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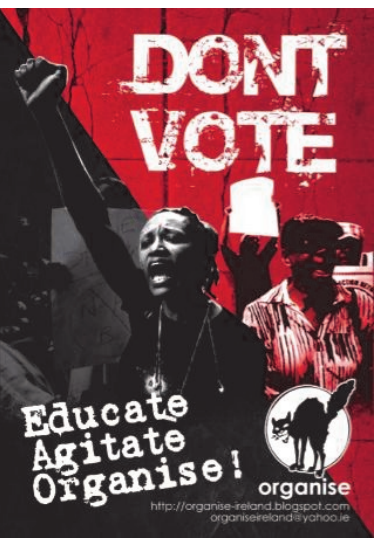
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Fight the Cuts







Not the Elections!

In March the Assembly voted through a cuts budget of over 4billion. Over £700 million will be cut from health and over £150 million from education. The people implementing these cuts are looking us to return them to power in May. Increasingly working class people are seeing through the illusion of democracy and refusing to vote. After all, it only encourages the bastards!

That time is upon us again, the time where we get to sit down and decide who is worthy of our vote, of representing us at Assembly and Council level. And, lucky citizens that we are, we're spoiled for choice! We have been presented with a veritable smorgasbord of candidates of all shapes, sizes and political backgrounds. As well as the line-up of usual suspects we have a gaggle of eager young hopefuls ready to pit their manifesto-writing skills against those of the jaded old warhorses. Freed from obscurity for 6 weeks only, these bushy-tailed campaigners are bounding from the shadows like dewy-eyed Disney bunnies, clutching handfuls of carefully thought-out speeches promising to deliver change and and create a better future if only we'd be good enough to put a wee mark next to their name.

The reality is, they'll deliver nothing but countless annoying leaflets, and create nothing but a fire hazard in your hallway. Political parties, no matter what their size, and yes! even those who slap the sexy soundbite 'Socialist', 'Worker' or 'Communist' in front of their name, have absolutely nothing to offer. Sure, they might earnestly throw themselves into campaigns 'fighting' cuts, taxes, fees, whatever else is trendy and/or at the forefront of 'working-class consciousness' at the time (read – whatever will get them noticed), but the noticeable absence of any action or campaigning in the areas in which they're not standing in election screams their true intentions in the face of anyone who cares to listen (some like to blame a lack of 'resources' – more appropriate is the term 'sincerity').

Along with the ardent lefties, an altogether more immediately sinister emergence has occurred. The far-right forces of the BNP (British National Party) and UKIP (UK Independence Party) have crawled their way out of the woodwork, presumably to blame the cuts on immigration. Well, that's not strictly true. UKIP also state that they offer an alternative to the established Unionist parties by 'rejecting bitter old sectarian politics' and reaching out 'across communities' to keep Northern Ireland in the 'democratic union' of the UK. It's good to know that the age-old Catholic v Protestant rivalry is now being transcended by racism; something which UKIP presumably think can bind our war-torn communities back together again. It conjures heady visions of peace walls being torn down, taigs and huns embracing in the once-divisive rubble, holding hands as they pick up debris, smiling lovingly at each other as they pelt the windows of migrant workers…. very progressive.

The establishment parties, of course, let's not forget them! What are they promising? Well, that would be sectarianism, poverty, unemployment, cuts……. Basically just a proven version of what everyone else is trying not to admit. All have now turned round and stated that water charges are indeed on the way, and it won't be long until they whip the cap off student fees in line with Westminster. So a two-tier education system for the privileged, and an annual bill of £300 on top of everything else in their box of treats. It's an irresistible combination.

On a more serious note, the emergence of these right-wing forces is telling in itself. The decimation of public services, attacks on living conditions, cuts in almost every industrial sector leading to massive levels of unemployment – all of these things have caused poverty, anger and despondency, and overall a desperation for change. Can't get a job? No, it's not because of capitalism, it's because the Poles have them all. Schools closing? That'll be all the funding going to the Muslims. Waiting for a council house? Well, the government's been selling off land earmarked for social housing for decades, but never mind that, did you notice that a family of Asians got one before you did? And by the way, the overcrowding in hospital's got nothing to do with cuts and closures, it's all to do with the waves of immigrants arriving daily on Great Britain's shores.

Absolute shite, of course. Take a step back and the cause becomes clear – the inherent failure of the capitalist system. It doesn't take a genius to know where the real finger of blame should be pointed, at the governments riding roughshod over workers. Even David Cameron has recognised that communities are in "discomfort and disjointedness", although our great 'leader' then went on to place the blame, rather bizarrely, on "immigrant communities unwilling to learn English" than to acknowledge the real cause. Unsurprising that he should do so, seeing it is his party who are at the moment cutting the life out of working-class people; although it is nice in a way to see the Tories go back to their traditional values. The airbrushed and shiny face of the 'friendly Conservative' pre-general election was just plain weird.

Obviously, change is needed, permanent change. The problem is that the people promising it from your doorstep will never deliver it. Liberal or Tory, Green or Orange, Left or Right – all they will give in return for your vote are promises and policies as two-dimensional and false as their plastic posters which are currently adorning lampposts and telegraph poles.

Using the current system of 'democracy' to swap one set of tyrants for another is pointless, all a government can and will ever give are crumbs from the fat-cat table. Temporary reforms, such as the NHS, will be given with one hand to shut us up for a bit, then taken away with the other when times get hard for the super-rich. There is a growing realisation that this is the case, and with it a steady decline in voter turnout in election after election. The alternative is this – working-class people organising and taking control of their industries, communities and lives. Not entrusting our future to a bunch of power-hungry idiots, but seizing control ourselves. Making sure we live in a society where nobody is ever, or ever can be, in a position to oppress any other. Getting rid of a system which does nothing but fuck us over. Ensuring there is not only work available for all, but also within a system which is run by the workers, not an exploitative minority of parasites getting fat from our blood and sweat.

Anarchism is not a system of 'no rules', but rather a system of 'no ruler'. It is based solely on the belief that the working-class has the tools and capabilities necessary for running the show ourselves, and indeed that this is the only way that true equality can ever be reached. We don't need wars, famine, banks, sectarianism, division and corruption! We need class unity and change, to fight and win against a defunct system which has for so long got away with giving us nothing.

In saying all that, I must admit that all those posters do brighten the place up a bit. And on windy days, there's nothing like seeing a four-foot image of a politician's face smacking repeatedly against a lamppost.