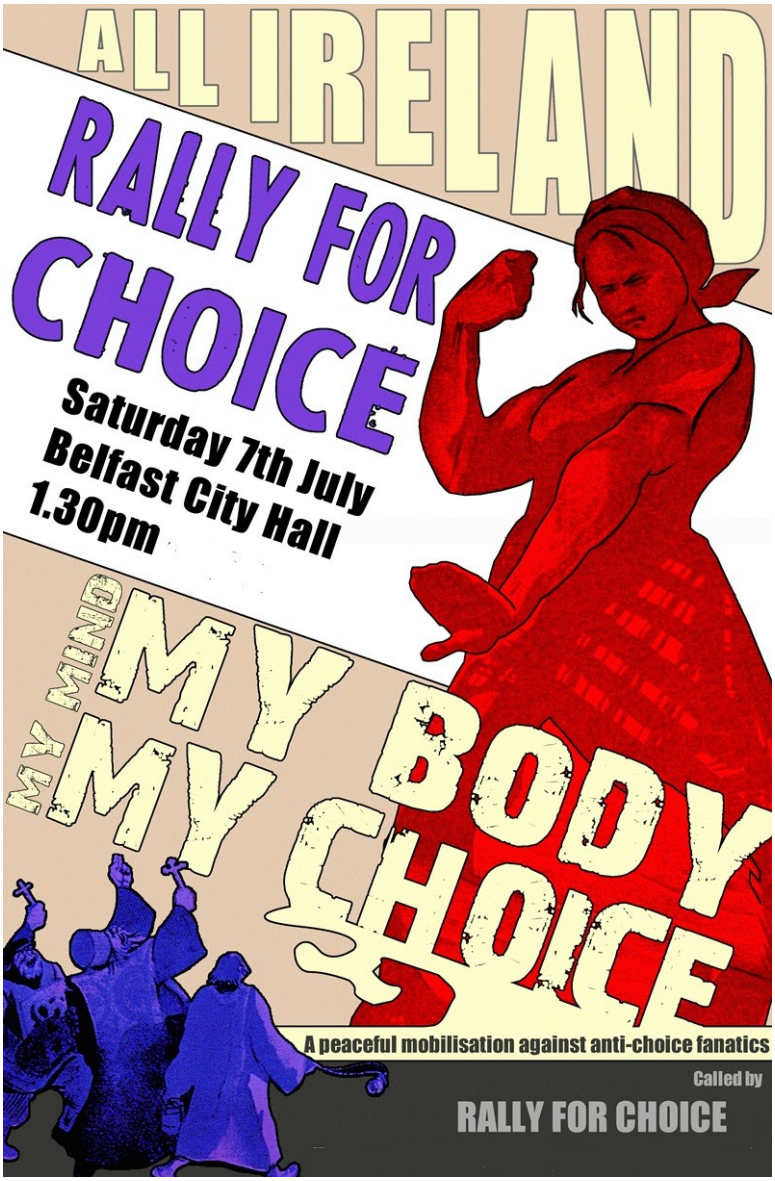
Cooperatives are reasonably well-developed in the UK, naturally influencing the situation in Northern Ireland. Julie Mc Nerney and Jason Brannigan also attended the seminar and are both members of worker coops. Julie describes how the model can serve flexible purposes as she has learned through working at the radical education coop Just Books. 'We didn't have a shop for selling books so we are getting into online sales with the help of the Creative Workers Coop. We are also setting up an education branch of Just Books called Just Learning thanks to a few people at the Ulster People's College who have been a great resource of knowledge and experience.' Jason is a member of the North Belfast Housing Coop and describes how the meaning and purpose of the organisation has changed over time. 'With the help of Radical Routes, the North Belfast Housing Coop was initially set up by people who identified as anarchists who all had a sort of ideological commitment to the idea of cooperative living. But with the attacks on welfare and housing benefit, economic reality kicked in leading people into homelessness and hostel-style accommodation. So it went beyond agreeing with an ideological idea to being - here, we actually need to do this: we need to sort out accommodation for us and people like us.'

Worker coops can fulfil purely practical purposes or can be designed to serve wider political agendas through a fundamental emphasis on democratic and egalitarian processes. Brothers Jack and Hugh Corcoran are two of the seven members that make up Na Crosbhealaí Irish language café and social centre in Belfast city. Jack describes how the coop makes demands of members as well as providing them with benefits, and links Na Croisbhealaí with a broader struggle against the privatisation of goods and services. 'All of our members are signed up to the Independent Workers Union which we see as one of the more progressive unions in Ireland. We also expect our members to speak Gaeilge fluently or be actively learning the language. I'll be travelling to Cuba soon where I'll be working on a farm. We will also have lectures from different Cuban representatives and see some examples of the revolution. I'll be educating myself about coops because they are starting to bring that into Cuba as a way of resisting privatisation.'

Hugh describes how worker coops can be hives of resistance to neoliberal ideology by providing spaces for social engagement and critical thinking. 'We had been visiting radical spaces in Cataluña and having conversations about being the first generation to come out of conflict and witnessing the deconstruction of a social movement. We could see our generation growing up in a very individualistic society and we knew we wanted to build towards this more collective idea by working together and pushing progressive ideas. So we started the social centre to promote the Irish language and promote workers control, directly challenging neoliberalism through language, culture and economics. We provide regular decent lunches for working people five days a week and free Irish classes once a week also. We have also just started political education classes aimed at creating political cadres through discussion and debate around theory and ideology.'

To find out more about the Workers Cooperative Network and to sign up for information on future events keep an eye on the WCN website (http://www.workerscooperativenetwork.org/). The following worker coops were represented at the Belfast seminar and currently make up the membership of the Workers Cooperative Network: Belfast Cleaning Coop, Na Croisbhealaí, Meitheal Midwest, Just Books Collective, North Belfast Housing Coop, Cooperative Support Services, Bridge Street Coop, Dublin Community Television , CounterPunch/Dole TV, Creative Workers Coop, TradeMark Belfast, Northern Ireland Cooperative Forum and PRAXIS.

Women Need Access to Safe and Legal Abortion in Ireland!



As 'pro-life' bigots descend on Belfast on Saturday 7th of July they will not go unopposed. A Rally for Choice has been organised to counter the lies of the 'pro-life' movement and demand that women from across Ireland have the right to access full reproductive rights without having to travel to Britain or Europe. Organise! and Anarchists for Choice have worked with other pro-choice activists to build for this event.

People are coming from all over Ireland to attend and buses have been organised from Dublin and Derry.

Over 5000 women travel to England from Ireland (north and south) each year to access safe abortions. While official statistics report a slight decrease in numbers of women travelling, calls to Abortion Support Network (ASN) from women in financial distress continue to rise exponentially. ASN has urged support for and participation in the All Ireland Rally for Choice being held this Saturday 7 July.

In addition to the thousands of women forced to travel to England in order to access a safe and legal abortion, there are the women who access abortion in other European countries, and those who source medical abortion pills from the internet.

At the same time, anti-abortion activists continue to promote stigma and shame around abortion. A current example of this is the advertising campaign created by Youth Defence. Their campaign slogan, "*Abortion tears her life apart. There is always a better solution*" implies a link between abortion and mental health that is both factually incorrect and intentionally misleading. A recent scientific study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, clearly stipulates that there is:

> *no increased risk of mental disorders after first-trimester induced abortion.*

Volunteers at ASN know personally from the hundreds of women they speak to each year of the anguish and guilt caused by our current punitive laws which add to what is already a stressful and difficult time for women facing crisis pregnancies. The ASN:

> *provides financial assistance, accommodation and confidential, non-judgemental information to women forced to travel to England to access abortion. We speak to women directly and hear first-hand of the difficulties and distress they are forced to endure because they cannot access a safe legal abortion in their own country.*

Despite statistics showing the numbers of women travelling to England for an abortion are ever so slightly down:

> *The number of women who are contacting Abortion Support Network because they are unable to afford the cost of an abortion, plus travel and other costs, such as childcare, has been more than doubling each year.*

The continued criminalisation of abortion in Ireland does not end abortion. It effectively makes abortion a class issue as it:

> *simply makes it more difficult for poor women and families to access [abortions]. The continued economic crisis is making it even more of a struggle for women and families to keep their heads above water and Ireland's severe abortion restrictions make it even harder for this group.*

In response to this the ASN exists to help those women who cannot meet the costs themselves:

> *As long as there are women facing an unwanted pregnancy who are unable to afford the costs of travelling to England and paying privately for an abortion, ASN will continue to do our best to help them to exercise their choice and rights.*

The ASN estimate that the cost of travelling for an abortion varies greatly:

> *depending on gestation, ranging from £350 to £1,775. Women who travel from Ireland bear the total financial cost of the procedure, which is available to women in Britain on the NHS, plus the additional costs of an often last minute plane ticket, child care and other associated costs. This is especially problematic for women without the necessary funds, or a passport or driver's license, because they experience further delays and are forced to access a later abortion at higher financial costs.*

The lack of any clear legislation permitting women to control their own fertility in Ireland means this is an issue that is exported. The Catholic Church, other evangelical Christian churches and sects, the 'pro-life' lobby and our local politicians are all happy that things continue this way.

For the wealthy among us this is not so much of a problem - for working class women it is all too often the case that they are forced to carry on with an unwanted pregnancy.

Abortion Support Network is an entirely volunteer-run organisation that was established in October 2009 to provide accommodation and financial assistance to women forced to travel from Ireland and Northern Ireland in order to have a safe legal abortion.

The Abortion Support Network is the only organisation known to be providing practical support of this kind. For more information or to support their work visit www.abortionsupport.org.uk

Anger In Dublin

At Sick 'Pro-Life' Advertising Campaign



Youth Defence have provoked anger with their new 'pro-life' advertising campaign.

The bill board adverts they have paid to plaster all over the city claim "abortion tears her life apart" and that, despite the evidence to the contrary, there is "always a better answer".

The republic's advertising standards agency has been flooded with complaints about the hundreds of posters on bill boards, bus stops, buses and trams across the city. In an effort to increase the stigma faced by women in Ireland considering, or having had, an abortion they have produced two styles of poster. One showing the face of a distraught young woman and the other a foetus sucking its thumb, both are emblazoned with the same slogan.

Choice Ireland have criticised the ads for not being representative of women's feelings following a termination, and only serving to increase the shame and stigma surrounding the issue of abortion.

Stephanie Lord said they had received:

A number of angry and offended emails about these billboards.

Some of the emails are from women who have had abortions themselves and who object to the message the billboards convey. These billboards do not speak for them. For a woman who has had one to walk past this every day, it's just horrible.

Youth Defence plan to cover the whole of the Republic in these offensive and mis-informed posters. We have a photo below of just what should be done with this garbage just as soon as it is spotted!



Thankfully some people have been taking direct action against the offensive and costly advertising campaign being conducted across the Republic by Youth Defence



Contacts

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Anarchists for Choice
anarchistsforchoice@gmail.com

Revolutionary Anarcha-Feminist Group (RAG)
PO Box 10785, Dublin 1.
http://ragdublin.blogspot.com

Solidarity Federation
British section of the anarcho-syndicalist IWA
PO Box 17773, London, SE8 4WX
Intsec@solfed.org.uk

Workers Solidarity Movement (Irish Platformist Group)
PO Box 1528, Dublin 8.
wsm_ireland@yahoo.com
www.wsm.ie

Alliance for Choice
Abortion Rights Group in Northern Ireland
http://allianceforchoiceni.org

Choice Ireland
Abortion rights action group in the Republic of Ireland
Choiceireland@gmail.com
http:choiceireland.org

Just Books Collective
Distributing radical books since 1978 now developing a community and labour education programme called 'Just Learning'
40 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FF
Email: justbooks@rocketmail.com

Libcom
Libertarian communist online resource with forums, library and global news
http://libcom.org

Seomra Spraoi
Dublin Social Centre
10 Belvedere Court, Dublin 1.
http://www.seomraspraoi.org

Shell to Sea
Campaign to move Shell's gas pipeline offshore from County Mayo
http://www.shelltosea.com

Solidarity Books
43 Douglas Street, Cork.
http://www.solidaritybooks.org/about/
Email: solidaritybooks@gmail.com

Warzone Collective
The Centre, Little Victoria Street, Belfast
www.warzonecollective.com
Email: warzonecollective@riseup.net

FUCK EURO 2012



On June 8, the Euro Cup opened in Warsaw. The city was full of football fans, media, police, military police and even some protestors.

Femen, the anarcho-syndicalist ZSP and the Tenants Defense Committee organised protests against the politics of the Euro. The ZSP and Tenants Defence Committee protested about the huge amounts of money spent on the Euro. Who will benefit? Well, unsurprisingly, UEFA (tax exempt in Poland) along with a few businesses. Almost 26 billion Euro has been spent on this spectacle and working people are footing the bill. Children go hungry as the city privatises school cafeterias, schools and nurseries have been closed, the poor are being evicted on a massive scale, there are cuts in social services and exorbitant price increases. All, you guessed it, in the name of 'austerity'.

Our comrades from ZSP also pointed out that the general contractor which built the National Stadium in Warsaw had just declared bankruptcy. Leaving "a whole line of subcontractors and workers" who have not been paid.

These workers:

> *threatened to block the opening of the Euro, but didn't. The workers at the stadium for the Euro, who are being cheated and receive less money than promised, threatened to strike - but didn't. This sort of situation, where many workers are not organized and are beaten with defeatism in a country with conciliatory unions, is creating more and more social problems.*

A guillotine was produced and the demonstrators declared that if the politicians continue protecting the interests of the rich and elites, at the expense of working people, they might have to use it:

> *Instead of more social cuts, the only thing we want cut are the heads of the government.*

The protestors described the city:

> *as one big Potemkin village, decorated for the games and trying to hide its misery. And this misery is growing all the time.*

The Ukrainian feminist group FEMEN also staged a topless protest against the Euro 2012 championship in front of Warsaw's National Stadium. Within minutes, all four protesters, armed with fire extinguishers, were arrested.



Top right: ZSP and the Tenants Defense Committe picket the opening of the Euro 2012. Background photo: advertising for the Euro 2012 on derelict housing in Warsaw. Bottom left: FEMEN protest the opening of

FEMEN is opposed to Euro 2012 because of fears that the tournament will lead to an increase in prostitution in Poland and the Ukraine, where the Cup is being co-hosted (for more on FEMEN see pages 7-9). Members of the ZSP and the Tenants Defense Committee joined protests at the police station holding the FEMEN activists to demand their release.

Always Crusaders Always Antifa

At the match where north Belfast team beat Derry City for the all Ireland cup local Crusaders fans unveiled a banner behind the nets reading Always Crusaders - Always Antifa.
Welcomed by the fans the response from some other anti-fascist football supporters was perplexing to say the least. Many seemed a little upset that the Crues fans had an antifa banner on display. Something was perhaps upsetting their view of the supporters of north Belfast's 'prod' team as 'fascists'.
From the Levellers point of view the waving of fascist flags at Crues matches in the past is something that should make an antifa presence all the more welcome.
We need more football fans, of all teams, and from all backgrounds taking a stand to kick racism, sectarianism and fascism off the terraces.

