

Altnagelvin Protest

A crowd of around 400 to 500 people gathered in the Guildhall Square in Derry on Saturday 26 March to protest the decision by the Health Ministry (and Executive obviously) not to fund the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital. Some speeches were heard from the 'Pink Ladies' breast cancer support group and various trade union officials before a smaller group set off to march across to the hospital. There had been the usual theatrics beforehand from UNITE official and former 'Official Republican', Liam Gallagher, who declared his opposition (on behalf of Derry Trades Council or himself, it was unclear), to Éamonn McCann speaking at the event because it might be seen as an electioneering opportunity or campaign endorsement. However, aside from the general supporters the platform and Square were crowded with the usual band of chancers, opportunists, reformers and morons seeking votes off the back of the issue. McCann was distinctly small fry compared to the presence of Shinnars on one side and a small group of DUPers on the other (both with their flags naturally), SDLP politicians and a wee knot of unreconstructed Shinnars (32 County

Sovereignty Movement arseholes) in the middle. When the march to the hospital set off only the postcode road to socialism PB4PA (People Before Profit Alliance) people, a mad group of Strabane Irps masquerading under the equally mad title of the Strabane Unemployed Vanguard or some fucking thing, and some pink flag-waving 32CSM fuckwits joined in with the Derry anarchists and sane people who I like to believe formed the majority. The entire march was characterised by good humour, solidarity and a good level of public support mixed with attempts by almost everyone on it trying to appear not to be on the same march as the Real IRA contingent. At Altnagelvin there were some speeches from McCann and a particularly good one from a Donegal woman involved with a community health group. The general mood of the day was determined and optimistic and although only a small band of us made it to the hospital, the pressure mounting on the Stormont executive was already clear from the tone in Guildhall Square and the reaction of the party hacks all clamouring to claim their opposition to the mothballing of the new unit. We'll wait and see.

International News

Libya

Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi has ordered the abolishment of most of the government ministries and handing over their powers to the people. "For years, Libyans have been unhappy with the workings of their country's ministries which have been transformed into a labyrinthine bureaucracy in which corruption and maladministration reign," Kadhafi told Libya's parliament late on Sunday. Apart from the main departments of defence, internal security and foreign affairs and those responsible for strategic projects like the Great Man-Made River and airport and road construction, state ministries will be "abolished", the Libyan leader said. The 37-billion-dollar a year budget allocated to the ministries should instead "be shared among the people so that they can manage their affairs themselves".

He has stated that the cabinet is not needed as it had failed to manage the country's huge oil earnings. He stressed big projects were behind schedule and so ordinary people should themselves devise a new way of sharing out oil revenues. "All citizens have the right to benefit from the oil funds. They should take the money and do whatever they want with it," he said, according to Reuters.

Speaking of the failure of the committees he claimed "These committees will be replaced spontaneously by real committees to be created everywhere by citizens. Citizens will get part of the oil revenue directly. They don't need intermediaries".

Greece

In the early hours of April 14th, in the Athens suburb of Keratea, locals furious over the building of a new landfill site dug a two-meter deep ditch across the Lavriou Highway to permanently blocking traffic. Hours later, scuffles broke out with police who rushed to the spot. Athens' top police officer has also recently asked for his men to be removed from the area.

"There is clearly a breakdown of the rule of law, and without the rule of law there can be no economic development," said political analyst Takis Michas.

The opposition to refusal austerity measures by Greek workers has seen thousands sign up to the "Can't Pay, Won't Pay" movement. In reaction to this, the government is announcing reductions of up to 50% in road toll fees. Greece has also seen numerous strikes, occupations, demonstrations and riots, all of which are causing many to wonder if Greece is becoming ungovernable.

Portugal

Talks to negotiate Portugal's bailout are due to begin in Lisbon. Representatives of the European Commission, the European Central

Bank and the International Monetary Fund will have met Portuguese authorities by the time we go to press to discuss what would be the Eurozone's third bailout since the global economic crisis.

The negotiations, which are expected to last weeks, will set the terms for what is expected to be a \$116bn deal.

The aim is to come up with a radical economic reform plan, including privatisations, labour market reforms and steps to shore up fragile banks by mid-May, weeks before Portugal is due to hold a snap election.

Portugal itself has also seen an increasing wave of protests with strikes on the Lisbon subway in recent weeks as well as demonstrations across the country organised through the Facebook which attracted over half a million people.

USA

Students from the Lehman Alternative Community School in Ithaca recently walked out in solidarity with Wisconsinites in unison with students in Portland. At 2p.m., teachers gathered to see off the high school students, and after hearing a speech by the principal Joe Greenberg, telling them that those who signed out to protest would be getting community service credit, the students left. They marched down State St. to the Commons to gather, in which two students spoke on why they were there - chanting: "We love our teachers, and their union too!", spelling UNION, "Ithaca Fights for Union Rights", "Ithaca Fights for Teachers' Rights". After, they chanted at the Ithaca Journal, trying to get media exposure. They then went to New Roots charter school to get anyone who would come out, marching them down to Ithaca High School (IHS). When they got to IHS, chanting on campus while the school was in session made officials come out telling the protesters to come back after school was over at 3:32pm.

South Korea

It has been two years since the management of Ssangyong Motor Company in Pyongtaek, South Korea, announced the layoffs of 1000 workers. Shortly thereafter, those workers occupied their plant and held it for 77 days, from May to August 2009, when they finally succumbed to a massive police and army assault.

In the immediate aftermath, many were arrested and some were sentenced to years in prison. Most, however, were laid off.

Two years after the announcement, fourteen people, both strikers and immediate family, are dead.

Five workers have committed suicide and five have died from cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack or brain haemorrhage. Doctors

Derry Anarchist Group

A new anarchist group has emerged in Derry recently. The Derry Anarchist Group has had a few meetings, taken part in some protest and solidarity actions and is currently planning for the future. The group includes a couple of former Class War activists and has had the support and goodwill of a number of unaffiliated individuals. A Facebook page (Derry Anarchist Group) has been created and the Group are seeking support and assistance from other class struggle anarchists and like-minded libertarians in the north west.

Contact the Group at <http://derryanarchists.blogspot.com/>



believe these were caused by severe stress in the aftermath of the strike and layoffs. Some of the suicides resulted from economic problems following the layoffs.

In Feb 2011, one worker on unpaid time-off died of a heart attack. Under the pressure of the layoffs, his wife had killed herself in April 2010. They had two children. The worker's bank balance was close to zero.

"A Korean hospital also found that more than half the Ssangyong strikers it has seen are suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, and 80% are suffering from severe depression. Almost all the workers involved have reported a deterioration in their marriages. Their average post-restructuring monthly income, of 822,800 Won (\$757), represented a 74 percent reduction from their previous salary.

After the defeat of the strike, 462 workers were put on unpaid leave. The promised one-year period has elapsed, yet the company maintains it is unable to begin reinstatement. Workers who retired or were fired are having difficulty finding new employment because of the Ssangyong "scarlet letter," and have been making do with temporary jobs and day-to-day work. Also absent has been any social safety network to address their deteriorating health and financial anxieties".

Egypt

Cairo, March 24 2011: Egypt's newest trade union was established; the Independent Union of Public Transport Authority Workers. Hundreds of PTA workers attended the inauguration and preparatory conference of their independent trade union - at the Journalists' Syndicate.

Joining this union are 60,000 bus-drivers, conductors, mechanics, and engineers employed in the PTA - from across greater Cairo. Tens of thousands have rallied for the establishment of representative, accountable and democratically-elected trade union committees.

Workers voted to break away from the General Union of Land Transport Workers, a yellow union within the (state-controlled) Egyptian Trade Union Federation. This new union is the fifth independent association to be established since 1957.

Italy

On April 6 more than 300 officers were employed in an "anti-terrorism" operation named 'Outlaw Operation' that specially targeted anarcho-insurrectionist activists. The operation was carried out in 16 different cities including Bologna, where police arrested 5 activists close to the squatted social centre Fuoriluogo and shut down the place. Another person was arrested in the nearby town of Ferrara and released straight after interrogation. 7 other people are under banning orders which restrict their movements and are also being investigated (just for your

information, these measures are normally adopted when there is serious circumstantial evidence of guilt AND at least one of the following: risk of escape, risk of acquisition or of the genuineness of the evidence and risk of the offence being repeated).

The operation was part of an enquiry started in 2009 linked in part to anarchist publications and in part to recent attacks against detention centres and corporations like IBM and ENI (multinational oil and gas company). The network was believed to stay in touch through the anarchist zine Invece which when found in houses would be proof of belonging to the network according to the police (by the way, in mainstream media the zine has been described as a "clandestine" magazine...). The police also seized other publications and materials considered "incriminating".

The 5 arrested are being held in Bologna for now. To send them messages of support, contact: Martino Trevisan / Robert Ferro / Nicusor Roman / Stefania Carolei / Anna Maria Pistolesi c/o Casa Circondariale, Via del Gomito 2, 40127 Bologna.

New Zealand

Between 80-100 attended the Rally for Christchurch Community Assembly on the 2nd April and went away inspired, energise and motivated to organise in their Communities, building on the solidarity and links made in the weeks following the quake which devastated the area in February.

What was special about the day was the absence of politicians and officials speaking at people, but really not saying anything at all. What was present was ordinary people verbalising their experiences and concerns, sharing their thoughts and issues freely, in an open forum.

Serious concerns that were brought up and discussed included issues around sewerage, housing, heating, public transport, health and majorly the authoritarian nature of the Government and CERA. Those present will be going back to their respective communities to hold assemblies, talk, organise and plan for the struggle ahead.

What is most certainly building is a movement rooted in the struggles of those most affected by the quake in the predominately working class suburbs of the east.

Expect the frustration and anger to boil over. Protests, pickets, occupations and civil disobedience undoubtedly lay ahead. Solidarity will be needed across the country and we must link this to the wider issues of austerity measures, cuts backs in the public sector and the most recent attacks on workers through changes to the ERA and Holidays Act....

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